

Exploitation

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Everybody who works for a boss is exploited. If the boss couldn't exploit you, the boss wouldn't hire you.

During every work day, in every office, factory, mine, or field, anybody who works for a boss is exploited.

Where workers have built strong unions they can wrest from the capitalists more of the surplus than they could get if no unions existed, but as long as the capitalist system lasts the workers can never thoroughly wipe out the bosses' surplus or end exploitation.

Workers and capitalists are in constant struggle over the division of this surplus, but the capitalist holds the highest cards because the worker is dependent upon the capitalist for the job.

How many times has a company announced layoffs, all while the CEOs get bonuses or raises for "tightening the belt"?

Millions of people around the world go hungry and lack access to clean water, health care, adequate housing, clothing and transportation. Yet so much goes to waste in the so-called developed world.

Factories close; companies go belly-up as each capitalist tries to outdo the other and in the process, they produce and produce. As their unplanned, anarchic production leads to a crisis of overproduction they transfer the crisis to the workers, with pay cuts, mass layoffs, and firings. This boom-or-bust reality is because of the nature of the system, which is to reap greater and greater profits regardless of what is

actually needed.

In times of crisis, the capitalists need new markets, cheaper access to resources, and new, cheaper, easily exploitable labor. This fuels the drive to war.

If one were to add the expense of war — both in monetary and more tragic human loss — the waste makes even less sense.

But what is the answer? The answer is the abolition of the capitalist system. In the place of the capitalist system a system based on actual human need, in solidarity with the oppressed and workers the world over, needs to be built. The system of socialism removes the profit motive; the means of production are held and developed by the entire society for the need of all in society, not for profit.

It is through this system that problems, as they come, are dealt with, as it is through need and solidarity that problems are solved, not through profit.

Additional reading

- [The Origins of Capitalist Exploitation](#) (PDF) – by Marta Harnecker, Havana, Cuba
- [Marx's Economic Doctrine](#) – from Lenin's "Karl Marx: A Brief Biographical Sketch With an Exposition of Marxism"

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