

Questions and Answers

We have been asked why we discount the need for leadership.

In addition to placing their trust in reforms, other organizations believe in leadership, and often account for the obvious failure of reformist policies by saying: "You had the wrong leaders! If you had good, MILITANT leaders — well — things would have been different!" This line of reasoning is a speciality of the Communists and Trotskyists.

We do not advocate following any leaders — "good" or "bad." Leaders can only flourish in an organization that doesn't know what it wants, or where it is going. Only with ignorance at the bottom can there be leaders. As a matter of fact, the word is a misnomer. Leaders never "lead" in the sense that they suddenly are able to impose ideas on the majority of their followers. They merely reflect the ignorance of their following.

In the Companion Parties of Socialism, there is no leadership, but there is a delegation of function. The administrative committee does what its name implies — administrates the will of the whole membership, by which it is controlled. Branch secretaries, editorial committees candidates, etc., are all responsible to the party as a whole, and if the membership disagrees with any of their actions, they can be replaced.

The Socialist Attitude

The Companion Parties of Socialism:

Reject anything short of socialism — a classless, international, fully democratic society based on the common ownership of the means of production, production for use and the principle: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."

Reject any conception of socialism which implies rule by an elite, a clique, a minority or personal dictatorship.

Reject the idea that means and ends can be separated, that trickery, lying and political scheming can be used to achieve socialism.

Reject the concept of the "lesser evil" and are opposed to the the philosophy embodied in "half a loaf is better than no bread," which leads to opportunism and political compromise.

The Companion Parties of Socialism hold that —

The majority of workers must understand what socialism is, what it implies, and must desire it. They must organize politically to achieve it.

They must get control of political power and the machinery of the state and transform these coercive powers into means of emancipation.

The emancipation of the working-class must be the work of the working-class itself, and cannot be brought about for them by leaders.

A Socialist Party must reflect these principles. It must be entirely democratic, opposed to political trading and constituted of socialists only.

The interests of the working and the capitalist class all over the world are irreconcilably opposed to each other, in peace or in war.

Political parties express class interests. The World Socialist Party expresses the interests of the working-class. Hence it opposes all parties that work, openly or otherwise, for the continuance of capitalism. It maintains that unity must be based on socialist knowledge and rejects temporary alliances, boring from within, and united fronts with non-socialist organizations.

If we were to express our views in one sentence, we would say: **YOU CAN'T HAVE SOCIALISM WITHOUT SOCIALISTS.** The task of a Socialist Party, then, is to make socialists. Therefore, our program, immediate and long-range, is always socialism — and nothing else.

H. HOLMES

Socialist Party of Australia

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What Is Socialism?

What is socialism? Socialism is a new form of society; a form in which the whole of the people of the world will own in common the means to produce wealth and will distribute it according to the needs of each.

All that people want is the satisfaction of their needs, but private ownership has given its own particular slant to what some people need today. To be wealthy today not only means to live in comfort and security, it also means to be the subject of social approbation. Hence the wealthy ostentatiously display their wealth, live in huge mansions, attend lavish balls bespattered with jewels, own numerous motor cars and so forth in order to inspire the admiration of their fellows. Millionaires without a trace of artistic culture accumulate quantities of pictures and other works of art, as well as patronizing artistic movements, for the same purpose. When the possession of jewels, motor cars, and pictures is open to anyone who wishes to weigh themselves down with these things the desire to accumulate them will vanish because society will only look upon the accumulator as a lunatic. Water is one of the most precious things in the world to the human race yet no one attempts to hoard up and display huge tanks of fresh water, nor do they carry air ballons to balls and Command Performances. Water and air, except under extreme circumstances, have not been denied to all but those that can purchase them. Under socialism the products of human ingenuity will be as free to all as water and air are now, and the badges of vanity and superiority will vanish.

One of the fundamental needs of humanity is occupation for the mental and physical faculties. As work at present is a badge of inferiority most of those who belong to the privileged section of society try to find other means of employing their energies; of these sports, dancing, dinners and philandering appear to be the most popular. But a surfeit of aimless

pleasures becomes wearying and there is an endless search for new thrills. Under socialism this wasted energy would be directed towards objects that would bring permanent enjoyment to the individual and to his fellows.

Socialism would not be a dull, dreary, state-regulated system as so many of its opponents suppose. As the whole of the people in free association would control the conditions of existence the aim would be to make that existence as satisfying as human ingenuity could contrive. Productive operations would be carried out under the best conditions that could be devised and harmful occupations would be abolished; people would be prepared to do without those few things that could only be obtained at the cost of evil consequences to the producers. Humanity is essentially reasonable and where free to act reasonably does so. Educational facilities would be of the best, open to all, and not clouded by the necessity of learning in order to find the right road to employment and social security.

There are workers who, while agreeing that socialism is desirable, despair of its accomplishment because they believe it would not work owing to the evil propensities which they think capitalism has bred into the mass of the people. The basis of this view is "I am alright, but the other fellow is hopeless"; it is unconscious vanity. The evils about which complaints are made are the direct product of capitalist conditions and will disappear with the latter. For example it does not require much imagination to appreciate that when money is no longer needed no one will sell his self respect for it; when bread and other things are as free to all as air is now no one can become a thief; when each participates equally in arranging social affairs no one can become a despot; when all the avenues of happiness are open to everybody no one can gain by bribery or corruption. And so one could go through the whole of the evils that have a cor-

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