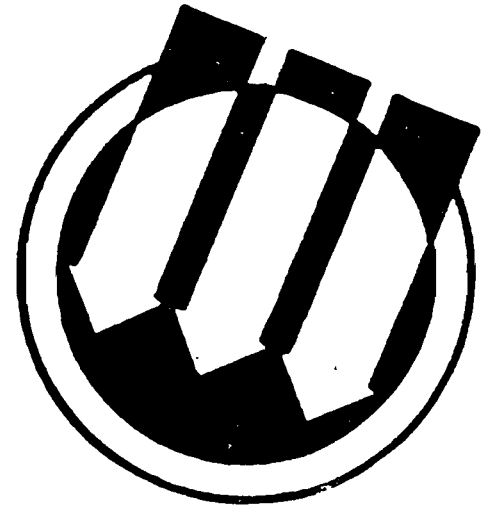


**This
is**



SOCIALISM!

BY IRWIN SUALL

**YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIALIST LEAGUE
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Ten Cents

THIS IS SOCIALISM!

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There have been so many beliefs labelling themselves as socialism that it is easy to understand why people associate that term with Nazism, which calls itself National Socialism, or with Communism, which expresses its loyalty to a country called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The misunderstanding which arises from the use of the term "socialism" by groups which have very little in common with the true socialist movement must be dispelled if there is to be a fair evaluation of the merits of socialism. Just as all sorts of anti-democratic groups have called themselves "democrats" and anti-Christian groups have called themselves "Christians", so have fakers made use of the term "socialism".

What is the socialist movement and what are its aims? We know that it is a world-wide movement which has followers in every corner of the earth. Daily newspaper dispatches tell of socialist movements all over Europe, in India, in the Philippines, in the America's both North and South. The socialist movement is part of the unconquerable struggle of the oppressed classes for freedom and the full product of their toil. In this struggle, visions of a better world were born. Many of these visions were very much akin to that of modern socialism, but were incapable of realization without the present productive level which for the first time makes possible abundance for all.

It would be impossible to trace the origin of the belief in cooperation as a way of life, but we know that there have been

men and movements that have held this belief throughout history. In the many revolts in the Roman Empire (including the revolt led by the Carpenter of Nazareth) there appeared such doctrines. Throughout the Middle Ages peasant movements had many premature socialistic ideals. In the British revolution of the 17th Century, under the leadership of Cromwell, there appeared a peasant socialistic movement called "The Diggers." In the French revolution, there was a socialistic movement called "Les Egaux" (Fr. for "believers in equality").

Many American towns were founded by people who held utopian socialist beliefs and thought that socialism could be established in a small isolated community. Such towns as New Harmony, Indiana; the Amana's in Iowa; Yellow Springs, Ohio, and many others, were founded on utopian socialist beliefs. These communities could not survive isolated in a rapidly industrializing society, but they can be cited to people who tell you that socialism is a foreign doctrine having no roots in America. The fact that the socialist movement when at its height was strongest in the states of Oklahoma and Kansas shows that socialism has deep roots in American culture, although its founding fathers, like the founding fathers of democracy, Christianity, and the wireless telegraph, were of old world origin.

Why is it that there have been so many men and women who have laid down their lives for this movement and made the many sacrifices of which the movement's history is so full? What is there about this belief which can win such loyalties?

We socialists believe that the continuation of the present economic system known as capitalism, or "free enterprise" spells misery for the human race. We believe that the common people of the world have nothing to gain from the present system, that it makes depression, war and fascism inevitable.

We believe that the capitalist system must be replaced with socialism, which would work on a very different basis.

Why do we think the capitalist system inevitably causes these evils we have just spoken about? Capitalism is an economic system which is based on the private ownership (by individuals or corporations) of the means of production and distribution, and the use of these means of production and distribution for the profit of its private owners. The number of people who own most of the productive property (mines, mills, transportation, etc.) in this country and in any capitalist country, is but a small percentage of the total population. They are the famous 60 families and the "elite" you hear so much about. They are the people whose daughters throw million dollar coming-out parties every so often. They are the people you read about in the society pages of the big city newspapers. When Mr. Vandercook catches cold there are headlines on page three. When his dog sneezes, they give him an item in the gossip column. When his daughter gets a new dress, they print lovely pictures of her in the papers for working girls to admire on their way home from their job.

This small minority of the population owns most of the factories and productive facilities of the country and run them for their own profit. When we say "running for profit" we mean grabbing a share of the production. The working man creates the products through his toil, but he doesn't get paid the full value of what he produces. Part of that value is taken by the capitalist as profit. If the workers in a particular industry create ten thousand dollars worth of goods in a single week, they'll only get back, say \$5,000 in wages and salaries. The rest is taken by the capitalist as his profit, after he replenishes tools, etc.

What do the capitalists do with their profits? They use

quite a bit of them for their personal purposes. They'll have large and beautiful homes, plenty of servants, more clothes than they can use, and fine, expensive foods. But they can't possibly use up all the profits they make. If you read the business section of any city paper you'll see that the profits of the large corporations run into the millions and billions each year. Most of this profit is reinvested in industry in order to make more profits. It will be used to provide improved tools, and to expand into old and new industries. Profit will be reinvested in industry only as long as the owners think they can make more profits by reinvesting it. Every so often they stop investing capital and the machines are stopped, and men thrown out of work. Then we have what is called a depression.

Why do the capitalists cease their reinvestments every so often? The reason is simple. In order to make a profit they have to be able to sell their goods to a customer. Only when people have enough money to buy all the goods that are produced can the capitalists make profits from production. But as we have seen, the people who work don't get paid the full value of what they produce. Therefore they don't have enough money to buy it all back. As a result, a surplus of products accumulates that the people don't have enough money to buy, and the capitalist stops investing his capital because there aren't enough customers to buy his goods, and finally industry stops and workers are thrown out of jobs. In other words, we have a depression.

These depressions are inherent in the capitalist system of private ownership of the means of production and distribution, for the profit of the capitalists. Only when the people get the full value of what they produce and can provide enough of a market for capital to continually be reinvested can depressions be prevented. That is what socialism would do. Socialism means

that the people themselves will own the means of production and distribution and run them for their own needs. This will provide enough money for the workers to buy back all they produce and keep the wheels of industry going.

It will mean an end to poverty and hunger. It will mean an end to slums and poor food. It will result in a much higher standard of living for the common man. Instead of the extremes of wealth we now have, there would be much greater equality of wealth. Depressions would be eliminated. We've had them in America in 1819, 1837, 1854, 1857, 1873, 1884, 1893, 1907, 1914, 1921, and the last terrible depression of 1929 which lasted a full ten years. Socialism would mean an end to depression and a raised standard of living for all the people.

WAR AND ITS CAUSES

Understanding as we do the basic foundation of the profit system, we can now go into the problem of war and its causes. Most people get side-tracked in their attempts to understand the causes of war. They seek solutions to the problem of war in the rearrangements of boundaries, the signing of treaties, and the appeal to the love of peace in people's hearts. Because solutions of this sort do not tackle the basic causes of war, some people give up in disgust and tell us "wars will always be." They tell us that war is innate in human nature.

As long as we believe that war is innate in human nature, there is no sense in seeking out its causes and trying to eliminate them. Human nature, we are told, is unchangeable and war will come as surely as the rising sun. All sorts of evils have been considered innate in human nature. The great Greek philosopher, Aristotle, believed chattel slavery to be innate in human nature. Events, of course, proved him wrong. Believers

in human nature as the cause of war can likewise be proven wrong. If war is innate in human nature, why isn't there a war in your home town every few years? Presumably, people in your home town are victims of "human nature." If war is innate in human nature, how can countries like Sweden and Switzerland stay out of war for hundreds of years? It may be true that there are belligerent tendencies in all people, but whether they are brought out depends upon the circumstances in which people find themselves. Here is an example of what we mean:

There are many towns in Europe where water is quite scarce, due to the sparcity of rainfall in those areas. In such cases people have to collect and preserve as much of the rain as they can. They usually do it by putting large pots and pans underneath the watersheds of their houses. Now in some of these towns, the collection of water is highly competitive. Each person will have his own pan and stay under the shed and try to collect as much rainwater as he can. Since the people are desperate for water, they'll fight and push and smack their neighbors in their desperate effort to get the rainfall. This results in a small scale war. Fighting tendencies are very much accentuated. What's more, a lot of rain is lost while people stand by beating each other for it.

There are other towns in which there is a community collection of the rainfall. In other words, they have a reservoir. In these towns everyone works together to get as much rain as possible into the community water collection, and then it is distributed on a more or less equal basis, according to needs. In these towns, the cooperative rather than the belligerent tendencies are brought out.

No doubt there are people in the villages where there is competition for the water who say that the resulting battles are

"innate in human nature." There is as much truth to their point of view as there is to the viewpoint of those who believe international wars to be caused by human nature.

What are the real causes of war? Socialists believe they lie in the profit system. As was shown before, the people who produce under capitalism, the workers by hand and brain, cannot buy back all the goods they produce. As a result, in many cases the capitalists cease investing capital and shut down the wheels of industry, which leads to a depression. From the very beginning of capitalism, that is, during the 18th and 19th Centuries, the capitalists sought *foreign* areas in which to sell their goods, invest their capital, and obtain raw materials. They went into undeveloped parts of the world, such as Africa, Asia and South America, and after forcibly conquering the native peoples, they claimed huge areas of land as their own. This plundering of other peoples is commonly known as "imperialism". This led to one type of war—wars of colonial peoples against foreign imperialists who attempted to conquer their lands, and wars to throw out the conquerors once they had gotten in. Such wars were the American Revolutionary War of 1776, the Opium War in China (where the Chinese fought to prevent the British from selling opium to their people), the Boer war of South Africa, and the Italian-Etheopian War of 1935.

However, the time came when all the backward areas were completely conquered. The capitalists of the various countries, still seeking new areas to make profits, fell into conflicts with one another. The very nature of the capitalist system is such that the owners continually have to expand in their search for places to invest capital. So, we have international wars. World War I was such an imperialist war, and so was the second World War. Germany, Italy and Japan came onto the world

scene late because their capitalism developed later than that of England, France, Belgium and the other imperialist powers. Being forced to seek empire, they came into conflict with the established powers, and world war ensued.

In every war an attempt is made to sell the war to the people (the vast majority of whom abhor war) on the basis of a "fight for ideals." They are told that they are fighting for "a war to end war," "a war of defense," "a war to revenge themselves on an enemy world," or "a war for Aryan supremacy." These slogans are merely bait used by the rulers to get the common people to do the dying and fighting that they may continue to make profits. We are so much cannon fodder that has to be persuaded by attractive slogans to lay down our lives on the altar of the great god "profit".

Socialists believe that there are additional factors in the cause of war; such factors as nationalism, racism and fear. But these can all be traced to an essentially economic origin, and are definitely lesser causes. The main problem is one of capitalist expansion, or imperialism. It does not matter if this expansion is done by the capitalists privately, or whether it is done for them by the state, which they control more or less directly, depending on the country. In Russia, for example, the exploiters of labor control the state directly and use it directly for their imperialist aims. In any case, as long as we have capitalism (private or state capitalism), there will always be war, and each war will grow worse.

War cannot be ended by conferences, or pacts, or the rearrangement of boundaries. The only solution is democratic socialism. Socialism would mean the social ownership of the means of production and their democratic control. Under such a system the socially backward people would have independence, and their development would be encouraged by the in-

dustrial powers. We would exchange our goods and services for their goods and services on a planned, non-profit basis, in an effort to raise the standard of living of all involved. Socialism would mean economic cooperation among peoples rather than competition. It would also mean political cooperation in the form of federations of peoples. The myth that one or the other country is superior to another (a myth fostered by capitalism) would fall by the wayside because it has no basis in fact and there would be no interest group that would have a vested interest in fostering it. Briefly put, we would have an international federation of cooperative commonwealths.

This is the only solution to the problem of war. If we don't arrive at this solution, the human race is likely to commit suicide. The wars to come will be so deadly as to either destroy the human race completely, or to throw it back into a new "dark age." Your life and mine, and the lives of our children, are all at stake. We must unite now and fight for socialism.

FASCISM AND ITS CAUSES

In order to understand the causes of fascism, it is necessary to examine conditions in the countries where totalitarianism triumphed. The best example of the rise of fascism in our time is in Germany. German fascism was total and it was also the most powerful fascist power that has thus far appeared. What were conditions in Germany when Hitler took power?

Everyone knows that Germany was in the throes of a depression. Germany, a capitalist power, was the victim, along with other capitalist countries, of the most devastating international depression the world has ever known—the depression that started in 1929. The German people found themselves completely without security. They never knew when they were go-

ing to eat another meal. They never knew if their children would starve to death each day. The possibility of losing their homes and being thrown into the streets was before them at all times. There was nothing to which they could hold. This terrible insecurity caused them to seek security at any price. Insecurity of that sort will cause any people to seek something to hold onto—some assurance of stability and plenty.

This drastic insecurity, the result of a depression caused by capitalism, provided fertile soil for a fascist movement. The German people, suffering as they were as a result of the depression, looked to various movement promising change for salvation. Many millions looked to the radical movements for solutions and were active members of these movements. The German capitalist class, recognizing this growth of socialist doctrine among the German people, looked about for a movement which could capture popular support but which would not deprive them of their power. In Hitler's Nazi Party they found such a movement. The Nazis promised everyone everything they wanted. Their program was a hodge-podge of everything to which they thought people would be attracted. The Nazis assured the large German capitalists that they would maintain and strengthen the capitalist system. They also warned them that the growth of the labor and radical movement threatened the power of the capitalist class. The Nazis promised these big money men at home and abroad that they would crush the labor and radical movement.

In that situation, a huge section of German capital (and much foreign capital) gave tremendous support to the Nazi movement. They gave them huge donations, publicity, and various other forms of aid. With this support, and the popular support they got from various sections of the German people, the Nazis were able to seize power. It should be noted that

they did not receive the support of a majority in the last free election. Nevertheless, they were able to seize power.

Capitalism provided the fertile soil for fascism—depression and insecurity, and capitalists planted the seeds in that soil with the support, financial and otherwise, of the Nazi Party.

The grave danger of totalitarianism will continue to exist so long as capitalism continues to exist. This outworn economic system causes the insecurity and frustration which leads many people to follow demagogues who promise them everything. It also allows a small few, the capitalists, to use their money and power to support a movement which promises to eliminate the threat of socialism. Such an anti-socialist movement has always been totalitarian.

In cases where they do not support demagogic street movements, the capitalist class and its political organizations will use the government to enact fascist measures from above. Such is increasingly the case here in our country. Note the growth of bureaucracy, anti-labor measures, and government assurance of profit for the capitalists.

The only answer to the threat of fascism is socialism. Putting bayonets through the bellies of those people who were the first victims of fascism is certainly no solution to the problem. We must create a system which can give people both security and freedom.

WHAT IS A SOCIALIST SYSTEM?

Precisely what would a socialist society look like? How would the dangers of bureaucracy of the sort that was developed in Russia be avoided? Socialists have given a good deal of thought to this subject and have worked up plans for a socialist order in rather detailed fashion.

Firstly, most of our economic system under socialism would not be under the control of the political state. Various types of independent socialized institutions would function under the control of all those affected by those institutions—the workers by hand and brain, and the consumers. Examples of socialized sections of the economy that would be free from political control by the state are consumers cooperatives, farm cooperatives and collectives, and public corporations.

Consumer coops are economic units owned and controlled by consumers and run in a democratic fashion. They exist today all over the country.

Farm coops and collectives make possible the pooling of the resources of farmers for more efficient crop production or distribution. Where the farms are of the family type, they would remain so with cooperative use of farm tools and machinery, and coop marketing and processing. Where farms are owned by absentee owners (banks and insurance companies, etc.) they would be collectivized under the control of all who work on them. All the value that is produced will go to the producers.

Public corporations are units of organization in industry which are organized and run by boards of directors representing workers by hand and brain, and consumers have a direct interest in the product. They would take in most of our industries and would be independent of the government. A few industries would be run directly by the government, as the capitalist government now runs the post office, roads, etc. These would be telegraph, telephone, electric power, and several other utilities.

These socialized enterprises would be planned on a national scale by a national planning board representing consumers, workers, and technicians. They would use the aid of

skilled economists and experts in the job of planning our nation's economy in the interests of the immense majority.

Under socialism there would be a free trade union movement constantly guarding the rights of workers. The right to strike and other protective action would be inviolable. Consumers would preserve the right of boycott and any other such means as would be necessary to fight for their interests when they felt those interests were being violated. The use of these weapons would of course be very much diminished in comparison to today, because both workers and consumers would be the decisive element in control of the economy. However, the right to take independent action would be preserved at all times as a principled and fundamental right.

This will be a system which so meets the needs of people that they won't entertain the notion of supporting a fascist movement which threatens to eliminate all freedom. Democratic socialism will provide security with freedom. Along with an ever-higher standard of living, socialism will provide the free education and cultural opportunities which make for greater intelligence in the use of freedom. Freedom of the press and speech, freedom of religion, and universal suffrage with the right of recall and referendum—these are an essential part of socialism. Combining these freedoms with the material security resulting from social ownership of the means of production will build a brave new world. They will produce new men, rising ever higher in their cultural and scientific achievements. Mankind will at last have conquered the forces of nature and put them to use for the benefit of the human race.

For this the Young People's Socialist League fights. We are the arm of the Socialist movement among the youth of America. Wherever young workers, farmers, and students

fight for these goals, we are in the forefront. If you believe as we do, we welcome you to join our ranks.

THE YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIALIST LEAGUE

ORGANIZATION

The Y.P.S.L. circle is the unit of socialist youth work and socialist youth organization. A minimum of five members is necessary for the chartering of a circle. Charters are granted by the National Organization. The three major functions of a circle are 1) attracting young people in the community to socialism and recruiting them to the Y.P.S.L., 2) educating the members of the circle in the principles, program, history, and problems of the socialist movement, and 3) exercising a progressive influence in the community and the various youth organizations in the community. Circles usually emphasize one particular field of work, depending on the functional makeup of the circle. Such fields as student work, trade union, and co-op activity, and interracial work are examples. Where more than one circle exists in an area, the circles form a district. Each district has its district executive committee and plans district-wide activity, education, and policy making.

CONVENTION

The highest body in the League is the national convention which meets each year in a different city. To these conventions delegates are elected by the entire membership in a democratic manner. The convention adopts the general policies of the League, elects its national executive committee, and acts as the highest governing body of the League on all important matters.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The National Executive Committee is the highest body in the League between conventions. Meeting quarterly and acting by mail and sub-committees, it outlines important campaigns, examines new issues, organizes new sections and aids old sections, appoints national officers other than the national secretary and national chairman, who are elected by the convention, and keeps the machinery of the League going, geared to the tasks ahead. The N.E.C. carries out in detail the broad policies chosen by the membership at the convention.

OTHER COMMITTEES AND UNITS

The N.E.C. appoints the National Organization Committee which meets weekly and is made up of members of the N.E.C. in the environs of the National Office, plus other key people in the area. It has the job of carrying out N.E.C. decisions on a week-to-week basis.

CHALLENGE

The Y.P.S.L. issues a national monthly newspaper, CHALLENGE. CHALLENGE is issued by the national office under the direction of the N.E.C. All members and friends of the Y.P.S.L. are invited to submit articles for CHALLENGE. Each circle is responsible for the selling of a bundle of CHALLENGES each month. Subscriptions to CHALLENGE sell at 50¢ a year, and individual copies sell for 4¢ a copy for bundles over 24, 5¢ for single copies.

DEMOCRACY AND DISCIPLINE

Democracy starts with the organization. All important League decisions, whether they be decisions in a circle or N.E.C. decisions or convention decisions, are decided in a democratic manner. All members have the right to express their viewpoints on any problem facing the socialist movement. All members of the Y.P.S.L. may present their point of view in Young Socialist Review, internal discussion organ, without restriction. A socialist organization must typify the democracy we are working toward.

Effective functioning requires unity in action. The Y.P.S.L. therefore carries out all decisions in a unified manner. Whether it be presenting part of the program, or functioning in a union, or any other type of political activity, Y.P.S.L. members abide by the decisions reached by a majority vote of their organization. Y.P.S.L. discipline is not based on coercion of members and beating them into "line". It is based primarily on the self-control of the members who realize that effective functioning requires unity. At all times members of the Y.P.S.L. have the right to discuss and attempt to change the minds of the members on any particular policy. They are also required to attend meetings of their circle, and take part in its regular activities, besides reading the socialist press.

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Members who are in an area where there are not enough for the formation of a circle, function as members-at-large with full privileges and duties. Members-at-large usually work with other organizations where they may find people who can be

won to socialism. They constantly strive to build a circle in their community.

Dues in the Y.P.S.L. are \$2.00 a year. All members receive subscriptions to the CALL, CHALLENGE, and Young Socialist Review.

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