

# World Socialist Review

25¢

vol. 1 no. 3

SUMMER 1987



a voice of world socialism

## IS THERE WORK AFTER CAPITALISM?

Under capitalism work is necessarily drudgery; and, though the production of commodities (on which capitalism is based) is not drudgery in itself, even the most gratifyingly direct forms of commodity production--that done by artisans, for example--rest on what is at the very least an emotionally repressive basis. A commodity is made to be exchanged: that is its purpose. Work as a human phenomenon, on the other hand, is carried out solely to satisfy human needs, and because people must work together to accomplish this, work is an inherently collective phenomenon as well.

A human community works to satisfy its needs, and that is what the genes and instincts of human beings are programmed to render gratifying about work. Consequently, we can consider only those labor processes which satisfy this condition as "gratifying." And obviously, the labor required to produce commodities does *not* satisfy it, since it is labor done not directly for purposes of satisfaction but indirectly, for purposes of *exchange*. Just because work is organized into complex production processes does not therefore make it "toil." And just because it is simple and psychologically stimulating is not enough to make it gratifying.

When capitalism, late in the period of commodity production, arrives on the scene and revolutionizes the production process from top to bottom, "socializing" it, pushing artisan labor to scattered points on its periphery, work has already been steeping in the brine of drudgery for several millennia. The universalization of wage labor (including its refinement, the professional salary) enforced by capital means the locking of the prison door for the "free laborers", the "working poor," who have been literally whipped, beaten and badgered into the condition of having no longer any commodities to exchange on the market (long since taken over by the capitalist class). All they have left is their ability to do work; and all the work they can find to do centers on profit.

Work done under such unnatural conditions

cannot but be unpleasant. The worker has no control over any aspect of it, and industrial production in particular is a brutalizing torture. Not only that, but labor performed for the sake of profit itself becomes capital accumulated out of profit, causing the capital to grow in magnitude relative to the workers whose labor generates it.

The accumulation of capital, for its part, becomes a source of ever greater complexity in the production process, pushing workers further and further away from any ability to control the "world of work" in which they are trapped. To human beings it has every aspect of a process operating independently of human intelligence and defying society's best efforts to control it.

But (as the song goes), is that all there is? Supposing no one works for anyone else anymore and no one is forced to find a job to get the money to obtain the things they need: will society still be stuck with the kind of inhuman labor processes it has inherited from commodity production? The answer is quite simply, no.

The commodity, implying as it does the setting aside of wealth from the consumption needs of the community, contains the germ of discontent in its very being. Abandoning wage labor means eliminating commodity production: regaining control over wealth production. It also means deciding what kind of organized, coordinated efforts people will be prepared to make for the sake of obtaining satisfaction, and on what scale they will be willing to carry this out. But having done that, they will have created a society that runs on labor processes which are voluntary in nature and in which labor is no longer a chore--a socialist society.

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## Of Contras, Pros... and Socialists

From the inordinate amount of attention being given to the Reagan Administration's double-dealing in the two affairs of arms to Iran and the diversion of funds to the *contras*, you would think something really big was happening in US capitalism these days. For Irangate/contragate has become a major media event.

Despite the apparent ferocity of the clashes currently taking place between rival political factions within the capitalist class, from one angle they are actually beneficial to the capitalist class as a whole: they obscure from view the more basic scandal of the division of the world into political entities or nation-states; they deflect attention from the more insidious ongoing misappropriation constituted by the monopoly of the capitalist class of the means and instruments of wealth production.

Media-generated concern over the poor little Reagan Administration's predicament masks (or perpetuates) the working majority's confused identification of its interests with those of the "top ten" per cent of the population making up the owning class. And--every bit as much as the more flamboyant histrionics of *Dallas* or of *Dynasty*--this fondling of the rich and the powerful belies a pernicious cult of personality on the part of the media around the world (and one by no means limited to Russia and China).

The World Socialist Movement, for its part, does not find much of an issue in all of the hoopla. Its one and only reason for existence is to disseminate information relating to the functioning and

foundations of capitalist society as well as to sow the seeds of socialism. The crises that shake our planet and even threaten the viability of life on it do not spring from the actions of conniving, dishonest politicians--though these latter certainly may help to trigger catastrophes.

The real problem is rather the continuation of the system of producing goods and services for sale on the market (ie, commodities) with a view to profit. The real solution is a socialist organization of society, the introduction of a worldwide society based on production for use.

So while we as socialists may derive some enjoyment from watching the capitalist class being forced to do its dirty laundry on TV (there is after all no reason why its own propaganda can't occasionally degenerate into farce), we ought not to imitate the reformists and ignore the real issue that we never find presented in the media: the urgency of common ownership.

Short of that, all that is really possible is the replacement of one governing party or regime by another. Socialism, or common ownership of the means of production, will on the contrary only come about through the conscious action of the working class around the world, aimed at replacing the entire system of exploitation, and it is only in helping to bring this about that socialists can ever hope to distinguish themselves from both the witting and the unwitting supporters of capitalism.

--Editorial Committee, WSP (US)

### A Socialist Lexicon

**COMMODITY:** Anything produced for sale on the market with a view to profit. It is not itself a thing, but a thing expressing a definite social relationship.

**VALUE:** A concept of measurement needed in a society based on the production and exchange of commodities. *It is a social relationship.* (It is a mistake to think that under socialism the worker will get the full value of her/his toil since, in a socialist society, there can be no such concept as *value*, given that goods and services will not be produced for exchange on a market.)

**EXCHANGE VALUE:** The proportion in which one commodity is exchanged for another. It is not a synonym for value, given that it refers to tangible items

rather than to a social relationship as such.

**USE VALUE:** Intrinsic utility of an item. Use values exist in all societies. Value and exchange value won't exist under socialism.

**LABOR POWER:** The mental and physical abilities workers possess.

**LABOR:** The use value that the employers of labor power derive from the exercise of that labor power by the workers. Workers cannot "sell" their labor because it belongs to the capitalist as a consequence of the sale of their labor power (see below).

**WAGES:** The price that employers of labor pay for the workers' labor power. On the average, wages represent the cost of producing and reproducing the various types of labor power (skills or non-skills).

#### SOCIALLY NECESSARY LABOR

**TIME:** "The labor time required to produce an article under the normal conditions of production, and with the average degree of skill and intensity prevalent at the time." (1)

**CAPITAL:** Wealth used to produce more wealth with a view to profit through the exploitation of labor. A *capitalist* is any individual or group of individuals who make their living from the accumulation of capital. "...Capital is the means of production transformed into capital. [But] in themselves, these means of production are as little capital as gold and silver are in themselves money." (2)

(1) Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1.

(2) *Capital*, Vol. 3, Ch. 44.

## No Shmoos Is Good Shmoos

Al Capp, the cartoonist, told a story about a creature called the shmoo, which was ten inches high, something like a pear in shape and creamy-white in color. It had no arms, tiny feet and big whiskers under its nose. The shmoo had only one desire: to serve the needs of human beings, and it was well equipped to do so. Its skin could be made into any kind of fabric, its flesh was edible, its dead body could go brick-hard and be used for building, and its whiskers had more uses than you can imagine. If you looked at a shmoo with hunger in your eye, it dropped dead in rapture because you wanted it, after first cooking itself into your favorite flavor. Since they multiplied rapidly, there were plenty of shmoos for everybody.

But the capitalists hated the shmoos, for the shmoos provided everything people needed; nobody had to work for capitalists anymore, because nobody had to make the wages to buy the things capitalists sold. And so, as the shmoos spread across the face of America, the capitalists began to lose their power. So they took drastic action. They got the government to tell the people that the shmoo was un-American. It was causing chaos, undermining the social order. The President ordered the FBI to gather the shmoos and gun them down. Then things went back to normal. But a country lad, called Li'l Abner, managed to save one female and one male shmoo. He carried them off to a distant valley, where he hoped they'd be safe. "Folks aint yet ready for the shmoo," Li'l Abner sighed. But Li'l Abner was wrong. Folks were ready for the shmoo. It was the capitalists that weren't. The shmoo spoiled their monopoly over the means of existence.

Some capitalists defend their ownership of the resources we need for survival by saying that they got them through their own talent and effort. But everything the capitalist now owns either is or is made of something which once nobody's private property. With what right did anyone transform it into private property in the first place?

Never mind the doubtful origin, capitalists may say. Whatever started capitalism off, the system benefits people, for the following reasons. Capitalist firms survive only if they make money, and they make money only if they prevail in competition against other firms. This means that they have to be efficient. If they produce incompetently, they go under. They have to seize every opportunity to improve their productive facilities and techniques, so that they can produce cheaply enough to make enough money to go on. They don't aim to satisfy people, but they can't get what they are aiming at, which is money, unless they do satisfy people, and better than rival firms do.

Well, improved productivity means more output for every unit of labor, and that means that you can do two different things when productivity goes up. One way of using enhanced productivity is to

reduce work and extend leisure, while producing the same output as before. Alternatively, output may be increased while labor stays the same. Let's grant that more output is a good thing. But it's also true that for most people what they have to do to earn a living isn't a source of joy. Most people's jobs are such that they'd benefit not only from more goods and services but also from shorter hours and longer holidays.

Improved productivity makes possible either more output or less toil, or, or course, a mixture of both. But capitalism is biased in favor of the first option, increased output, since the other, toil reduction, threatens a sacrifice of the profit associated with greater output and sales. When the efficiency of a firm's production improves, it doesn't reduce the working day of its employees and produce the same amount as before. Instead, it makes more of the goods it was already making, or, if that isn't possible, because the demand for what it's selling won't expand, then it lays off part of its workforce and seeks a new line of production in which to invest the money it thereby saves. Eventually, new jobs are created, and output continues to expand, although there's a lot of unemployment and suffering along the way.

Now, the consequence of the increasing output which capitalism favors is increasing consumption. And so we get an endless chase after consumer goods, just because capitalist firms are geared to making money, and not to serving consumption itself.

I'm not knocking consumer goods. Consumer goods are fine. But the trouble with the chase after goods in a capitalist society is that we'll always, most of us, want more goods than we can get, since the capitalist system operates to ensure that people's desire for goods is never satisfied.

Capitalism is supposed to be good at satisfying our needs as consumers. But people have needs which go beyond the need to consume. One of those needs is a person's need to develop and exercise his or her talents. When people's capacities lie unused, they don't enjoy the zest for life which comes when their faculties flourish.

Now, people are able to develop themselves only when they get a good education. But, in a capitalist society, the education is threatened by those who seek to fit education to the narrow demands of the labor market. And some of them think that what's now needed to restore profitability to an ailing British capitalism is a lot of cheap, unskilled labor, and they conclude that education should be restricted so that it will supply that labor.

The present Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, said in a speech a couple of years ago that we should now think about training people for jobs which are, as he put it, "not so much low-tech as no-tech." What sort of education is

contemplated in that zippy statement? Not one that nourishes the creative powers of young people and brings forth their full capacity. Nigel Lawson thinks it's dangerous to educate the young too much, because then we produce cultivated people who are unsuited to the low-grade jobs the market will offer them. An official at the Department of Education and Science recently said something similar. He said: "We are beginning to create aspirations which society cannot match...When young people...can't find work which meets their abilities and expectations, then we are only creating frustration with...disturbing social consequences. We have to ration...educational opportunities so that society can cope with the output of education...People must be educated once more to know their place."

What we've got here is a policy of deliberately restricting educational provision so that state schools can produce willing sellers of low-grade labor power. It's hard to imagine a more undemocratic approach to education. And notice that to prefer a *democratic* distribution of educational opportunity you don't have to believe that everyone is just as clever as everyone else: Nigel Lawson isn't saying that most people are too dim to benefit from a high level of education. It's precisely because people respond well to education that the problem which worries him arises.

There's a lot of talent in almost every human being, but in most people it remains undeveloped, since they don't have the freedom to develop it. Throughout history only a leisured minority have enjoyed such freedom, on the backs of the toiling majority. Now, though, we have a superb technology which could be used to restrict unwanted labor to a modest place in life. But capitalism doesn't use that technology in a liberating way. It continues to imprison people in unfulfilling work, and it shrinks from providing the enriching education which the technology it has created makes possible.

Is it possible to create a society which goes beyond the unequal treatment that capitalism imposes? Many would say that the idea of such a society is an idle dream. They'd say that there's always been inequality of one kind or another and there always will be. But I think that reading of history is too pessimistic.

There's actually much less inequality now than there was, say, 100 years ago. Then, only a few radicals proposed that everyone should have the vote. Others thought that was a dangerous idea, and most would have considered it to be an unrealistic one. Yet today we have the vote. We are a political democracy. But we're not an economic democracy. We don't share our material resources, and most people in this country would regard that as an unrealistic idea. Yet I think it's an idea whose time will come. Society won't always be divided into those who control its resources and those who have only their own labor to sell. But it'll take a lot of thought to work out the design of a democratic economic order, and it'll take a lot of struggle, against privilege and power, to bring it about. The obstacles to economic democracy are considerable. But just as no one, now, would defend slavery, I believe that a day will come when no one will be able to defend a form of society in which a minority profit from the possession of the majority.

-- G. A. Cohen, Chichele Professor of Social and Political Theory at Oxford University  
(G.A. Cohen presented "Against Capitalism," from which the above extracts are taken, in the "Opinions" programs examining capitalism made for Channel 4 by Panoptic Productions.)

Ed. Note: The above article appeared in The Listener (Great Britain) for September 4, 1986. We thought it took an interesting approach to a subject that merits everyone's attention: world socialism. Let us hear any of your comments.

## THE WORLD SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

The following parties adhere to the same Object and Declaration of Principles (see page six):

WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

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PO Box 8279, Stirling Street, Perth, W. Australia  
PO Box 2291, Sydney, NSW  
PO Box 1357, Brisbane, Queensland

AUSTRIA: BUND DEMOKRATISCHER SOZIALISTEN  
SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

Gussriegelstrasse 50, A-1100 Vienna  
PO Box 4280 Station A, Victoria, BC V8X 3X8  
CP 244, Pointe-aux-Trembles, Québec H1B 5K3

WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY (IRELAND)  
SOCIALIST PARTY OF NEW ZEALAND

41 Donegall Street, Belfast  
PO Box 1929, Auckland, NI

WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES  
SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

PO Box 405, Boston, MA 02272  
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The *Discussion Bulletin*, published by the Discussion Bulletin Committee in Grand Rapids, Michigan, consists largely of letters and articles contributed by various representatives of DeLeonist groups and others whom the Committee designates as "third force" socialists (those adopting neither a Social-Democratic nor a Leninist outlook).

Since the re-making of the Socialist Labor Party's philosophy by Daniel DeLeon and his adherents around 1905, its basic position has been that no "pure and simple" socialist political party can effectuate the Revolution; that there must exist, along with the party, an industrial union organization to back up the ballot with economic force (because the ballot is, after all, "as weak as a woman's tears"--a sentiment attributed to DeLeon) and to organize and carry on the business of the new society.

Just how far from *new* this SLP-envisioned order would be, however, becomes evident when one notes that the DeLeonists always seemed to regard the parties of Social Democracy as "pure and simple" *socialist* political parties rather than as pure and simple parties of capitalist reform. As far back as the March 1915 issue of the *Socialist Standard*\*, for example, we find a lengthy editorial-article which examines and dissects an official letter from the SLP of America addressed to "the Affiliated Parties of the International Socialist Bureau." Although the SPGB had never been a member of that organization (the British Labour Party represented it), the SLP had nevertheless taken it on itself to send the SPGB a copy of the letter.

The crux of their argument was that had the "Socialist" parties of Europe paid heed to the DeLeonist message of the need for industrial union organization, Social Democracy would not have found itself in the mess that it did in 1915, with its various

Despite our long-standing opposition to the DeLeonist analysis, we of the World Socialist Movement are at least encouraged to air our viewpoint in the pages of the *Bulletin*. The editorial committee of the *World Socialist Review* feels that the following contribution to DB #21 (adapted as an article for this issue of the *Review*) deserves a wider audience

member parties supporting their respective national governments in the slaughter of World War I.

The gist of the SPGB's response was simple: the SLP of America did not seem to realize (as DeLeonists today do not comprehend either) that organizing workers on the basis of individual industries is really *dividing* rather than uniting them; that an economic organization is, to be sure, important and even essential but that it should be based upon *class* rather than on sectional-industrial interests. It ought to be apparent that when workers in the millions are ripe for socialism, labor union membership will be top-heavy with workers who are socialist-minded.

Not only has the SLP (like the various splinter groups that have broken off from it) shown little ability to distinguish *socialist* organizations from reformist ones: in January 1917 it even went so far as to attempt the consummation of a merger with the SPA, participating with it in a joint conference in New York City.

At the conference both organizations agreed on the questions of aim and of reform policies, but the attempt at unification failed because the SPA delegates refused to accept the SLP's economic program. A *Weekly People* editorial for January 13, 1917 claimed that the rock upon which the Unity Conference foundered was that of industrial unionism.

But lest this not be regarded as sufficiently conclusive evidence that the SLP advocated (then as now) a conception of socialist

for the important information it contains on the history of the Socialist Labor Party of America, as well as for its unambiguously stated views on the subject of DeLeonism. Any reader desiring back issues of the *Bulletin* can obtain them from the *Discussion Bulletin*, PO Box 1564, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

society which was fundamentally no different from that of Social Democracy, let us turn to the SLP's "thinking" on the subject of the Soviet Union. Here again the same self-deception reproduces itself on a political scale: anyone having a minimal acquaintance with SLP history after 1917 knows that even prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, DeLeonism showed a disregard for the need to concentrate on class consciousness as the crucial factor in a socialist revolution (as opposed to sectional recognition for the existing divisions of wage labor).

On the question of "vanguards" and class consciousness, for instance: during the period of World War II the SLP berated Stalin for "betraying" the Revolution. This kind of language makes no sense from a socialist perspective--*unless* it were true that (1) the SLP regarded the Bolshevik Revolution as a genuinely socialist upheaval and (2) it really believed that a socialist revolution *could* be brought about without a majority of class-conscious workers in the population understanding and approving the basics of socialism. Does this not imply that the SLP and its splinter groups are themselves to all intents and purposes believers in "vanguardism"--the same as the Bolsheviks? It is difficult to think otherwise.

Or concerning the nature of Soviet society: though some DeLeonists seem to have come to the awareness that something is definitely rotten in the state of the Soviet Union, they seem equally bent on compounding their previous error. Rather than

decide that it is long past high time to start calling a spade a spade, they instead tend to regard that land as an example of DeLeon's "industrial feudalism."

The problem they evade is that certain important, basic features serve to define a society--features such as the predominant social relationships among the members of the population, for instance. In the USSR the preponderant relationships are those of wage labor and capital; from which the only intelligent conclusion one can draw is that the USSR is *capitalist*. It is as incongruous to label the form of society found in the USSR "industrial feudalism" as it would be to call it "capitalist socialism."

But apart from such abuses of language, whatever we might predict for the way in which socialist society will organize production, one thing is certain: once there is a solid majority of class-conscious socialists in the population and this has become manifest to the capitalist class, the era of class societies will come to an end in short order. We can assume that those workers who up until that moment have operated the industries will continue to do so--but it will be in the interests of the *entire population* rather than for the benefit of private or corporate owners (which includes state capitalist bureaucrats). Even the need for labor unions (of any variety or designation) will vanish.

If Marx's materialist conception of history makes sense, it should follow that the only really worthwhile task for socialists today is to make more socialists (and good ones at that); it is certainly not to turn out prescriptions for what in the end are really just idealized versions of already existing social formations.

--Harmo

(\*) Journal of the Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB).

### From a Recent Pamphlet

## WHAT UNEEMPLOYMENT MEANS

Is massive unemployment here to stay? Many workers think so. They point to the closures of shipyards, steelworks and scores of factories as big corporations pack up their bags and head for places where low-paid labor forces hide behind every tree. There appears to be no letup in the round of layoffs and sackings that turn whole cities into colonies of the jobless, much less that these places of work will come back to life again in the future. This pessimism is supported and rationalized by some journalists, politicians and economists in newspapers and on television.

### It has happened before

Socialists have long memories. We can remember the 1950s and 1960s when the "experts" assured us that unemployment was finished forever because governments had learned how to control it. Most workers believed them. They were wrong, and we told them so at the time. They are equally wrong now. Massive unemployment will not last forever--although it may last a very long time, as it did in the 1930s.

And those who say that things are different now because of the microchip are wrong too. Automation of jobs does not in itself cause long-term unemployment. The effect is to shift workers from one area of employment to another. Fewer are needed to do the purely manual and routinely bureaucratic tasks increasingly carried out by the new machines, but more are needed to design, construct, program and maintain them. The rate of unemployment has been much higher than now at times when labor-saving machines were far fewer--notably in the Great Depression of the 30s.

### What is employment?

It is impossible to understand unemployment properly without understanding employment itself.

Employment (a "job") is, in fact, a buying and selling relationship, in which one human being sells his or her ability to work to another human being for a day, a week or a month. Like all buying and selling, the sale of working abilities is generally governed by "the market." The seller (the worker) tries to get the highest price (wage or salary) that he or she can, while the buyer (the employer) tries to pay as little as possible.

The great majority of men and women in the industrialized nations of the world can only make a living by trying to sell their mental or physical skills and energy. They have no option but to put themselves on the labor market for most of their lives, because they have nothing else to sell.

### Who or what employs us?

In this respect, our lives are very different from the lives of that small proportion of the population who own enough wealth to live off their investments. But investments are not some magical trick which "makes your money." Investments (that is, capital) buy the brain or muscle power of the workers. The big investors, therefore--in private industry or state bonds--are the ultimate employers. It is to them that workers try to sell their intelligence, punctuality and willingness to work hard.

So there is a direct relationship of buyer to seller. What one gains the other loses. But for workers it is their livelihood--sometimes their life--that is at stake.

The owners of wealth only invest if there is a good prospect of making an acceptable profit, but factories and machines and materials do not produce anything by themselves--certainly not a profit. It is only workers who produce, and transport, and maintain machinery, and sell goods, and manage other workers--and produce all profit.

(Continued on last page)

## THE WORLD SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE UNITED STATES

### 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 World Socialist Party of the United States holds that:

1. 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 labor alone wealth is produced.
2. 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. 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. 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. THIS EMANCIPATION MUST BE the work of the working class itself.
6. 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 the agent of emancipation and overthrow of plutocratic privilege.

7. 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 COMPANION PARTIES OF SOCIALISM, therefore, enter the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labor or avowedly capitalist, and call upon all members of the working class to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labor, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality and slavery to freedom.

## Technology, Private Property and Revolution

The idea of a wageless, classless, moneyless society is ultra-modern; in fact it may come of age simply because technology is making it more and more difficult to possess anything. Each time an entrepreneur figures out a way to "own" a product and sell it for profit, someone else figures out a way to take it for less. Satellite dishes beam in broadcasts that are meant to be sold and show them for nothing; a \$400.00 computer program can be copied and distributed without paying the fee; books are easily pirated and sold sometimes for a fraction of the publisher's cost; virtually every product in the market can be, and sooner or later is, stolen, copied and counterfeited on so vast a scale that the government can no longer enforce ownership and copyright laws, and the only effective recourse of private companies is to try and maintain their ownership by more and more sophisticated technology: scrambling devices, counterfeit detectors, etc. As this race continues, the absurdity and futility of institutionalized possession becomes more and more evident.

Socialists argue that Socialism, by which they mean production of goods and services for direct distribution without the impediments of ownership and money, can only occur when a majority of people act politically to make it happen. They will not do so unless this idea makes sense to them; unless it seems practical and workable, the only common sense solution to the crisis now wracking this planet of ours.

The problem is that enough people don't yet see it that way: but the need for Socialism is so obviously urgent the insight can't be very far from the surface.

-- Stephen Butterfield

## Unemployment (cont. from p.6)

### The profit scramble

Prospects for profit, however, are affected by an enormous range of factors throughout the world, and the market is constantly adjusting prices to balance these. Capitalists shift their wealth around the world (or their stockbrokers do it for them), seeking the highest rate of profit at an acceptable risk. As more and more profits are made and re-invested as new capital, production expands, building up into a boom. At such times, more workers are employed than at any other time, more and more goods and services are offered for sale on the market, and yet more capital tries to share in the profits of the boom--and then the whole frenzied mass of investments collapses in crisis and slump, as such a spiral must do.

This *trade cycle*, as it is called, operates throughout the world now, including the "Eastern Bloc" nations. It has occurred periodically through the whole history of the present economic system, increasing in scale as the world market has expanded. Governments are powerless to control it, and so are agencies like the United Nations or the International Monetary Fund. Slumps are not only inevitable--they are necessary, for capitalism. They restore profitability--eventually.

### What can be done?

Many politicians (particularly among the Democrats) push what they euphemistically describe as a "full employment policy." This is dishonest. The record shows that no matter who is in office, the business cycle keeps right on going. In an effort to save face, some economists and politicians claim to have discovered "structural unemployment"--which is virtually an admission that unemployment is not subject to government fiat. The hard fact is that there is no cure for unemployment as long as the system of employment lasts.

The best that workers can do, by being active in their unions, is to prevent themselves being played off against one another by employers and to resist the downward pressure on wages and conditions that employers and governments exert particularly ruthlessly in slumps. But this is limited in scope, and it is no comfort those who are thrown on the scrap-heap. When the labor market is a "buyer's market" and supply exceeds demand, workers who are trying to sell their skills are in a weak position.

### Working-class strength

And yet the working class as a whole has enormous strength. It is workers--high and low paid, "white collar" and "blue collar" who produce all the goods, who build and distribute and administer everything in society. It is workers who staff the armed forces and police forces all over the world. It is workers who teach children what to think and believe about society. And, of course, it workers who vote overwhelmingly at elections to keep handing over the wealth they produce to the capitalist class, to maintain nations and weapons and wars, to hang on to the system of employment--and unemployment.

### We can end unemployment

We workers who have formed the World Socialist Party and its overseas companion parties urge our fellow workers to give careful consideration to our analysis of modern society. Whether you are working your way through unemployment benefits or "earning," whether you are paid \$500 a month or \$50,000 a year the facts are the same. We reject the explanations of the paid experts. We reject the nostrums of the left as much as the quack formulas of the right and the vote-getting placebos of the "middle-of-the-roads." We do *not* call on workers to march or demonstrate for jobs. It is futile. We do *not* promise to lead workers out

of their problems. That is a con trick.

What we *do* say is that workers *can* solve the problem of unemployment--by understanding it and by organizing themselves as a class which has overwhelming strength. Our analysis makes it clear that the system of employment is now obsolete. It not only causes waste and misery: it stands as an obstacle to technological progress. The working class has the power to consign the employment system to the scrap-heap of history--without shedding a drop of blood. It has the power to run the productive forces of society to meet the needs of everyone. To produce solely for use--not for sale and profit.

*Read our literature. Discuss with us. We understand what is happening--and so will you. Work with us to unify the working class so that it can take control of the future--sooner--and end unemployment for good.*

Questions of the Day	\$1.00
Historical Materialism	.50
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From Capitalism to Socialism	.70
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**WSP- US**

**BOX 405, BOSTON, MA 02272**

I enclose \$\_\_\_\_\_ for the above items [check off as appropriate.]

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_