

# Capital

written by Struggle - La Lucha

January 13, 2019

Capital, says the capitalist, is money used in the production of more money.

The teachers of capitalist political economy put it more “scientifically.” They explain that capital is factories, machinery, raw materials, and money to pay wages.

But these things are only capital and only command a return for the capitalist under a certain kind of social system.

For instance, the existence of Black workers and fertile lands in the South more than a century ago did not create the wealthy slavemasters. Only a social system could do that. Only the social recognition of slavery with laws, customs, chains, prisons and executioners could maintain the slave system.

And the massive machinery and other means of production in existence today do not in themselves equal capital. They are only the form of capital.

The essence of capital is its social relation to the worker. The insane domination of the means of production over the producer (the worker) is only possible because of history and because of customs, culture (brainwashing), courts and prisons which all dictate that this be so.

Consider the billions and billions of dollars worth of Jeff Bezos’ (Amazon) capital.

There are not enough one-dollar bills in existence to equal the value of Amazon. But dollars are only the name of the game. They are not the game itself.

In reality, the billionaire monopolies like Amazon, Apple, Google, Facebook and Microsoft are a tremendous aggregation of the crystallized labor of millions and

millions of people over decades. In reality, they even represent stored-up human labor from centuries earlier, too.

The billionaires' legal possession of all this material gives them the right to do as they like with it. And they like profits.

Thus the achievements, sweat, blood, tears, and daily grind of the living, and practically all the stored-up production of the dead — dead labor, so to speak — are used to enslave the living laborers today.

In the words of Karl Marx, “Capital is dead labor which lives, vampire-like, from the blood of living labor. ... It is only the domination of accumulated, past, materialized labor over direct, living labor that turns accumulated labor into capital.”

In a rational world the living laborer would be the master of the dead labor of the past. Capital, then, would no longer be capital — the possession of the capitalist. It would be transformed or reborn into its true form and essence — the accomplishments and creation of all of humanity being used by all of humanity for all of humanity.

[Why Marx was right about capitalism needing to have periodic crises](#)

---

- Return to [What is Marxism?](#)