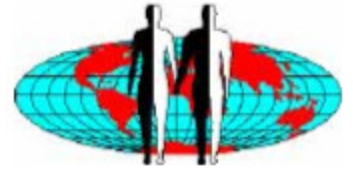


IMAGINE



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Some Socialist Thoughts on the Pandemic

The arrival of the novel Covid-19 virus has caused unprecedented disruption to our daily lives and to the economy not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s or the two World Wars.

It has been reported that it began in an animal market, probably illegal, and where live bats, that often carry corona viruses, in Wuhan, China, are sold. One of these viruses, Covid-19 was apparently transferred to a human and spread from there. After the SARS (Severe acute

respiratory syndrome) scare almost twenty years ago, we have to wonder why warnings from infectious disease specialists that another one could come along any time, were ignored and strongly affected our readiness for this outbreak. China had put in place an early warning system but it failed to work as officials who could have acted earlier ignored the medical evidence before them.

As the spread of something serious became more obvious, the World Health Organization was slow to sound the alarm for fear of that blaming China would have consequences from a world super power with lots of clout in international relations. In turn, national governments were reluctant to take the drastic steps they were later forced to take – shutting down all non-essential businesses causing widespread unemployment, closing borders and keeping everyone at home. To be fair, it was a unique situation that took most governments by surprise and as we are in a system driven by profit, a bold step.

It is also interesting to note that governments the world over were able to access untold billions of dollars to subsidize the wages of the unemployed, who would otherwise have had to take what they needed for free (an interesting concept!) despite fifty years of austerity measures – just as in 1939, after ten years of depression and deprivation resulting in malnutrition and a host of diseases for the working class, governments were able to produce billions of dollars to prosecute death and destruction on a global scale to protect the interests of their capitalist masters and their ability to produce profit.

As the number of infections and hospitalizations grew alarmingly, it became a desperate race to adequately equip front line workers with personal protective equipment and intensive care patients with the necessary respirators. After the SARS outbreak, such equipment was stockpiled in case of another threat. Sadly, as stocks became outdated, they were never replenished as it was deemed an unnecessary expense by those responsible for hospital budgets for something that might never happen. Hence, the institutions we rely on in an emergency, were unable to keep up and it came perilously close in Canada to having to choose who would get respirators and who would die.

In Canada, over eighty per cent of deaths from Covid-19 occurred in Long Term Care Homes. Despite decades of warnings and investigative journalism exposing the problems, the conditions in many homes were so bad that they were ripe for the rapid spread of the virus – overcrowding, lack of necessary equipment, and very thin staffing levels. Conditions became so acute that the Ontario government called in the military medical staff to take over the six worst homes and while there, they produced a damning report of endemic neglect.



Thus, the capitalist system of organization and profit making created the perfect storm for the virus to spread quickly and globally. Firstly, there would be no reason in a non-market socialist/communist system to hide the fact that a new, potentially dangerous, virus had appeared – either monetary, or politically – but rather, common sense and science would dictate the enactment of immediate and appropriate steps to be in place to save the most lives possible. Secondly, the failure to have adequate equipment in place is a function of capitalist economics and the globalization of everything. Those responsible for budgets did the right thing in failing to stock properly and maximize profits. That's what capitalism is all about – profit before everything, including people. So being continually stocked for an emergency that may be a long time coming becomes an easy efficiency the longer time goes on, and your performance is based on the last quarter's profits compared to those of your competitors. In socialism, every economic region would be as self sufficient as possible with production facilities and skilled workers for necessary products and importing only what could not be produced locally. With the profit angle out of the picture, stocks of vital equipment would be updated constantly, as necessary. Presently we are reliant on fewer and fewer suppliers of necessary equipment and have become unable to produce our own. At the time of writing (July), for example, Canada has received less than one percent of its order for 40,000 inhalators. It is not rocket science to make them but we don't because they can be produced cheaper in places where wages, working and living conditions and safety are the lowest possible. Capitalism is a race to the bottom and we are seeing the consequences of this profit-first madness in the pandemic infections and deaths.

In the case of Long Term Care Homes, it was recently reported by *The Toronto Star* (May 9 2020) that residents in for-profit homes were four times more likely to get

infected and die from the virus than those in municipally not-for-profit homes. According to a spokesperson for the health union, expressing no surprise, for-profit homes use more part-time and casual staff and have lower staffing levels. In the 1990s, Conservative premier, Mike Harris, elected with the slogan, “The Common Sense Revolution (!)” removed minimum staffing levels and established a competitive bidding process for the homes. Harris is now chairman of the board for Chartwell Homes, a corporation that owns many facilities. In addition, three of the largest operators of the homes paid out \$1.5 billion dollars in dividends over the last decade. Little wonder they couldn’t afford equipment and adequate staffing levels.

a family of four would owe about \$50 million! Obviously, the debt is owned by the capitalist class as the working class could never hope to pay. Since wages are the amount needed to reproduce the worker to continue to work and produce and rear the next generation of workers, taxes to pay for infrastructure, health, education and social programs must ultimately come out of profits. In other words, it is not our debt but don’t be surprised if it used as an excuse for yet another round of austerity measures in the coming decades that will further weaken our ability to confront the next out break.



Another consequence of our new life under the threat of the virus has been the sudden elevation of those whose work was considered menial and non-skilled and were paid accordingly to the role of ‘essential, front-line’ workers. Doctors, nurses, and first responders are frequently recognized for their valuable work to society, but truck drivers, warehouse workers, grocery store employees, personal support workers, cleaners, and the like became important pieces of supplying necessary goods and services. Full page newspaper adverts thanking these workers were purchased by governments and corporations thanking these essential workers and lawn signs popped up everywhere. Large grocery chains gave their workers a \$2/hour increase for danger pay. Sadly, this has since been rescinded and the Ontario government that had earlier cancelled a \$1/hour increase for the minimum wage, rewarded our health heroes, nurses etc., with a \$1/hour increase in their new contracts that, of course, amounted to a wage cut after inflation – just another example of the futility of reform! Socialists understand that every contribution to the public good is essential. Those who cannot contribute enough work per hour to be useful the capitalist mode of production will be welcomed in the socialist system.

The amount of money that governments have borrowed to keep people and businesses afloat is truly staggering. The federal debt alone is at \$343 billion and if we add the provincial debts in we are well over \$500 billion, so far, or \$12.5 million per man, woman and child in Canada. So

THE DEBT BOMB

One naturally wonders exactly how bad the economy will be after the Corona Virus, which has sucker-punched the economy placing many companies in peril. The rate of big businesses in Canada filing for creditor protection, is almost double last year's rate.

What makes matters worse for many Canadian companies, is the record-level of corporate debt they're carrying. According to Ashley Taylor, a Bay Street corporate insolvency lawyer, "The higher your debt levels, the harder it is to service your debt and so a downturn in your business makes you vulnerable."

Corporate Canada's Debt, both loans and debt securities, currently total \$2.7 trillion, or the equivalent of 118% of the entire GDP, up from 85%, from the financial crisis of 2008. This debt to GDP ratio is the third highest among G20 countries, behind only China and France and is the eleventh highest in the world.

Heavily indebted U.S. companies, including Hertz, have already gone bankrupt. Also, there was the bankruptcy this spring of Dallas-based Neiman Marcus, the famous American department store chain, which was purchased in 2013 for \$6 billion, by Ares Management and the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board, which makes investments on behalf of Canadian pensioners. It is well to bear in mind, that many of the fat pension cheques Canadians enjoy are tied up in investments.

In March, after Covid19 struck, Montreal-based Cirque de Soleil, already staggering under a \$900 million debt load, laid-off 95% of its work-force. On July 2nd, it filed for bankruptcy protection. Bombardier, the Montreal-

based transportation manufacturer, has more than \$9 Billion worth of debt. It may need government hand-outs to stay afloat. Air Canada, is losing \$20 million, every day the virus lasts.



In fact, entire sections of the economy are at risk, including, oil and gas, manufacturing, travel, tourism, hospitality and commercial real estate. When the virus hit, corporate Canada, scrambled to shore-up its debts. Meanwhile, the debt-to-equity ratio, of private non-financial corporations, jumped to 212% in the first quarter, the highest since 2009, according to Stats-Canada.

The still-escalating corporate debt may threaten the entire economy many economists warn. Typical of these is James Orlando, Senior Economist at the Toronto Dominion Bank, who states: "I view corporate debt as one of the highest risks in the financial system." His research shows that real estate, manufacturing, oil and gas, account for 45% of total non-financial corporate debt, with debt levels well above their respective averages of the current economical cycle.

The longer the pandemic lasts, the greater the danger that debt will prevent companies surviving the pandemic. It may very well be the beginnings of a depression the world has not seen since the 1930s. The pandemic, global-warming, unemployment, and rise of violence do not bode well for the future. Could there be a better argument for the establishment of socialism?

Summer, 1970

Citizens, have you noticed in early August when days are still full of the sun's honey and nights are soft and warm and nourishing, the trees are dying an unnatural death like old humans after years of insecticide poisoning, food additives and car fumes, withering outside from the nerve ends? So like us the leaves curl brown around their edges (unlike the growth of winter's even shroud) and as they die they twist into waving clenched fists in agony, while our old people, long before the air is crisp with frost double over, stomachs clenched, retching. Green lungs turned brown no longer breathe.

1970 Trevor Goodger-Hill

THE CAPITALISTS CAN'T SEE THE FOREST FOR THE TREES

Across the globe, we see an increased divide between Indigenous people, who try to defend the land and governments that serve the interests, not only of their respective capitalist class, but also multi-national corporations. According to Global Witness, the Washington-based non-profit organization, more than 160 environmentalists and land-defenders, were killed in 2018, some of them were Indigenous people.

In Brazil, some Indigenous people formed the Guardians of the Forest, a group of volunteers who defend the forest from illegal logging, some of whom have been shot and killed. One member told a Reuters' reporter, "We are protecting the land and the life on it: the land, the birds, the tribe on it here too. I am scared sometimes, but we have to lift up our heads and act. We are here fighting."



No matter where they live, Indigenous people feel a connection to the land. It's not so much a question of whether the land belongs to them, but they feel they belong to it. The land is their life, their history, their food and their shelter. After decades of being ignored by western science, Indigenous knowledge is in increasingly being looked to by academics and researchers for answers to questions on plant growth, organic foods, how to save declining animals species and forest fires. Yet, the land and the Indigenous people who defend it continue to be attacked by corporations and governments in their insatiable drive for profits.

An article on the website of the American Institute of Biological Scientists, noted, "Especially worrisome are potential irreversible climate-tipping points and nature's reinforcing feedbacks (atmospheric, marine and terrestrial) that could lead to a catastrophic hot-house earth, well beyond the control of humans. These climate chain reactions could cause significant destruction to ecosystems, society and economies, potentially making large areas of earth un-inhabitable."

Indigenous people already know that. Their communities have been on the front lines of climate emergencies for decades as the earth warms. In Canada, northern hunters will tell you animals have already changed their behaviours, thus, altering hunting seasons. They also tell you of fish species moving north and several weather patterns that have led to an increasing flooding and ice-road season. Yet, when Indigenous people protest, whether it be in the Amazon, Wet'suwet'en territories in northern British Columbia, or at Standing Rock after the fight to prevent the Dakota Access Pipeline, they are jailed, or told they are being radical, dispersed and in some cases, killed.

Brazil has always been ground-zero in the climate change fight. It is the home to the Amazon, the largest carbon storehouse in the world and a key factor in regulating the

temperature of the world. It is also, the country where big ranchers and corporations have run roughshod over Indigenous rights, taking away land and murdering Indigenous people. President Bolsonaro, "The Trump of the Tropics", often makes derogatory comments about Brazil's Indigenous people. In April, 2015, he told the Campo Grande News, that, "The Indians do not speak our language, they do not have money, they do not have culture, they are native peoples. How did they manage to get 13% of our national territory?" This question is coming from a man who is president of his country, but after all the comments Trump has made, should we be surprised?

The insatiable demands of the world's capitalist class in a mad, pell-mell, drive to acquire raw materials to be turned into goods for sale and profit, is not only leading to the destruction of Indigenous communities, but, since this affects the entire planet, it could sadly lead to the destruction of us all.

TO PUMP OR NOT TO PUMP

In March, the Ontario Government gave consideration to the proposal of a hydro plant on the grounds of a military base near the town of Meaford on the shores of Georgian Bay. The residents of Meaford are bitterly opposed to this and have organized themselves into the Save Georgian Bay Resident's Group. The group's on-line petition to stop the hydro proposal has been signed by more than 33,000 people, which is quite remarkable given that the population of Meaford is 11,000.

If approved, TC Energies (TCE), \$3.3 billion hydro facility would be one of the biggest industrial developments Georgian Bay has ever seen. The Calgary-based company, who are also building the controversial Coastal GasLink Natural Gas Pipeline in B.C. stresses its studying the feasibility of the project and has yet to conduct studies on how the electricity plant will affect the environment.

Company documents note that at night, when demand and cost of electricity is low, gigantic intake pipes will suck 20 million cubic meters of water from the bay using 1,000 megawatts for eleven hours to fill a reservoir almost two kilometers away on a plateau 150 meters above the shore.

The pumped water - equal to the amount pouring over Niagara Falls during a two hour period - would be flushed back down to turbines to create electricity when demand and prices are high. TCE expects this pumping and flushing loop to be repeated pretty much daily.

Ontario has a surplus of power at night, forcing export to the U.S. or other provinces, at cut-rate prices. TCE says, "In peak daytime hours, it runs gas-fired facilities to meet the higher demand."

John Mikkelsen, TCE's Director of Power Development, said, "Flushing the proposed hydro facilities reservoir when energy is most needed, would create 1,000 megawatts of continuous electricity for eight hours, enough to fuel almost one million homes for that length of time.

If given the green-light after federal and provincial assessments, including the Environment Treaty Rights, the company expects construction to require 800 workers, take four years to build, and be completed by 2028.

TCE's first problem will be Department of National Defense (DND). They may not approve of the company's plan to build the facility, including the reservoir, on the 4th Canadian Division's Military Training Centre. The department is consulting Indigenous Groups and local residents to decide whether giving up 3% to 5% of its space would seriously disrupt military training, which includes firing machine guns and tank canons. It's assessing whether the training on that piece of land can be moved. Hmmm, how terrible, land which could be used to train young men in the ways of killing each other should be taken away for crass profit. "If DND can't accommodate TCE's proposal, then everything stops", said Peter Craine, DND's Director of Portfolio Requirements, whose team plans infrastructure for Canada's military bases.

Another affected group, is the Saugeen Ojibway Nation (SON), which has a long-standing claim on un-ceded land and water that includes the Bruce Peninsula, the area between Goderich and Collingwood and part of Georgian Bay and Lake Huron. In an obvious attempt at a bribe, TCE's vice president, Francois Poirer, offered the SON, "A commercial partnership." Mikkleson, said, "It would



be a part-ownership of the facility."

In an information sheet for community members, SON's chiefs and councils, cited as risks, the potential impact on waterflow, Indigenous Cultural and Archeological sites and fish. Part ownership, however, "Would mean a significant financial benefit for the communities," the chiefs added. Greg Nadjiwon, Chief of the Chippewa's of Nawash

Unceded First Nation, one of the two Indigenous groups that make up SON, said in an interview, "It's too early to say if SON will be on board, but anything that reduces reliance on nuclear plants is worth considering."

The Save Georgian Bay Petition says, "Fish spawning habitats, will be replaced with massive stone breakwaters and concrete structures. Bird habitats and nesting areas will be destroyed along the pipeline and transmission corridors. The clarity of the water that makes this area of Georgian Bay so beautiful will become turbid with silt and clay and by the endless ebb and flow of water to and from the plant."

In response TCE, said it's \$100 million worth of assets, including, pipelines and energy facilities, directly produced 13.5 million tonnes of CO2 greenhouse gas emissions in 2018. It points the proposed project as an example of its commitment to reduce such admissions, but the Save Georgian Bay People aren't buying it. Spokesperson; Bruce Rodgers said, "They're painting a nice green-washed story to get people to buy into the argument. He described the proposed facility, "As a huge vacuum, sucking everything up," adding that whitefish spawn where the company will put its intake pipes. The fish mortality could be huge.

The proposal is based on a 1,785 megawatt facility that began operating in 1972, on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. A study in 1980, which was a baseline for mitigation requirements by The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in the U.S., estimated that the plant's six intake pipes, sucked up and killed 532 million fish annually. "The change in pressure essentially ruptures the fish. It's not a pretty thing," said Mike Shrieberg, Great Lakes Regional Executive Director, for the Virginia-based National Wildlife Federation.

Here we have another typical capitalist situation. At

present, we do not know how this will play out. It could well be that the government will refuse TCE's proposal, but if they do it will be because they don't want it built on military training facilities and not because they care about people and the environment. What we can say for certain is that in a socialist society environmental concern and the well-being of the local population will receive primary consideration, not last.

Humiliation

The surface of his desk is hard,
reflects my face. Can he divine
how scared I am? "Sit
down" he bids, as if to set
his crouching form on high.
The leather seat has rigid
lines and angles like a fence.
My fingernails pock-mark my palms.

"It is a trivial matter" he
begins: the neighbours peek behind
the window shades. "No reflection
on your work." His desk grins back.
Where is my courage to declare
him meaningless, my hatred for all jobs
when I must make, or sell, or fix
out of necessity? Silent, for hope
of later work, I join the queue outside.

1962 Trevor Goodger-Hill

Questions & Answers

Questions socialists often get asked . . .

"You guys talk about capitalism like it was an economic piece of garbage, but how do we know that socialism, if established, wouldn't break down into chaos?"

Answer: You already have chaos, war, mass poverty,

unemployment, global warming, pollution, race riots, the rise in crime of all types, families breaking up, addiction to narcotics and alcohol, floods, fires, famine, soldiers raping women and sometimes little kids even babies, deaths from preventable diseases, genocide, protests and riots against autocracy, the spread of disease's that are impervious to antibiotics as well as COVID-19. stock market crashes that wipe out life savings, people fleeing wars. No chum, if its chaos we're talking about, socialism can't improve on the above.

~ Q: "What exactly do you mean by production for use?"

A: Exactly that. Under capitalism production is with view to profit. So everything possible is done to realize a profit, including inferior, hence cheaper materials, and slip-shod workmanship, including planned obsolescence so you have to keep buying the same product. With the abolition of money, their will be no impediment to making good quality products.

~ Q: "What! a society without money how could we get what we need and who would work?"

A: You would get what you want from distribution centers, pretty much like you do now in department stores, except you wouldn't have to pay for it.

~ Q: "But wouldn't people grab as much as they can and to hell with everyone else?"

A: No, if you want a TV and there's a hundred in the store are you going to take all of them even if it were physically possible.

~ Q: "Surely nobody would work if they aren't getting paid for it?"



A: Lots of folk already do. Look how many do; lots of people do volunteer work and everyone does things they enjoy and others benefit from it in one way of another.

~ Q: "Who will supervise production?"

A: People who have experience and knowledge will be elected to supervisory positions, by the people they will supervise. If any show themselves incapable they will be immediately dismissed and someone else appointed.

~ Q: "How will society as a whole be administrated?"

A: The same thing on a larger scale. Decisions affecting the whole planet will be made by the worlds population as a whole. Improvements in communications mean decisions can be made quickly. Likewise decisions concerning local regions will be made by its residents. Whomever is elected to administrative jobs at all levels will be there to carry out decisions made by the majority. In other words you tell them what to do, not them you.

~ Q: "You speak of regions, but what about countries?"

A: Countries will no longer exist. A country as a political entity is nothing more than a means where a small minority live well at the expense of the majority. All the talk they give you about patriotism is bullshit to get you to fight their wars for them. In WW1, they said it was, "The war to end all wars," in WW2 it was, "To make the world safe for democracy," but when it was over more people lived under dictatorship's than before it. Go back to the Crusades and it was, "Free the Holy Land from the Infidel," when what they really meant was, "Smash the Otamann Empire so we can set up trade routes to the Far East." The working class of all countries have no stake on wars, all of which are fought by competing sections of the capitalist class for raw materials and markets.

~ Q: "What is the difference between your party and the other's on the left?"

A: First we don't consider our party as being on the left, because left and right wings are merely competing sections of the same thing. The NDP stands for the introduction of reforms to make life more bearable under capitalism; reforms that would soon become obsolete or abolished by another government. The so-called Communist Party aim to run capitalism

with more government control over the economy, but leaves the fundamentals of capitalism intact; instead of workers being exploited by individual capitalist's they would be exploited by the party officials, which they were in the Eastern European dictatorships. The Trotskytes want much of the same and believe the working class cant grasp the concept of socialism and need them to lead the working class. We of the SPC understand that the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself. So why not join us and help establish a society where none of the evils caused by capitalism will exist.

A SOCIALIST EDUCATION SOCIETY for the SPC?

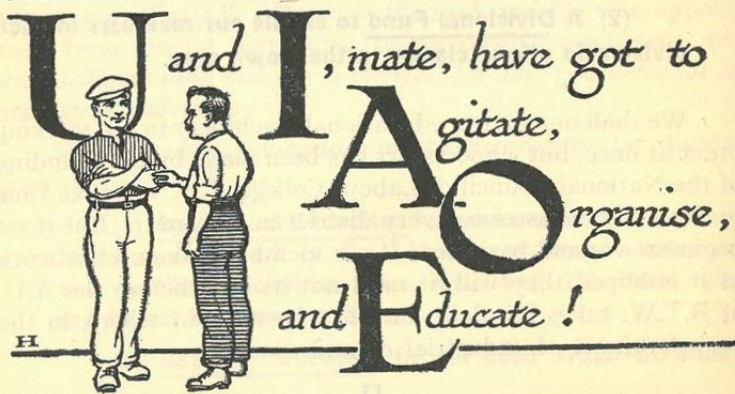
Open commentary from a SPC sympathizer.

What real hope is there for a tiny handful of people to become a mass party, get elected to parliament in a vast majority and introduce socialism? Not very bloody likely. I have known about the SPC for 55 years and while agreeing with its analysis of capitalism and its correct conception of socialism, have seen its political influence remain nothing more than a pipe dream. A small group must focus its energy on a single aspect that it does well and not try to do everything. What the SPC has done reasonably well is to educate workers on the nature of capitalism and of socialism. Maybe it is time for the party members to cease kidding themselves and focus their energies on becoming a Socialist Education Society. I am not saying that the name "Socialist Party of Canada" should be dropped, there are good reasons for not doing so, such as preventing labour fakers from using the name – but the emphasis should be on forming an educational society.

We are at a crucial point in history and need that education badly. One hundred and ten years ago – when the SPC actually had some mass political influence – millions of workers worldwide considered themselves socialists. Along came the First World War and that socialism went out the



THE VOWELS OF VICTORY



VACHER & SONS, LTD., Westminster House, S.W.1.—97155

"Vowels of Victory" 1920s Plebs League

window. In reality, they were nationalists and not socialists. Ten years later, the Great Depression. Many workers were radicalized and became militant trade unionists, but a handful of social and economic reforms were enough for them. Socialism was not to be seen. Leap ahead to the 1960s and many young workers (or those workers in training, the students) challenged capitalism's racial, sexual and gender oppression. In spite of the revolutionary rhetoric, the goal ended up a more egalitarian form of capitalism and not socialism.

Today, we face a different situation from before – a conjunctural crisis of immense and unprecedented proportions. A crisis that is simultaneously political, social, economic and environmental. The crisis is to millions of people a crisis of capitalism. Perhaps not so explicitly, but implicitly. The greens with their concept of a “steady-state economy” and the more radical ecologists with “degrowth” are implicitly anticapitalist, for capitalism will die if it cannot eternally expand, ie augment profit. Implicit also are the host of ideas and practices floating about such as land trusts, worker cooperatives and other forms of mutual aid. What is lacking in all of this is a profound knowledge of capitalism and socialism. Think of all the people that claim that Bernie Sanders is a socialist or that the NDP could be converted to socialism. There is little understanding of class and even less of dialectics. Most people radicalized by the crisis have an underlying approach or philosophy that is essentially bourgeois – one that fragments reality, is black and white moralism and thinks in terms of fixed categories. It is no wonder that division, sectarianism and idealist approaches abound, and that these movements ultimately fail.

What is needed is a Socialist Education Society that will bring together socialists, whether SPC members or not, and attempt to educate the

populace about the nature of capitalism, the reality of socialism, the necessity of class analysis and a dialectical monist approach to understanding the world around us.

Larry Gambone

FOR ALL YOU RIGHT-WHINERS, THE TRUE ROOTS OF SOCIALISM EXPOSED.

The right sees socialism everywhere, including the most innocuous of social reforms. But they fail to get to the root source of the problem, a root source forever feeding its socialistic impulses into society. I am speaking of family and friendship. For example, in your family do you have a lock on the fridge and charge your children for the food they eat? No, they eat without payment – pure socialism! What's worse, they can eat as much as they want and need contribute nothing, or at most a few chores. Is that not “From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs”? Socialism, hell, that is pure Marxian communism!



"A spectre is haunting the family fridge . . . "

Friendship is another sleazy socialist trick to wrap us up in the red flag. Invite your friends over for dinner. Do you give them a bill at the end of the meal? Of course not, the welfare scroungers get to eat for free! Your elderly neighbor needs a ride down town, do you charge her cab fare? No, she rides for free, the parasite. Friendship and neighborliness are socialistic traps! And what are the causes of family and friendship? Why those insidious commie irrational behaviours known as love and affection. The ONLY WAY to eliminate socialism is to root it out at its sources. The sources are family and friendship. To be truly capitalist, to be truly "Conservative", you must live alone and have no friends, love only yourself, beware of the slightest feelings for others or otherwise you will be susceptible to the socialist virus.

(With thanks to David Graeber and his concept of the communism of everyday life, which inspired this diatribe.)

C.N. Lee

Weekend

On Friday night
The workers get tight
To prove that they are master:

On Sunday night
See their plight
At Monday morning's disaster.

1960 Trevor Goodgerhill

OBSCENE & HEARD

The Socialist Party of Canada and its companion parties in other lands have always and very clearly pointed out that wars are fought between competing sections of the capitalist class for raw materials, markets and related

matters, such as; the protection of trade routes and capture of strategic positions. Therefore, it is always significant when a spokesperson for the capitalist class verifies our position. The following comments were made by Major General, Smedley Butler:

"I serve in all the commissioned ranks from Second Lieutenant to Major General. And, during that period, I spent most of my time being a high-class muscleman for big business, for Wall Street and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism. I helped make Mexico and especially Tam Pico safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American Republics for the benefit of Wall Street. The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the International Banking House of the Brown Brothers in 1909 - 1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China, in 1927, I helped to see that Standard Oil went its way unmolested. Looking back on it, I feel I might have given Al Capone a few hints. The best he could do was operate in three city districts. I operated on three continents."

I came across these comments in the iWi Co-operatives Newsletter. This is a commune in Quebec.

Scientists have said that an estimated six hundred million people live directly on the world's coastlines, among the most dangerous places to be in the age of climate change. They have predicted that the oceans will rise by 30 to 120 centimeters by the end of the century, with the likelihood of heavy storms and higher tides that could change the lives of entire communities.

San Francisco is, in this respect, one of the most threatened cities in the world. According to a survey, undertaken by the California Coastal Commission, the ocean level would rise by 70 to 100 centimeters by 2100, in the San Francisco Bay area. This analysis is predicated on the assumption that green house gas emissions will continue at the present rate.

Naturally, capitalism being what it is, the authorities are more concerned with the rich than the poor. To quote Jack Ainsworth, head of the commission, "People's properties and investments are at risk. It becomes very political and very emotional." Bay area municipalities are very wealthy and many of them are already paying a lot to fortify the coast.

In Pacifica, a suburb south of the city, coastal bluffs are

eroding so swiftly that city officials have demolished some properties before they could fall into the water. The wealthy can buy houses inland, but it's not so easy for the poor. One apartment building in the working-class area had to be demolished and the 52 tenants were not entitled to any compensation. They had to move.

The most frightening thing about climate change is that if socialism were established tomorrow, the damage done by capitalism might very well be irreversible. Nevertheless, the sooner established the better, then we could make an intelligent start.

In 1906, Upton Sinclair wrote his famous book, *The Jungle*, in which he called attention to the unhealthy conditions in the meat-packing industry. His book caused a sensation and Teddy Roosevelt ordered him to come to the White House as soon as the book was in the stores. The reaction of the public, in general, was, "You mean we are eating this unhealthy stuff?"

Things haven't changed a lot since Sinclair's time. Every Tuesday morning, "Toronto Cow Save," an animal rights activists group, sets up protests in the stockyard neighbourhood outside the St. Helen's and the Ryding - Regency meat packing companies, two of Toronto's last slaughter houses. The picketers draw attention to the fact that both companies are under fire from the government. Their licences were recently suspended by the Canadian Federal Inspection Agency (CFIA) and since then, all but 100 of its raw beef and veal products have been recalled on suspicion of potential contamination of the e-coli 0157, H7.

Hundreds of meat products have been flagged by the CFIA in a spate of e-coli recalls from major grocery stores, including Wal-Mart, Metro, IGA and Pusitari's. The e-coli are a dangerous strain of bacteria, which is a result of present-day industrial agriculture. When cows were switched from grass to corn, which is more easily digested, their stomachs became breeding grounds for tougher bacteria. Added to this, there have been changes that includes growth hormones and feed additives. According to Sarah Hargreaves, owner of Three Ridges Ecological Farm in Aylmer, Ontario, "I think it's a huge miss-use of drugs and it's causing an epidemic of antibiotic resistance."

Obviously, all the changes in agricultural production are with view to profit and have little concern for people's health: a situation Upton Sinclair would understand very well.

An article in the July edition of "Air and Space",

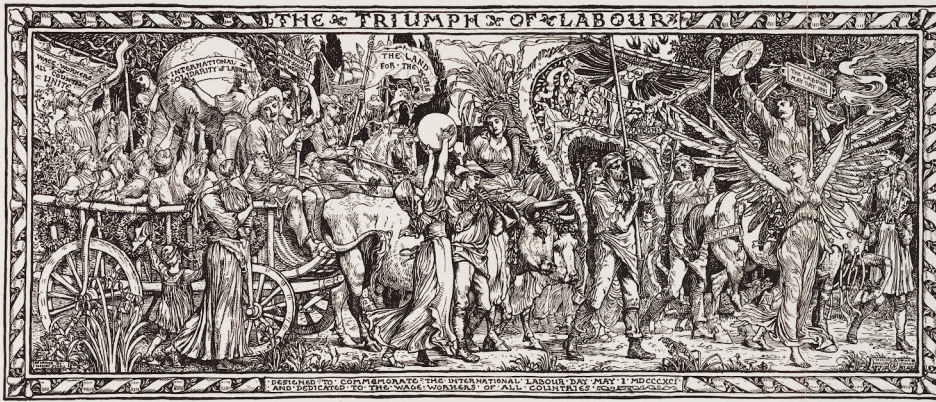
magazine, a publication of the Smithsonian, focused on the use of drones to smuggle drugs from Mexico to the US. In one instance agents from the US Customs and Border Protection (CPB) found 28.55 pounds of heroin, worth nearly \$1.5 million had been flown across the border and its Mexican-side pilot had made a clean getaway.

During the 1980's small private airplanes loaded with cocaine and marijuana became notorious for wave-hopping over the Gulf of Mexico or cactus-dodging as they flew across the Mexican border - flying under the radar on their way to clandestine airstrips and deserted drop-zones. At the time, Columbian cartels dominated the drug business and Mexican criminal groups were essentially middlemen. As the war on drugs ramped up, US law enforcement responded with sophisticated radars able to detect the cocaine cowboys. Colombian cartels faded under pressure and Mexican middlemen developed their own cartels and began to produce and ship heroine, marijuana and methamphetamines. Although the smugglers and their techniques had changed, the southern border remained the primary route to import drugs.

Now drones, which are unaccompanied by the person operating them, seem like a successful way to smuggle. CPB headquarters recorded 170 reported incidents over the past five years, but the Border Patrols did not disclose how many drones had been recovered or seized, how many incidents resulted in arrests and convictions, the type and quantity of the drugs recovered, where the incidents took place, or what type of drones were involved.

"You just don't know what they're carrying in these things," said a spokesperson for the Drug Enforcement Administration. Using one kilo of Fentanyl as an example, when you do the math on that, your looking at between 200,000 and 500,000 people that one kilogram could overdose or kill. If something like that would fall through the sky in an urban area it would be a catastrophe."

It is obvious that there is a market for any kind of narcotic. Capitalists, whether they be legal or not, (and quite frankly, most capitalists are legal criminals), will take steps to sell their products in whatever market they can. As transportation is difficult, they will find a way of overcoming that problem, which they have proven over the years highly innovative. In a society where its members will feel no need for artificial stimulation such 'mood enhancing substance' pushers (*legal or otherwise*) would soon be out of business.

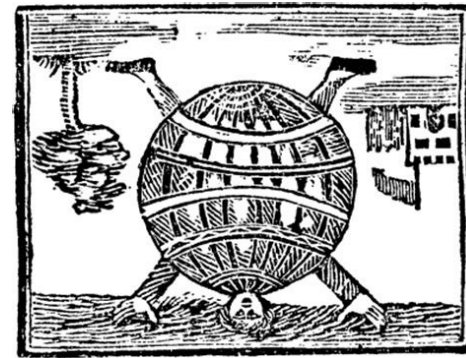


collective-will to throw off the yoke of social oppression. For contemporary Socialists, study of the history of such ideas is indispensable in educating our fellow wage slaves to dispatch the almost innumerable blind-alley ways of thinking for ones that chart a future for workers made in their own interests.

If readers can take as correct what Osborne Ward informs in his 1400 page work, *The Ancient Lowly: a history of the ancient working people from the earliest known period to the adoption of Christianity by*

Constantine (1888), the long march of working class development was neither a mystical social burst onto the contemporary scene, nor a scientifically, sober economic analysis that the oppressing class must go.

Resentful social feelings of deep grievance to throw off the yolk appears the norm rather than exception in the human condition, and the articulation of such gut-felt emotion has found numerous religious expressions in mutual-aid to the modern day: some good, most not.



Working peoples have been an unruly messy lot for oppressors to control, and with the adoption of Christianity in the 3rd century A.D. by the Roman state the world notes a confounding, dizzying, swirl of religious hocus-pocus to help confuse and blunt worker organization into a blind herd-obedience desirable to ruling interests.

Despite such a dismal state of woolly-headed thinking, history is punctuated with rebellions and revolt shedding light on elements of our own movement rising to socialist understanding grounded in a naturalist explanation of nature.

This odyssey towards freedom has more than a few notable uprisings instructive for any socialist to hunt up:

The Wat Tyler Rebellion (1381), arguably spurred by the descending sermons of the radical priest John Ball, overthrew the tyranny of the English parasites for several days. Most refer to the revolt as a peasants' rebellion.

The World Turned Upside Down

In this first of what we hope may form a series of freethinking articles on intentional communities we believe dedicating several pages to their exploration in each issue of *Imagine* useful for the interested reader. Awareness of their existence, past and present, may entertain while they educate the socialist educator, especially in the vein of inquiry: "What will Socialism look like when it happens?" In this spirit of free inquiry we invite criticism and contributions to bring improvement in stating our case, and in the process spur the movement to dispatch capitalism to the dustbin of history as speedily as possible.

In our first exploration we look at an intentional community rooted in Christian Socialism, the Bruderhof, parsing its limitations within the capitalist landscape while attempting to lend historical context to why such a community struggles forward to maintain vitality and grow.

A thumb-nail sketch of British radical-reform early middle-ages to c.19th

The development of Socialist thought is seemingly endless, and in the mix of revolutionary ideas of such thinkers as John Ball and Wat Tyler (c.1300s), Levellers and Diggers (c.1650s), to c.19th Utopian Socialists, noting shifts from generally held religious supernatural belief to monist-naturalism demonstrate a timeless



Levellers and Diggers of the 'Puritan Revolution' were on the dissenter fringe of this bourgeois revolution, rooting out England's aristocratic class from political dominance; the revolution was peppered with feral dreamers wanting the real-deal of a communist utopia. The Diggers characterized authentic Christian communism, digging up St. George's Hill to live without property or money on



what was left of the English common lands. Their example was too much for the merchant capitalist masters of Cromwell's ilk to bear, however, and their 5 year common-land utopia was smashed and burned to the ground. To this day the Levellers demands of abolition of monarchy, levelling of wealth and property 'upon grounds of common right, freedom and safety,' have yet to be met.

Allegories, such as Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress from This World, to That Which Is to Come* (1678) helped lay bare the religious hypocrisy of church married to state, exploiter begetting exploiter, foreshadowing later historical fiction and political polemics threatening what British conservatives perceived as a Jacobin copy-cat revolution of France, 1789.

Radical publishers during the late 18th century, such as Joseph Johnson, arguably galvanized direct lines of connection to 19th century revolutionary critical thinking through writers such as William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Erasmus Darwin, and the numerous other radical-reform thinkers. The radical-reform organization, London



Corresponding Society, for instance, quickly grew during this time threatening the Pitt Government to the point of arresting and trying its key members for seditious conspiracy and subsequently proscribing the whole of the society illegal. This period of history saw some 8 million acres of common-lands privatized by numerous acts of legislation over a 80 year period, transferring vast wealth to the bourgeoisie putting sheep on the land instead of people to supply the textiles mills with the wool they needed, driving untold thousands into the cities to find work.

Robert Owen's 19th century worker-centric textile factory community of New Lanark was admirably an improved model for worker prosperity, even if still under the dominant master-servant statute powering capitalist rule. Many of the innovative features of New Lanark laid basis for such things as Britain's Co-operative shops that exist today.



The generalization of socialist thinking impacted experiments alternative communities. In 19th century Britain, art-critic and Pre-Raphellite patron, John Ruskin, promoted improvement for worker experiences through the arts, crafts and rural economy, trying to severe growing dependence on capitalist tyranny over workers access to the necessities of life.

Ruskin's attempt to humanize runaway laissez-faire capitalism radicalized him as a vocal critic of c.19th society and its destructive impact on both working people and nature. Similar to Ruskin, William Morris furthered aims to improve workers' lives through a revival of traditional arts and crafts, keeping alive manufacture skill of the middle ages eroded by factory automation and division of labour.

The parasite mindset encroaching the commons for these centuries violates long standing norms of communal life; remnants of communal economy are found in current spaces where shared use occurs such as public parks, libraries, community centres and other public use facilities.



Guild of St George Ruskin Trust (1871)

Originating with the *me-first* ravings of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Regan, these shared spaces are being rapidly devoured through public private partnerships - the engine of for-profit, private sector ownership of public assets and services; made through cleverly arranged 'lease scheme contracts,' where-in 'constructive ownership' guarantees profit through under-writing against loss by the public purse paying. We live in an age witnessing the continuing erosion of communal ways of life and thinking – the dear wage slave paying again and again for the 'win-win only' for the swindling class and their dirty deeds . . .

A communal non-secular community today: the Bruderhof

In contrast to life in the swindle, examples of both non-secular and secular communal communities include such things as the Kibbutz and the urban Kibbutzim in Israel, monastic communities in Russia, both pre- and post-Soviet Russia, not to mention communities that developed in Great Britain after the second World War, particularly after the New Towns Act of 1946. The Fellowship for International Community recently listed more than 300 intended communities in the US, and thousands worldwide.



If we take as an instance of collectivized thought in the non-secular world, the Bruderhof Community originating in Germany is an continuous example of communal practice within the private property

adversarial conflicts of modern society. Bruderhof is a Christian-Communist community co-founded in 1920 by Eberhard Arnold, a German philosopher, theologian, and Christian socialist. The Bruderhof community was influenced by a number of non-secular ideals, including early Christian proto-belief, the Anabaptists, German Pietism, and the German Youth Movement, of the time. Arnold and the movement's Christian socialism was also greatly influenced by the work of Hermann Kutler, especially Kutler's text, *They Must*.

Capitalism's ultimate market arbiter, war, shaped Arnold's experiences as a Chaplain during World War 1, spurring his revulsion of the money-grubbing greed manifesting the conflict; Arnold was radicalized by his war experiences, demanding a new mode of social interaction – one based squarely in communist thought in

practical terms as an 'intentional community,' yet still retaining religious elements as a moral compass philosophically.

Like numerous capitalist dissenters of the age, Arnold echoes numerous socialist principles typically found more in scientific socialist thinking, encapsulated by such statements such as only by "... renouncing private property and living with others in harmony and love was the only answer to war and injustice."

Naturally, the rise of Nazi fascism and conditions giving rise to World War II clashed with such communistic thinking, ultimately driving the Bruderhof to leave Germany to relocate near the village of Ashton Keynes, England in 1936.

In the UK the Bruderhof quickly flourished attracting numerous British conscientious war objectors, drawn to the community's relative freedom from oppression of British state conscription.



While the contemporary the Bruderhof remains arms-length from the agitation of the world socialist movement to rid the globe of capitalism, its legacy remains a unique example of practical art, craft, and rural economy making community in small. Though they remain a viable intentional community today -- everything belongs to and is shared among the collective membership -- they unfortunately are compelled to run external businesses to maintain their basic needs, as well as to raise funds for their own outreach programs.

Like other communities of its kind, Bruderhof remains an anomaly of predominant capitalist production -- a beacon of sorts of non-secular life holding hope through values of plucky pacifism, social equality, sharing the community stock in common where no personal private property, wages, or exchange through money exists.

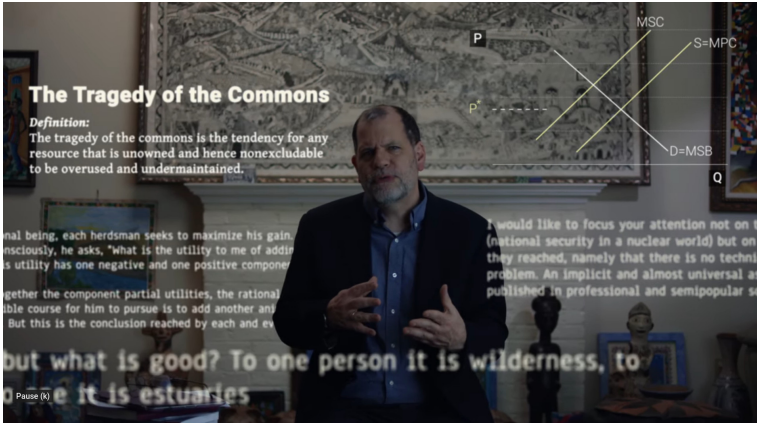
Such communities as Bruderhof stubbornly bucking the capitalist trend through their applied philosophies, stand as alternatives to the present day fragmentation, alienation and polarization characterized by capitalist society.

Indeed, alternative communities taken as a whole within our midst today show what social critic, Ollman, sums: "change is at hand and it's closer than capitalists would have us think!"

These types of communities defy the baseless thinking of “Tragedy of the Commons” arguing people cannot manage in common, and underscores the mutualist principle of nature driving all human evolution, thought, and society.

For examples of social mutualism in action see:

Tragedy of the Commons <https://youtu.be/BDEAgmklNyE>



Black Lives Loyalists

With Black Lives Matter gone global, many in Canada are now gaining an understanding about their own black heritage. Some are re-discovering a family history which makes a connection with what has been described as the largest slave rebellion in North America, when tens of thousands of ex-slaves defected to the British to gain their liberty during the American War of Independence. Those Black Loyalists who sided with the British against their former masters were promised “Freedom and a Farm.” Between 80,000 and 100,000 escaped slavery to seek sanctuary with the British. However, there were those who still remained enslaved and did not gain their freedom because they were the property of white Loyalists.

When defeat eventually came for the British, many loyalists, both white and black, were initially re-located to Nova Scotia. Almost half the Black Loyalists settled in what became known as Birchtown. At its peak, the town was the largest community of free blacks outside Africa. Birchtown, though, was most unsuitable for a settlement, surrounded by a large swamp and the

available farmland being mostly rocky barren soil. The best land, the most fertile farms had been allotted to the white Loyalists. The Black Loyalists who came to Nova Scotia were promised they would receive the same treatment as the white Loyalists and the 3,500 ex-slaves arrived in Nova Scotia with the dream of a place where they could live independently, on land they owned, free from prejudice. The British promised 100 acres of land for each head of household and an additional 50 acres for each family member, plus provisions. This was not the case and they were bitterly disappointed. The freed slaves thought they would have equal claim to free land. However, they soon discovered that the land grant system was corrupt. For sure, all the loyalist refugees had lost a great deal, but the ex-slaves had absolutely nothing to start with, lacking any savings to support themselves so they suffered most from the hardships.

In practice, the land granted to them were smaller and their provisions less generous. Given their former status as slaves, the white Loyalists proved unwilling to accept them as their equals, despite the great valour they had shown during the American war. The position of the Black Loyalists was compounded by the institution of slavery, which most white Loyalists condoned. Many of the Loyalist elite, including Edward Winslow, were slave owners. Whatever their qualities, people with black skin were regarded as social inferior to whites, and they were denied many of the privileges taken for granted by whites. They could not vote, they were forbidden from fishing in the St. John river, and sat separately in church. The Black Loyalists were left to work their land for nearly a decade with little or no livestock, guns or ammunition for hunting, nor lumber for housing, nor capital or credit for supplies. It is not surprising that the Black Loyalists felt that they were once more on the losing side.



Pedagogy of Oppression, 2016, Maurice Spira

They had risked everything for their freedom and equality and quickly realized that neither would be easily obtained. Some essentially returned to the bondage they had fled, selling themselves as indentured servants. Others became the source of cheap waged labour on the job market for the more prosperous. Invariably they were underpaid (the exception being the fishing industry) despite possessing skills and trades much in demand. This led to tensions with unemployed whites who were rivals for the same work. Many of the former slaves were forced to perform public works such as felling trees and clearing roads in order to receive rations.

In 1789, all of North America was in the grip of a serious famine. The winters had been bad ones for several years, and the settlers' dreams of establishing farms were dashed by poor land and a desperate scarcity of farming's necessities. Famine struck everybody, white and black alike. Those who could leave, left, but the ex-slaves, the choice was a brutal one: misery or death. They too relocated to other parts of Canada. Others of the ex-slave community had given up hope of fair treatment and were receptive to an opportunity to depart for a new promised land. Their chance arrived in the form of the Sierra Leone Company, eager to recruit for a new colony on the west coast of Africa. The Black Loyalists decided that an uncertain future was better than certain misery. Those who had profited from the exploitation of black workers now feared the consequences of their departure as it was expected that the migration of so many cheap workers to Sierra Leone adventure would cause a rise in the price of labour, resulting in the economic ruination of the farms, and the fall in sales for stores and merchants. Those who exploited the blacks had grown dependent on them and now with them leaving they had to face the prospect of bankruptcy. Landowners with share-croppers were especially dismayed. How could they ever cultivate such unpromising land without free labour?

Intent upon a new homeland, almost 1,200 Black Loyalists emigrated to Sierra Leone in 1792. But once more, the reality was a bitter disappointment. The new settlers arrived in Africa in 1787 and things quickly became unpleasant. Some sort of agreement for land had been made with the locals, but differing tribes and demands for tribute soon exhausted the settlers' patience and their supplies. The original food and livestock soon ran out, and in order to eat, tools were traded to the local tribes-people. By 1788 a rudimentary settlement named Granville Town had been established, but the situation was clearly grim. In 1789, the local Temne tribe attacked over a dispute over rent for the land. Granville Town was completely destroyed, and the settlers scattered either to be taken for a second time as slaves or they themselves became accomplices to the local slavers. Undaunted though, the Sierra Leone Company continued their

efforts. New investors were found, a royal charter granted, and fresh groups of distressed Black Loyalists were recruited to settle their colony. And so yet again another cycle of disillusionment and despair took place.

For all those slaves who had risked life and limb in a rebellion against their owners, finding themselves "free" meant only a change of master and becoming a wage-slave. Like so many immigrants, before and after, from Scotland, Ireland and elsewhere, the promise of Canada's prosperity and security proved elusive. AJ

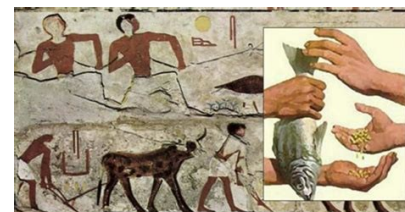
hoi polloi corner

I recently watched a short documentary on the three stooges comedy group. In the early days of their careers they had become quite popular on broadcast television. One might assume they had become wealthy as a result. Don't forget this is capitalism. Their masters would not divulge the rates to them in order to keep their pay as low as possible all the while raking in a fortune, they had no idea how popular they were. Capitalism is the real stooge maker here and will always rip off the working class.



During my years of being a wage slave I have experienced many attempts at wage theft, reduction, or squeezing more profit. One capitalist said to me "Normally I don't pay for training" as if he expected me to give up what little I had. My response "Normally I don't work for free". In another incident this same person did not want to pay me for helping his company's "charity" work, even though he was recording and going to sell the charity event on video. This sort of attack on wages happens regardless of how large or small a capitalist institution is. Time to end capitalism and the way it enslaves us.

Currency as a concept was proposed by its cheerleaders to be something that created "fair trade." Strange how aboriginal peoples lived just fine without it for thousands of years before European capitalists invaded. Currency



was originally created from earth metals that defined its value, from its rarity to how much human labor it took to find, dig up and purify. Eventually capitalism invented the brilliant idea of a currency that only had its value printed on it and not backed by anything real, which evolved into existing as numbers on a computer. Currency will always devalue, hence why the Canadian government stopped production of the penny. It's time for the working class to stop laboring for something that is more worthless every year and use our real value, human labor, to create a socialist society.

Recently watching a documentary on retirement in the United States, it compared the golden years with a three legged stool. First leg is the government assistance/pension. A system that does not keep up with inflation and gets even less value the more people retire, not to mention any cuts made by politicians trying to squeeze money from anywhere except the rich.



Second is a pension from employment. Good luck with that, it took this writer almost 30 years to find employment with some kind of pension plan. I may be

able to retire when I'm ninety. In the documentary a couple in their sixties were looking for work after being "let go". They couldn't even sell their once valuable home for retirement money since the stock market crashed and cut its value by more than half.

The third leg of retirement is the stock market, also known as the capitalist gambling circus. One lady had her group pension plan slashed by 90 million dollars after the economic crash of 2008. She makes twenty-three thousand a year as a musician and her body is wearing out from the strain. Retirement is a distant hope at best.

Capitalism does not care how long you worked for it, if you are no longer profitable you will be discarded and replaced like a piece of rental equipment. The only stool one could compare capitalism with is the smelly kind, let's dispose of it shall we.

HOW TO GET EVERYTHING FOR FREE

The time has come in the history of our species when it can get everything it wants for free. Yes, you heard me right, *for free!*

Technology has evolved to the point where there is no reason why food, clothes, housing, medical care, education, transportation, computers, books, CDs, digital connections, etc., cannot be freely available to all human beings on the planet. It is time for such a change. And we are urging our fellow humans to organize to bring about this new world, which is no pipe dream, but a logical outcome of our technological progress as well as our desire to live a fuller, freer, life.

Many of us are used to campaigning for, or at least voting for, different politicians to run our political and economic affairs for us. We find that our lives do not change at all after each election. Leaders often do represent differences in how much money should be spent on the military, on the environment, on education, and the like, but when we get right down to the nitty gritty we find our lives are fundamentally the same no matter who we vote for. We still have to work hard (some of us in more than one job) to raise enough money for our families and ourselves. Our lives are still ruled by the alarm clock, traffic congestion, budgeting, saving, praying for an economic miracle when we spend more than we earn, and by the stress that our working lives produce for us. Ever wondered why our lives are so similar no matter the outcome of the elections? The reason is that the market system itself, based on buying and selling, operates by its own laws. So when politicians say they are going to reform it for the better, they are not telling the truth. There is nothing they can do to stop recessions, or to significantly improve the value of our wage or salary, or to meaningfully reduce the prices of the things we need to live. In other words, the economy controls them – just the way it controls us.

You see, the companies that produce all the things we require must compete to save as much in production and to make as much from the sale as they can. The value of the things they produce is roughly determined by the amount of labour it took to make the things, including the costs of feeding and housing the employees (wages), of the rent, of the electricity, and other miscellaneous expenses. The value of our wage or salary is also determined by roughly the values of the educational and other living needs we possess that allow us to work five days a week for our employers. That can't be changed much. Our unions can work for small increments here and there, yes, but they can't work for, say, five times the value of our wages and what we would really like to earn to buy all the things that would make our lives fuller and less stressful.

It would therefore be true to say that money itself prevents us from having what we need. There is no technological reason we cannot have all the food and clothes and other important things we need to live *absolutely for free* – if the whole community owned the farms, food plants, clothing factories, and all other workplaces where wealth is produced. The only reason money exists is so that the owners of these places of work can generate profit to live off, the value above our wages and all other production costs from the revenue obtained from sale.

Although our culture likes to think of itself as possessing many classes (e.g., the middle class), that is really a lot of nonsense. There is only the class of people living off rent, interest and profit, and the class (most of us) who lives by working for wages or salaries (a fancy word for wages that are paid once or twice a month instead of every week). So the wealth accrues to the population in only those two ways, the vast majority of us only earning wages or salaries. While there are always failing businesses whose owners fall into the work class, the capital class tends to make the most money, while the

work class tends to make the least. That is always how it is going to be, as long as money exists. No politician can do a thing about that. Even in the countries our media incorrectly call “socialist” or “communist” like the old USSR, or England under the Labour government, or China or Cuba today, the laws of value still apply. Most people in those countries are work people who are paid wages that they must budget all their living expenses out of, while a small clique lives abundantly. Although, theoretically, one can become President, the Prime Minister, or some other fancy name for Head of State, even a Manager or Chief Executive Officer for some giant multi-national, living off high salaries and million-dollar bonuses, we all know the chances of *that* happening!



The truth is that real socialism or communism has never existed. It means a society in which the means of producing wealth are owned “socially” or “in common.” Obviously if the state owns the railroad that does not mean all the people do, unless they get to ride it for nothing. The government owns the

Post Office in the United States but you still have to pay for stamps, don't you? Government ownership in countries such as ours merely means that the capital class decided that there were industries that they could all benefit from, or share the expenses for as a class, like the post office, most roads, state hospitals or the military. But in countries like China where the government owns most of the industries, there is a whole class of bureaucrats who lives off the hog of the land, just like here.

Our revolutionary movement – one of Ideas, not Violence – consists of working people from around the world who feel that the time is ripe for us *as a species* to finally own the means of producing wealth collectively. In such a society we would no longer need money. Everything really would be free, but that obviously doesn't mean it

would work if we were all hoarding ten times more than we needed. But we believe that hoarding behavior is more likely to occur in an economy of scarcity rather than one of abundance. For example, in today's American economy, most of us can afford basic foodstuffs like bread, so we don't store 600 loaves at a time in our freezer, do we? That is because we know we can always get more in the supermarket.

Real socialism or communism or anarchism will be like that. Knowing that we can get what we need for nothing, we will hoard much less (if anything) than we do even now in our cluttered homes, where today we keep every piece of rubbish we've bought in case we need it again and would have to pay dear money for it a second time! When wealth is held in common, we believe that without the impediment of financial cost limiting efficiency and progress, our society will be able to recycle at an almost 100% capacity. Greenbacks prevent us from having a truly green society. The beautiful visions of ecologists remain pure pipe dreams as long as we inhabit a world in which the economy commodifies nature and in which the most idealistic reforms are going to cost money. The class-based money economy remains the true obstacle to all other technological and social advances that we could have today – to create a society of peace, abundance and ecological balance.

A planet-wide society based on private or state property must inevitably be divided into nations. Thus we have war, terrorism, starvation, child labour, ecological devastation, racism, sexism, shoddy goods or waste through planned obsolescence that the market requires companies to produce for their economic survival – and totally useless industries that squander our planet's resources while not producing anything, such as those industries that revolve around advertising, selling, buying, banking, ticketing, investing, brokering, insuring, militarizing, policing, governing, managing. Think of the millions of wasted buildings, or the vast supply of wasted



energy, resources and human lives that are entailed in these useless occupations – useless from the point of view of producing wealth; although, of course, the market system requires them, and that is one reason it is so wasteful. When we own the means of producing wealth as a community, we won't need those industries anymore

because goods and services will be free. So we will require far less resources and energy than we do now to produce much, much, more. We will probably only need to work about a day or two at most per week to produce a lot more wealth and get everything we need.

But since we are not a lazy species (except when forced to work or do anything else), we will probably choose to work more (though there will be no law saying we have to, since without property even law itself will be redundant). We will probably want to spend the remaining five days of the week in athletic, creative, intellectual, social, sexual, scientific or other pursuits, depending on our talents and interests.

Imagine actually being happy and secure in our world. We have the technology to liberate our lives, yet we find ourselves working many more hours each day for our masters than the feudal peasants did to support theirs. Our amazing technology is rapidly developing into the future, yet our social organization based on working people and employers, buying and selling, money, and nation-states, is from the primitive past and is still around today, holding us back! Capital society is only a few hundred years old. Before that, most of humanity lived in feudal societies with kings and queens, in slave-based economies, or in tribal systems (some of which did possess relatively communistic organizations, but they could not prevent the advance of capital society and the turning of their common land into a vast commodity or into production sites for other commodities). And while capital society helped to abolish feudal privilege and slavery, and to usher in our scientific progress, it also

caused destruction on an unimaginable scale. Why, in the last century alone, hundreds of millions of lives were lost to war and starvation, and that doesn't even count the billions who were either unemployed or employed in totally useless occupations, or living in squalor.

It is now time for homo sapiens to harness our technological progress and use it for the common good. Do you think we are going to achieve critical social,



spiritual and technological advancements in a society based on wage-labour, or in which we do not produce important inventions or innovations because they are too expensive, like we do today in our society of strife and want? If we did bring about a society of common ownership, we could abolish world hunger in months, poverty in weeks, and war immediately. We could organize our society democratically to produce all the goods and services we need, producing to meet needs rather than for sale. Using our computer technology to record needs and the use of world resources, we could live in a society without poverty of any kind and with relatively less stress (the psychologists tell us we function at our best with moderate stress; presumably not the extreme stress our lives in capitalism produce, which has created the entire mental health industry in the first place!). With employment abolished, we could spend more time in stimulating activities that will feed rather than starve the human spirit. When the health of our ecosystem returns, and the quality of our food improves, when we live more in harmony with our planet and with ourselves, will our mental and spiritual health not also greatly blossom? These revolutionary ideas have been around for the last 150 years or so, and they have been growing slowly but surely, largely in the industrialized areas of the world. Most recently, this understanding has

been healthily spreading in Russia, India and in many countries in Africa. More and more humans are awakening to the promise of a world that can truly be called theirs. They are awakening to their own power, and they are demanding the world for themselves. This is the unfulfilled religious dream of a "brotherhood of man" (and of woman!) that we believe can only be realized by political organization, rather than by prayer. Many scientific ideas have taken entire generations, even

millennia, to be accepted, such as the idea that we are not at the center of our solar system. We do not know when our ideas of liberation from the market system will begin to spread like wildfire across the lands. But we believe that the experience of our lives forges our ideas, and that the more people live in this violent and unsatisfactory social world, the more these revolutionary ideas will be accepted as common sense and be seized upon. We invite you to consider them carefully, not as followers but as fellow citizens. And when you are ready, we invite you to join us. Change occurs as quickly as an idea travels. Speed the day!

– Dr Who

Proclamation: Burn The Churches

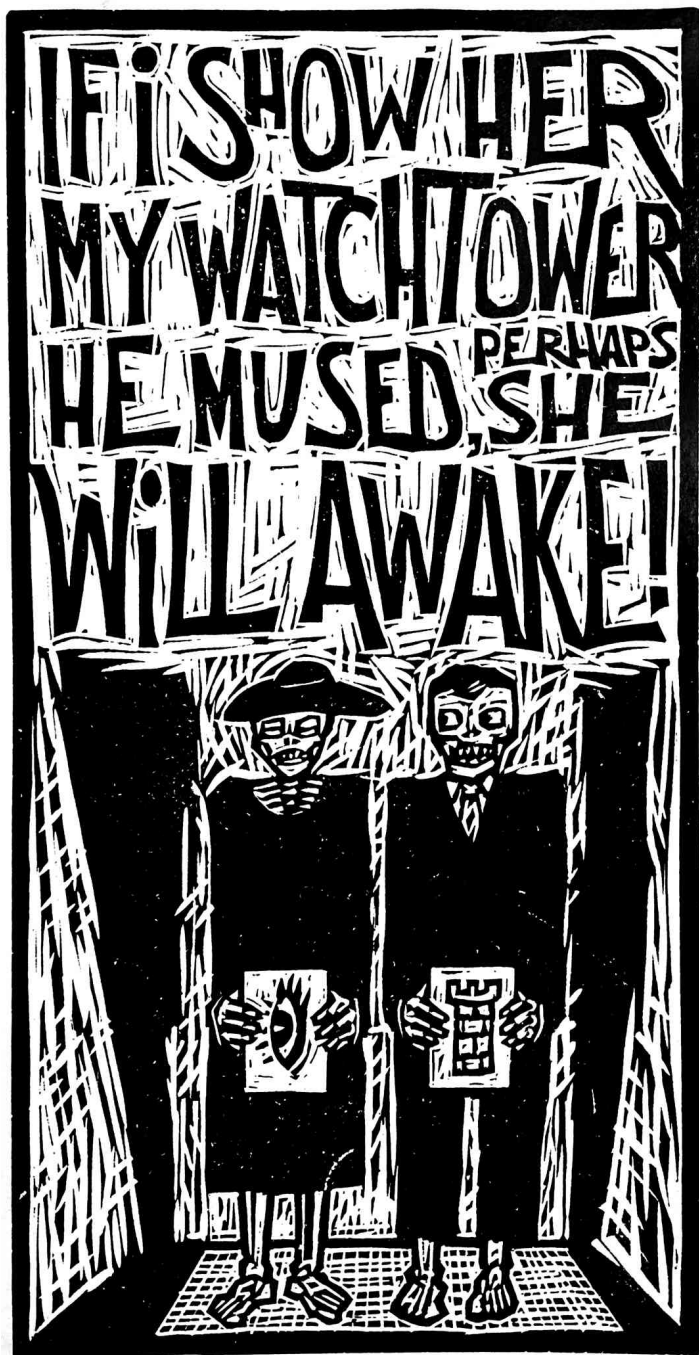
Burn the churches in your mind,
Hold them up to shame
For making man fall on his knees
And plead to take the blame.

They tell not history like it is,
How rich exploit the poor;
And god supports the men who kill
So they can bar the door.

Before they ruled, and taught the lie
That man is like a beast;
Hand-in-hand we walked the land
And fed our kin in peace.

Burn down the churches of the mind,
 Ignite the fires of shame;
 Kill not thy kin, exploit no man,
 Be halt to help the lame.

Let not religion foul thy mind;
 See thou our goodness. Be not blind.
 As others give, return in kind.



M. Spira "If I Show Her" 1990

Editorial Notation: This piece of doggerel has survived solely due to the furor it created, as well as six religious assassinations associated with it, when it was

flashed electronically in the last days of the peoples' internet as a block message against the organized religions and mass media which were attempting to take control of the newly-developed commercial communications system when it had just become world-wide. Bothrell in his treatise on "20th Century Investigations Into Religious-Secular Conflict" code 10, sub 3, pub 2063, relates how a contemporary collected over fifteen versions typeset by the author to include all religions and not just the christians, indicated by "churches" in the first version; they were sent to over 2,000 christian sects we are led to believe. Some of the other title versions he records are:

Burn the mosques within your mind
 Burn the temple in your mind
 Burn the synagogue in your mind
 Burn the shrine within your mind, etc.

It must be remembered it was not until early in the 21st christian century, with the ecological collapse of the oceans, that the real battle was provoked between the metaphysicians and the materialists – the metaphysicians representing the negative religious view that mankind was sinful and intrinsically-evil against the rational positive thesis of the materialists who, rightly, maintained that man was essentially a coöperative non-aggressive species, communal and playful in nature. The author was particularly hated by the religious right in the Confederated American States of the time for his republication of a hated rationalist text, "The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors" by Kersey Graves, published in 1875, over a century before, which documented the logical non-existence of the jesus christ the christians were worshipping.

1997 Trevor Goodger-Hill

From "Prickly Poems of the Past: Some 20th Century Squibs", published MM A.D, 24-page booklet form for Citizens of the World by iWi Coöperative. iwi@ivic.qc.ca
 -- copies without charge available on request.

Some introductory thoughts...

The dna of homo sapiens traces the path through the evolution of sentient life, and indicates our close relationship to other mammals, such as primates and pigs. Like lemmings, or some other plants or insects, humankind has over-bred his range, the planet earth. In his early days as he crawled out of his caves, ignorantly

facing a world as little understood as a dog does thunder, he turned to others of his kind – those he saw as more powerful and knowing – as a child does to parents, and begged to be protected and saved from his fears. Thus the concept of god was created, and we became a slave of our beliefs out of fear and ignorance. To liberate oneself from one's beliefs, one's misconceptions, contributes to the continuing evolution of the tissue of human knowledge. To reject the concept of god, inflicted upon us by our past, permits us to accept that we are just mammals and we can thus accept the responsibility of forging our own future, our destiny – and the existence other species less conscious of time.

tgh

Religion: Blessing or Curse?

by Kenneth Lynch

"Religion" means different things to different people. I take it here to mean a belief in any sort of supernatural power(s) that humans are obliged to worship or obey. In that sense, religions range from vague and gaseous forms of pantheism to the astonishing arrogance of theistic creeds. All are silly; some are vile. Taken as a whole, religion is logically incoherent, is devoid of factual support, and a constant stumbling block to human unity and progress. We would do well to abandon it.

Some of our greatest minds have wasted untold time in a vain attempt to prove the logical necessity of a 'supreme being', yet over thousands of years not one has managed to clear even the first hurdle of infinite regress.



Yet the problem is very simple. If all things extant necessarily require a creator, then god (under whatever alias) must also require a creator, and so on infinitely. There is clearly no place to cut the chain that is not absolutely arbitrary. The usual religious dodge is to simply assert that god exists without need of a creator, having always existed, or to leave god's origin as an ultimate mystery. However, it does not require an especially brilliant logician to observe that if one allows that god can 'just be', then it follows that the universe itself could also 'just be', thus rendering the god concept an unnecessary complication that adds nothing. Likewise, if the ultimate origin of god can be accepted as a mystery beyond our ability to understand or explain, then the ultimate origin of the universe should hardly require cause or explanation either. More simply, it is a matter of fact that primal origins are beyond our current ability to explain completely. However, in probing these mysteries, religion rejects testable theories in favour of untestable dogma, and replaces the simply unknown with the utterly unknowable. Religious 'logic' is nonsense on stilts.

Along with the logical difficulties inherent in any religious theory, there are also practical considerations: namely, are the things it claims to be true in fact true? When it comes to reliable evidence for religion, the problem is that there is none. Indeed, it is a wildly underappreciated fact that there is no clear and convincing evidence for supernatural activity of any kind. Anecdotes abound, but there has never been a repeatable demonstration of even the mildest sort of alleged supernatural phenomenon, and there surely has been no lack of investigation. When religions confine themselves to what their god desires which, it must be said, seems remarkably often to be more money for its messengers, science has little to add. But when religions make claims about the real world, those claims can be tested. When not utterly fatuous, such claims have invariably been found false. This hardly inspires confidence. Since religion is necessarily a belief in the supernatural, and the existence of any sort of supernatural phenomenon is highly improbable, it is reasonable to conclude that religious belief has no basis in reality. In fact, religious belief is quite often directly contradicted by reality. In plain language – religion is a pipe-dream.

Although religion is unsupported by fact or logic, we might dismiss it as a harmless phantasy, something like the tooth fairy, were it not that religion continues in so many ways and in so many places to thwart human progress. Religion is a cultural artefact that belongs to our dim and distant past and, once possibly useful, is now, like our taste for salt

and fat, extremely maladaptive. Human unity is unarguably the most pressing need of our time. The problems that confront humanity on a global scale are, without exception, the direct result of our woeful inability to cooperate in a meaningful way toward the achievement of common goals. Yet, across the world, religions cause division and discord where harmony is so sorely needed. It is a great shame, but a fact proven every day, that people will gleefully kill one another over differences that are as insubstantial as the wind. Surely, in such a situation, any system of thought that enhances differences and deepens divisions among human beings must be regarded as evil and repugnant. Religion fits the bill.

Neither are the most egregious evils the only way in which religion works its mischief. Even the majority of religionists deplore such obvious faith-based horrors as sectarian killings and suicide bombings. But the more subtle consequences of modern people holding fast to the outmoded mores of tiny desert tribes are no less pernicious. When we see children streaming into an already over-populated world without the resources to support them, we should thank religious objections to family planning. (It is an interesting commentary on the literally incredible beliefs of religionists that they often hold their god to be the supreme power of the universe, omniscient and omnipotent, and yet his divine will can easily be thwarted by a few microns of latex or milligrams of hormones.) The wonder of stem-cells remain unrevealed and their potential for healing untapped because of religious concerns for the 'soul', an entity never demonstrated to exist in any adult human, of an undifferentiated mass of protoplasm quivering in a petri dish.

Religions condone and enforce the subjugation of women around the world. Religions relentlessly persecute people for doing things that harm no one and offend no one and nothing except an archaic code of conduct. Many religions encourage a lack of concern for this fragile world, the only one any of us shall know, and a preoccupation with a mythical world to come, which no one has seen or will see. And it is demonstrated with numbing regularity that religions serve as ready-made vehicles for con-artists and madmen of every stripe, from Oral Roberts to Osama bin Laden, from Uganda to Jonestown. It is high time for humans to align their concepts of

morality with factual reality. The current situation is untenable.

Emerson had it quite right when he wrote, "As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are the creeds a disease of the intellect." There is no good reason to embrace, and every reason to shun religion as a force in human affairs. It is long past time to consign religion to the ash heap of history.

The People

Tommaso Campanella (1568 – 1639)

The people is a beast of muddy brain,
That knows not its own force, and therefore stands
Loaded with wood and stone; the powerless hands
Of a mere child guide it with bit and rein:

One kick would be enough to break the chain;
But the beast fears, and what the child demands
It does; nor its own terror understands,
Confused and stupefied by bugbears vain.

Most wonderful! With its own hand it ties
And gags itself – gives itself death and war
For pence doled out by kings from its own store.

Its own are all things between earth and heaven;
But this it knows not; and if one arise
To tell the truth, it kills him unforgiven.



The Dominance of Gravity, 2001, M. Spira

“The People” is a classic poem written hundreds of years ago around the time of Shakespeare, when feudalism and the homocentric view of the world were breaking down. Even then, there was a cry against the economic evils of the powerful as they kill to suppress the truth. In this regard the transformation of one economic system into another – feudalism into capitalism – has changed nothing. Both are constructed under the concept of a hierarchical structure of society and the use of the state on behalf of the owning class to control those they dispossess. It is fascinating that the poet uses as metaphor the tools of his production and transport to express his slavery and suppression. The poem is truly an amazing and universal cry for justice.

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Socialist Party of Canada

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Canada holds:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
7. That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.