

How do we get socialism?

written by John Parker
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'Unity, Commitment and Victory': Workers in power march on May Day 2019 in Havana, Cuba.

Why is capitalism so f@*d up?

Well, the short and loosely accurate answer is that it's like one of those driverless cars that still don't quite work the way they are supposed to — because no one's at the wheel!

No one is monitoring what needs to be produced or by how much. It's all based on each individual capitalist's drive for the maximum profit – whether it means producing milk for babies or bombs that kill babies. And since producing bombs has a higher profit return, then bombs it is. Humanity be damned, the climate be damned!

Capitalism has always been a cruel system, but it came into being partly as a result of farm laborers rejecting an even crueler system, feudalism, which lost its ability to expand production. This revolt against the old system was led by the soon-to-be new ruling class of capitalists, leading the exploited farm laborers (or serfs/peasants) as an army against the monarchs.

Once the capitalists were in control of how things were being produced in society, with their more scientific and more efficient means, bringing those farmers into their factories as workers, it allowed the advance in productive capacity, helping to limit our want for basic necessities.

But remember, the capitalists aren't in business to employ workers or provide the necessities of life. They're in business to maximize profits — which means reducing labor costs by lowering wages and using every new technological advance to make their machines and processes capable of producing more while cutting the amount of workers needed, eventually leading to more poverty and unemployment.

Capitalism blocks progress

But the bigger problem for the capitalist system is the fact that the pace of production always accelerates above the pace of consumption, leading to what we

have today – a global crisis of overproduction — too many products that can't be sold at a profit.

And when greater profits can be made through financial speculation (gambling on the stock exchange), the investment money flows there.

That's mostly why there aren't enough full-time jobs that pay a living wage. Of course, we could always just lower the working hours, allowing more people to be employed — but that's not allowed because (1) it cuts into profits and (2) even if we think human needs should trump profits, we don't control how things are produced.

We're not the ruling class, and we don't control the police and military — which will undoubtedly be called in when the profits of the bosses are threatened.

That's why unemployment and low wages can't be solved by politicians working within the confines of the capitalist mode of production. Just as feudalism became a strain hampering production, so too has capitalism run its course and become an inhibitor of vital production for humanity.

The world is now ripe, overripe in fact, for a new mode of production — one that puts us, the workers, the producers of wealth, the majority, behind the wheel — and that defines socialism.

The science of Marxism

It's important to remember, at this point, that the systemic change that occurred from feudalism to capitalism could only have happened after the means of production were taken from the old ruling class of monarchs and landlords and then controlled by the new ruling class — the capitalists.

Likewise, a socialist revolutionary change can only happen by taking the means of production from the ruling class of capitalists.

How do we know this? The same way we know that gravity exists. Scientific analysis of objective reality can also be applied to social change as it relates to how a society produces, or its modes of production. The capitalists maintain their power precisely by controlling (owning) the means of production, and control the wealth in society resulting from the value created by our human labor.

This science is called Marxism.

Karl Marx used the scientific method to analyse how human society is organized to produce the necessities of survival, from ancient societies with no classes to the class societies of slavery, feudalism and capitalism. And this analysis pointed clearly to the next step: socialism.

This scientific socialism developed by Marx, explaining the economic workings of capitalist society and the methods to overcome it, has been the single most relied-upon source for implementing revolutionary social change since the early 20th century on every continent.

It's been utilized by revolutionaries like Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Clara Zetkin, Amilcar Cabral, Paul Robeson, George Jackson, Rosa Luxemburg, Mao Zedong, W.E.B. Du Bois, Celia Sánchez, Samora Machel, Ho Chi Minh and, of course, V.I. Lenin — whose utilization of Marxism expanded its reach. His leadership was instrumental in bringing about the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 in Russia.

Socialism and elections

Okay, time to clean up that driverless car analogy. The problem really isn't that there is no one behind the wheel. The problem is that the driver is more concerned about making profits than bothering to notice or even being able to care that the car is going off a cliff.

Yes, we don't control the police or military or even the legislative process. In fact,

it's important to understand that the executive and legislative branches of government have been rigged to ensure the status quo since the late 1800s.

That's when the money of the Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, Mellons and Morgans, to name a few, locked up the system with the enormous profits they gained from cotton production — in other words, slavery — and used that power to expand into other markets.

In addition to using money to keep out candidates that appeal to workers, nowadays the corporate media insure that any “controversial” candidates don't make it far into the political process. They slander or more often ignore candidates that represent movements that could inspire a shift to the left.

That's happening now with the media playing catch-up in their unified attack against Bernie Sanders, since, regardless of his advocacy of remaining within the framework of capitalism, his base of supporters and his progressive platform could threaten the ruling class's ideological domination that holds back a raising of working-class consciousness.

This is certainly a new development in our current period, and it affords a tremendous opportunity for revolutionaries: not to be spectators from the sidelines, but active participants in an electoral political campaign that has the potential to go significantly beyond the intentions of the liberal candidate and allow access to the many members of our class who are excited about this campaign.

Lenin promoted this perspective in his pamphlet, [“‘Left Wing’ Communism: an Infantile Disorder,”](#) sharing the lessons from the experiences of the Russian Revolution just three years earlier.

Revolution, not reform

But to answer the question you're probably asking about how our class can take over

the means of production, we should first understand that promoting the idea of the necessity of that takeover is of prime importance.

Especially when the organs of capitalism — its media, its politicians and the entire ruling class — have an existential fear of, as Marx put it, “the specter of communism.”

They will promote and help others to unknowingly promote any alternative theories that have been proven ineffective and incorrect time and again — theories that call for everything but the acquisition of the means of production and replacement of the boss’s state and its bought legislature, military and police.

Marx, in fact, exposed the fallacy of the many forms of socialism being peddled by not only liberal forces, but also encouraged by some government institutions, to avoid the revolutionary implications of scientific socialism in his pamphlet [“Critique of the Gotha Program.”](#) Lenin did the same in [“What is To Be Done?”](#)

Three years ago was the 100th anniversary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. From then up to and including today, socialism as an ideology and the countries that were and are working toward it have been mercilessly attacked by all imperialist powers, starting with the invasion of Soviet Russia by 16 countries when it was just one year old — led by French, British, U.S., Canadian and Japanese imperialists attempting to snuff out communism.

As powerful as the imperialists were, they were defeated. But devastating economic warfare, embargoes and the continued threat of nuclear annihilation by the U.S. followed. In addition, serious missteps occurred in the leadership of the Soviet Union after Lenin that would not allow the country to endure the external sabotage by imperialist countries.

As a result, the Soviet Union and its socialist economic system eventually collapsed

and broke up into capitalist countries like Russia, Ukraine and others, now acquiring all the problems of homelessness and poverty at breakneck speed.

What socialism can accomplish

Yet, in spite of these ongoing attacks, it was the Soviet Union that was the determining force in the defeat of Nazi Germany, and it was the socialist countries that facilitated the liberation of 17 African countries from colonialism in the 1960s.

None of these achievements could have been made without socialist planning. This allowed an underdeveloped country to become the second-greatest industrial power in the world at unheard-of speed.

If it were not for the type of economic planning that allowed the expansion of heavy industry for military purposes as rapidly as it did, the Nazi government in Germany would most likely have been the victors of World War II, a war that took 20 million Soviet lives. Remember that when they tell you that the Soviet Union, and therefore socialism, was a failure.

Also remember the contributions of Cuba's health care and education system exported all over the world, and that the countries putting up the greatest fight against global warming in resources and money are able to make these contributions to the world precisely because of their economic system of scientific socialism and the workers' ownership of the vital means of production in society.

Imagine what we can accomplish for the people of this country, and the whole world, when we take the advanced productive powers of the U.S. economy into our own hands and apply socialist methods to them.

