

generated into corrupt, self-serving regimes retaining all the repressive features of capitalism. In practice, nationalisation and the rule of the 'Party of the Working Class' (whether reformist or 'revolutionary') can neither satisfy the hopes and expectations of ordinary people, nor give them any real say in determining the conditions under which they live.

\* advocate the creation of unions which are controlled directly by rank and file members, do not divide workers by trade and are workplace-based. Such organisations operate across national boundaries with mass assemblies and mandated delegates subject to immediate recall. The ultimate aim is to create

one big union.

\* strive to create 'a new society in the shell of the old' through these revolutionary unions. Industrial direct action, taken at the point of production and culminating in the general strike, is the chief means by which far-reaching social changes can be effected. Control of workplaces will be assumed by democratic workers' councils as the prelude to more comprehensive and universal social reorganisation.

\* believe that radical social change must, by necessity, be accompanied by the active dissolution of other forms of relationship based on power and domination, such as sexism, racism, and homophobia.

# Anarcho-Syndicalism: An Introduction



## CAPITALISM: THE BOSSES' SYSTEM

**C**apitalism is the social/economic system dominating the world today. Driven by the pursuit of profit, it is characterised by the private and/or state ownership of the means of production and by wage labour.

Originally based on Thomas Malthus' idea of scarcity, capitalism claims to be the most efficient way of distributing limited resources via a free competitive market. Capitalism's bible, Adam Smith's *The Wealth of the Nations* (1776), argues that efficiency and competition should be rewarded for the benefit of all. Darwin's ideas of 'the survival of the fittest' and 'natural selection' are also used as a further justification for economic competition.

A conflict of interest operates under capitalism whereby the workers create the wealth and the capitalists extract the surplus value of the workers' labour (profit) by virtue of their ownership and control of the means of production ie. fields, factories, workshops, warehouses etc.

The role of the state throughout history has been to forcibly protect the inequities of capitalism; reinforcing its infrastructure (economy) through its superstructure (institutions, laws, values and models of organisation). All the main political parties support and endorse capitalism, even though we are constantly fed the illusion of choice and 'democracy' at election time.

On a global scale, capitalism perpetuates the underdevelopment of poor countries via trade liberalisation policies imposed by organisations such as the World Bank, G8 and World Trade Organisation. These policies merely serve the short-term economic interests of transnational corporations and political >>

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elites of rich countries.

Market forces rely upon and generate unbridled economic growth, giving rise to imperialism, militarism, overconsumption, poverty and the destruction/degradation of the natural environment.

Capitalism and its underpinning power

relationships are sustained on the principle of 'divide and rule'. This is reinforced by a repressive morality (often founded in outdated religions) & institutional nationalism, sexism, racism and homophobia.

Modern capitalism alienates us from each other economically, spiritually and socially.



## THE HARD FACTS

**S**ince the 1970s stocktaking of global resources has revealed enough food, energy and material resources to maintain a high standard of living for every person on the planet. Furthermore, the technological know-how is available, but not utilised, to ensure this standard of living on a sustainable, ecologically non-disruptive basis. (Source: United Nations)

**Therefore, scarcity, the premise underpinning capitalist economics, no longer applies. A competitive economy which fuels booms, slumps, social**

***injustice, conflict and war is both archaic and outmoded.***

At present, someone starves to death in the world every 36 seconds. (Source: United Nations)

The 225 richest individuals in the world have a combined yearly income which equals the combined yearly income of half the world's population. (Source: UN Development Report, 1999)

Half the world's population survives on less than US \$2 a day, and the wealthiest 20% of the world's population consume 86% of the world's resources (Source: Guardian Weekly, 2002)

Most of the world's economic, social and environmental problems could be solved by spending 30% of the current global military budget. (Source: United Nations)

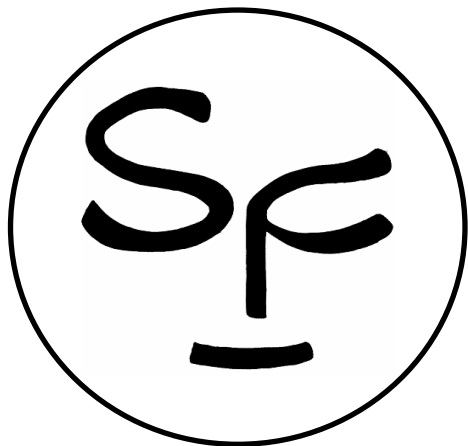
1 in 3 children in the UK grow up in poverty. (Source: End Child Poverty Campaign)

1 in 8 UK households cannot afford to heat their homes (Source: Fuel Poverty Advisory Group, 2008)

"Catastrophic" and irreversible effects of climate change such as droughts, rising sea levels and extreme weather conditions are predicted without prompt and robust action to curb pollution. At the

present rate, by 2050, global warming will result in 150 million environmental refugees, and 30 million more going hungry. (Source: United Nations Climate Panel, 2007)

***In order to address all of these problems, a completely new type of social arrangement is required wherein the means of production are shared collectively, hierarchical relationships are abolished, and the wage labour / profit system is replaced by a new social order with production/distribution organised according to need.***



## ANARCHO-SYNDICALISTS

\* support and promote libertarian socialism and the complete destruction of the state and capitalism.

\* advocate a classless, environmentally-sustainable social system based on mutual aid and voluntary cooperation. This will operate on the principle of 'from each according to ability, to each according to need'.

\* argue that radical social transformation can only be effected by the mass of people taking back control of the means of life. This is to be achieved not by commandeering the reactionary institutions of the state, but by instituting a federal system of community and workplace-based organisation.

\* reject the bureaucratic, hierarchical

model of trade unionism which divides workers according to trade and workplace. This only assists capitalism by mitigating conflict and negotiating the terms of workers' exploitation through professional elites. Trade unions also support and fund political parties which act contrary to workers' interests (New Labour).

\* reject political parties which claim to represent and seek to take power 'on behalf of' the masses. Without exception, all so-called socialist states have de- >>