

AGAINST SOCIALISM—FOR COMMUNISM

A Message to All Activists in the Struggle for Peace

September 29, 2001 by Floyce White

Today we gather to oppose President Bush's threats to launch a war of revenge—really a war for conquest of oil and gas fields and poppy fields. I too am saddened and horrified by the depraved acts of murder committed by terrorist hijackers September 11. But I will allow neither warmongering nor pacifist "non-politicization" to dissuade me from discussing these urgent issues with fellow activists.

Peace is the natural, cooperative condition of humanity. Warfare is an anti-social aberration that can be ended permanently. Peace is a way of life, not merely an interval between attacks. Our struggle is to end the entire system that causes war and violence.

Every violent act and threat of harm is based on a mistaken idea: that one person should tell another what to do. Power over others is achieved by claiming possession of the things that other people use. Power over others becomes a method of human relations—a social system—in which every thing, every place, every idea is someone's property.

Ownership takes the actual form of society divided into classes. The upper class consists of inheritance units—families—that make huge claims of ownership. Economic and political oppression comes as the rich enforce their claims. Employers, landlords, merchants, and investors are the instigators of coercion and war. For this reason, rich people must not be invited to participate in peace activities.

The lower class consists of the great majority whose claims of ownership do not go beyond items of personal use. These dispossessed families are forced to sell themselves as laborers to the possessing rich. Working-class people are exploited, but do not exploit others for property gain. This concern for others before one's self is the only source of peace; therefore, the struggle of the working class to end capitalism is the same as the struggle to end warfare.

We must advocate action based on the self-organization of the working class. We must reject the elitist notion that poor people are somehow unable to comprehend theory or practice. To the contrary—the poorest people are the best informed about actual conditions and are the most capable of directing struggle. We must oppose any philosophy that tends to limit the participation of poor people. Concepts of race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual revolution, male chauvinism, experts or authority figures, and the like are just excuses for the existing structure of oppression. Comrades from capitalist family origins must step aside and become sympathizers without voice and vote.

For many years, the goal of the movement against capitalism was called “socialism.” Socialists adopted the idea of maximizing state (public) property while retaining most forms of family (private) property. The reality of so-called “socialist countries” or “workers’ states”—such as the USSR or China—was rule by petty-capitalist clans that individually were not big enough to control heavy industry. They exploited the working class directly through small business, and indirectly through government-owned big business with a hired bureaucracy of privileged management workers—many of who were from petty-bourgeois families. As soon as these families accumulated enough power to wrest control of heavy industry, they dropped their fiction of being pro-worker.

Nationalization is part of the ordinary organization of capital. How could it be otherwise? The nation-state is the form of territorial rule specific to capitalism, just as the kingdom was specific to feudalism. “Nation-alized” means in the hands of one nation of capitalist families. Most countries use a nationalized postal system. Many have a nationalized airline. Nationalized big business can be found in many less-developed countries. Nationalizations are also used by more-developed capitalism as a way to rescue unprofitable industries, such as Conrail and Amtrak in the US. Some socialists developed theories of “state capitalism” or “statism” that correctly identify the so-called “socialist countries” or “workers’ states” as a form of capitalism, but their goals are fundamentally no different. They too are in favor of maintaining property relations—the system of exploitation of labor—with maximized state property. The struggle against capitalism is yoked to the method of nationalizations, which is no more anti-capitalist than are syndicates or co-ops. In many less-developed countries, the struggle for workers’ liberation is also subordinated to the local capitalists’ struggle for national liberation from foreign domination. The anti-imperialist movement becomes a pro-petty-capitalist movement. Fact is, the entire history of socialism is a history of bitter defeats of various “minimum programs,” “transitional periods,” and other experiments in “stages.”

For these reasons, we must oppose socialism and any pretense to stop the struggle at some “stage.” Instead, we must advocate the abolition of all property relations—both public and private—during the overthrow of the capitalist state. If our method is to always relegate the ultimate goal to the far future, it will never be achieved. Our slogans must be:

SHARE NOT TRADE
ABOLISH EMPLOYMENT—END WAGE SLAVERY
NO RENT—NO MORTGAGE—NO HOMELESSNESS
COMMUNISM IN OUR LIFETIME

This article is the first in a series, available at <http://www.geocities.com/antiproperty>

AGAINST LIBERALISM—FOR COMMUNISM

A Message to All Activists in the Struggle for Peace

November 1, 2001 by Floyce White

Petroleum. Natural gas. Opium. Refugee labor. These are the commodities on the new Silk Road of Asia. Treasures reaped by the merchants, who fight each other for control of trade. Treasures unseen by the millions of dead in the off-and-on oil wars. The prolonged war in South America differs only in substitution of cocaine and coffee for opium poppies. The rich disco in Cairo and Miami. The poor kill each other for soldiers' pay. Such is life under imperialism.

When the Soviet Union lost the Cold War and its government collapsed, the Russian capitalists lost most of their empire. Chinese capitalists returned to being colonial compradores to again-victorious America. The "Opening of Vietnam" and the attempt at a New Bases Treaty for the Philippines were immediate consequences of the Sino-Soviet surrender. The advance of US capital into the fringes of the old Soviet empire could be seen by satellite photography as trails of smoke and dead bodies from its participation in wars around the Persian Gulf and Mediterranean. A new version of "Manifest Destiny" was unwrapped as the Free Trade Area of the Americas. Western European capital hurried to duplicate this in its European Union. Japan became increasingly isolated and crisis-ridden as it and the "Four Tigers" were no longer special investment opportunities. Sheer butchery in Rwanda, the Congo, West Africa, Angola, and the Horn of Africa reflected the changes in imperial strengths. The hundreds of millions of war-related and economic refugees throughout Eurasia, Africa, and the Americas testified that human suffering is the greatest product of any empire.

It took only ten years for the American New World Order to draw attacks on its homeland. The threat from the skies is every bit as terrorizing now as it once was from Soviet and Chinese nuclear missiles. The extinction of all humanity from plagues of biological warfare is every bit as possible as our eventual extinction from radiation-caused genetic mutations.

American capitalists tell us that the enemy is foreign capital, foreigners, and anyone who seems to not be their supporters. Their advice is to support the US military as it drops bombs and shoots radioactive shells at foreign targets. Their advice is to support the US police forces as they spy on and shoot people who seem to match stereotypes/profiles of the "criminal types" who are poor, have dark skin, or speak a foreign language. American capitalists are forever telling us to shut up, do as we're told, and get back to work. Foreign capitalists tell us that they love Americans—until death rains from the skies.

The ongoing tradition of the peace movement is to repeat the lie that capitalists are our friends. Part of the peace movement postures as the anti-communist, loyal-opposition pacifists who say that business is good and should not be disrupted by war. Part of the peace movement postures as "anti-imperialist" and spreads the lie that petty-capitalist rule labeled as "socialism" in the USSR, China, Vietnam, or Cuba represents the unity of working-class people. They spread the lie that

petty capitalists in Central America or Palestine are allies in a common struggle against big US corporations. The current “anti-globalization” movement is even more blatant: it falsely equates worldwide opposition to big capital with support for locally-based small capital. The approach of these peace movements is to increase the political power of small capitalists—that is why communists refer to them as *petty-bourgeois movements*.

Many working-class people participate in various petty-bourgeois movements. We discover political people who mouth “anti-capitalism” but never advocate direct workers’ takeover of the workplace, direct tenants’ takeover of rental and mortgage housing, direct homeless takeover of empty buildings or land, direct neighborhood takeover of stores, or any action that can immediately end property relations. We feel a burning hatred of the rich, but the rich brats who go slumming in leftist movements tell us there is no anti-property solution. Their revolution is the despicable revolving door, where our struggle is used to help small capitalists replace big capitalists as the ruling exploiters. Forgotten is the principle of worldwide workers’ solidarity against all capitalists. Forgotten is the method of listening most to the ordinary nobody. Instead, insults are used to divide working-class people—such as the idea that homeless, sick, and hungry poor whites somehow benefit from racism and imperialism. As obviously fascist as is the movement for “white power,” many radical-liberal and socialist organizations endorse and promote “black power” and other segregation movements. Day-to-day activism confirms the simple fact that broadly-inclusive organizations are controlled by their purse strings. Multi-class committees mean money-dominated politics.

The concept of *niche oppression* lingers as a stench of death over the liberal-oriented socialist movement. All of the devices that capitalists use to divide workers are resurrected as sacred cows: nationality, religion, sexual revolution, supposed “race” or “ethnicity,” and so on. In this way, the landlord always claims to be more oppressed than his tenants, since he points out plenty of ways that the culture and organization of bigger capitalists restrict his ability to do whatever he pleases. The small employer who practices vegetarianism is supposedly “progressive” while his junk-food-eating employees are “backwards.” Liberal ideas are reflected in all the current socialist theories, such as the jargon of “triple-layered oppression” or the line that “workers can’t win by themselves.” The purely-commercial leftism displayed on the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica or on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley is the suicidal end point of liberalism in the workers’ movement. We must totally break from liberalism and differentiate ourselves from liberals. We must unite against the rich—and especially against liberal, pro-capitalist ideology within the movements for social change. Our slogans must be:

SHARE NOT TRADE
ABOLISH EMPLOYMENT—END WAGE SLAVERY
NO RENT—NO MORTGAGE—NO HOMELESSNESS
COMMUNISM IN OUR LIFETIME

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WHAT IS COMMUNISM AND HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE IT?

December 1, 2001 by Floyce White

In the article *Against Socialism—For Communism*, I present the idea that preserving the forms of capitalism—such as nationalized big business—is not a step toward communism. In the subsequent article *Against Liberalism—For Communism*, I draw the conclusion that bourgeois methods of struggle are always counterposed to direct workers' control. Form and substance, methods and goals, theory and practice coexist to condition each other.

These articles are not written for a small group of co-thinkers, nor as an attempt to influence any elite group of "experts" or "leaders." This discussion is for the participation of the masses of working-class activists. Millions of communists worldwide are influenced by the politics of the Communist Parties and descendant movements, and they use the term "socialist" to describe the former USSR. Millions of Socialist Party members and sympathizers worldwide also define "socialism" as a system with classes, states, politics, money, and other forms of property. Millions of union organizers and supporters of Labor Parties think likewise. While a majority can be wrong, it is important to point out that language is fluid. The meanings of words are determined by social movements, not by scholars.

The group of positions taken by Lenin was used by him and others as a dogma associated with his status and personality. "Leninism" currently is the predominant influence on communist ideas; therefore, Lenin's definitions of socialism and communism are the standards of current usage. Many communists believe that the group of positions taken by Marx and Engels is an unbreakable whole—this too is a dogma associated with their personalities. "Marxism" promotes the idea that there must be a prolonged "lower phase" of post-revolutionary society. Lenin merely applied the term "socialism" to the "Marxist" lower phase, and defined "communism" as the final goal. Just as "Marxism-Leninism" must be roundly criticized, so must "Marxist-Leninist" definitions.

Class society is the society of classes of property ownership. Property classes cannot exist without property. The abolition of property in every form is the abolition of class society. Support for a "lower phase" called "socialism" that continues property relations is merely another way to defend class society and its exploitation of the working class. The whole point of overthrowing the state through revolution is not to secure reforms, not to "re-form" the state, but to create favorable conditions to rapidly shatter all forms of class society. Socialist revolution nowhere did this. The obvious defects of socialism caused a great deal of discouragement and introversion among communists. A dogmatic and sectarian pitting of the views of one "leader" against another with "leader-ism" dragged the workers' movement further and further away from any useful theory. Ideas come from the struggle, not from politicians. To develop meaningful theory, we must examine the struggle and the social relations behind it.

The natural ecology of all living things is to adapt the environment to fit their needs. In doing so, the environment changes. As the environment changes, so do living things. Our great ability to make tools and artifacts changes our selves, our society, and all life in a way that no other animal can.

The rise of property classes was the humiliation and subjugation of productive activity. The division of labor, specialization of trades, mechanization, and other techniques of labor management cause some

productive behaviors to be isolated from other associated and complimentary activities. Unrealistic labels of “work,” “education,” and “leisure” are created. Specific “work” behaviors become the subjects of economic thought, and the false distinction between economic and non-economic activity is used to promote an economic fetish. As with all fetishes, it originates from class society and serves to support class society. Communist theory is influenced by this economic fetish, and communists are won to the belief that society must pay excessive attention to and must always strive to maximize the “work” behaviors. The result is the idea that communism must be defined as an abundance—or at least an adequate supply—of the goods and services that result from “work.” The gushing adoration of producers is, in reality, backhanded support for their continued alienation.

Communism is first and foremost a relation between people, not a relation between people and things. Relations between people are not altered by changes in the quantities of things. Relations between people change through the violent, revolutionary process of *imposition and suppression*, whereby new social relations are imposed and the old social relations are suppressed.

An ongoing system of social relations can be either communist and peaceful or propertied and violent. The application of violence prevents people from using their productive abilities to reduce shortages in food, shelter, fuel, clothing, or necessary artifacts except as it benefits the aggressors. The application of violence forces people to use their productive abilities to make an abundance of goods and services that do not correspond to physiological needs—workers produce use-values that are useful to continue the rule of the aggressors.

Communism is not the permanent elimination of hunger and disease, nor is it any temporary abundance of things. Conversely, communism is not a religious appeal to suffer and sacrifice for someone else’s betterment. Communism is the well-reasoned concern for one’s self as an inseparable part of the community, as opposed to a cunning, competitive calculation of “mine” and “theirs.” Communism is thinking and doing for the well-being of everyone—knowing that each of us came from and always will be a part of that everyone. Communism uses the method of people sharing things, regardless of how abundant or scarce those things may be. Petroleum, natural gas, and coal are natural resources that become increasingly scarce as we use them. Scarcity of fuel will not undermine communism. Rather, communist, non-violent social relations will allow us to produce fuel crops if needed instead of setting us against each other in a scramble for control of naturally-occurring fuel. The never-ending fuel war in the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and Central Asia is the total opposite of communist society.

Communist ideas are the history of struggle against violence and exploitation. These ideas are discussed and change as more history is made. Communism can be achieved only by integrating the lessons of history into current workers’ struggles. Working-class activists learn from history and become communists through our participation as *fellow workers* in their struggles. Communism can never be achieved by redirecting workers’ fury into bourgeois causes. Communism can never be achieved by an elite vanguard of bourgeois commanders who herd workers as dumb cattle into the holding pen of socialism. Communism can be achieved only as the intentional product of the organized action of the entire laboring class. Communism always was and forever will be achievable—it has never depended on the technical development of workhouses. The “struggle within the struggle” remains the same: against liberal-oriented socialism—for communism!

ALPHABET SOUP SPELLS CAPITALISM

January 1, 2002 by Floyce White

A few weeks ago, I attended a public meeting sponsored by a local peace group. A known speaker was introduced who identified himself as a member of one of the many US-based socialist organizations. He talked about the war, about US corporations, about the "Afghan people," and about the "Arab people." Not once in his hour-long speech did he use the term "working class." This is how he is preparing the working class for revolution? With this sort of preparation, it is no wonder that socialists assert that workers "can't" reach communism—that workers need a prolonged post-revolutionary period of extreme exploitation to learn how to be communists. Nonsense! The reverse is true. Socialist "leaders" are interested only in mystifying politics to make themselves seem brilliant to potential "followers." Socialist "leaders" don't know what communism is, nor do they know how to achieve it—and they don't care. "Leaders" are well educated and well traveled; relevant discussion for "followers" can wait till the undetermined future.

After reading the first article in this series, *Against Socialism—For Communism*, several people commented that I am unfair to write that capitalists must not be members of workers' organizations. No. The reverse is true. I would be unfair to you if I called your landlord my "comrade." You would be unfair to me if you called my employer your "comrade." Just as management employees tend to act as agents of their employers and are not allowed to join unions, individual members of capitalist families tend to protect the system of property classes and must not be allowed to join any workers' organization.

What does it mean if, in a so-called "workers' party," capitalists are present roughly equal to their proportion in society? It means that a dual-class alliance is being built—not a workers' alliance. Dual-class political organization is a method to advance the goal of dual-class society. Without a doubt, in every capitalist-worker alliance, the capitalists dominate the workers.

Indeed, there is a veritable "alphabet soup" of self-proclaimed "workers' parties" and pre-party formations that recruit capitalists to be members, as their 19th Century models did. They openly advocate socialism as a form of class society. They lump together labor issues with divisive bourgeois causes: feminism, national liberationism, "race" quotas, and so on. They busy themselves in labeling every niche as an "oppressed minority" and then creating a majority out of these "minorities"—in every way, the bourgeois parliamentarians. Virtually indistinguishable from one another, a new micro-party is formed as one clique of "leaders" discovers a new disagreement and splinters off. Working-class people who participate in these groups are thus divided. These dual-class hybrids of bourgeois patronage alternately mushroom and rot with every change in the political climate. This "alphabet soup" is the true face of bourgeois consciousness: awareness of their existence as individual blocs in competition with other capitals, and of their needs to isolate and command over groups of laborers. Their betrayals look good only in the absence of a genuine workers' party that practices solidarity against all capitalists.

A workers' party is indispensable—it transcends the divisions of competing countries and companies. Labor unions, neighborhood committees, and school associations are also indispensable—they build upon the existing organization of society. These groups cannot be declared into being—they are created by masses in struggle. Every struggle that has working-class participation has the potential to bring forth

workers' demands, but as we see in the petty-bourgeois socialist movement, this potential can be effectively dampened by pro-capitalist theory and practice. Election campaigns, petitions, and lawsuits are among the sorry tools that derail working-class activism. These methods greatly reinforce the liberal belief that social change occurs only when government policy changes. They foster reliance on government functionaries rather than on the united action of working-class people.

Is the purpose of working-class organization to get state power? No. The reverse is true. Governments are the armed thugs who defend the right of the propertied to exploit the dispossessed. The working class has every reason to smash all governments and to prevent their return. Socialists claim that a "dictatorship of the proletariat" is a necessary transition from capitalism to communism. They assert that a "workers' state" is an essential part of a "lower stage" when ever-smaller businesses gradually get nationalized. Eventually the state should "wither away" when "everybody owns everything." Hah! Why not "nobody owns anything," which is already a fact of life for the vast working-class majority? All that is needed is to immediately dispossess the rich through a revolution that abolishes all forms of property, public and private. Yet socialists insist on a slow process of repossession. Petty-capitalist "leaders" lust to seize the property of the big capitalists and make it "ours," as the Russian October Revolution accomplished for them. Frustrated in their desire to get control of the immense Russian Empire, factions of that small and weak capitalist class created one after another populist movement of multi-class alliances. Immediately after a workers' uprising won power for it, the Bolshevik government used capitalist commissioners as "leaders" to disrupt, co-opt, and pacify the soviets before the growing working-class movement could use the councils as organs of communist revolution. Pre-existing capitalists created the Bolshevik regime. Propertied classes create states—not the other way around.

Communists must abandon and criticize the "Marxist-Leninist" concept that the dispossessed laboring class could, should, or did create a state to defend its property interests. In doing so, we must also abandon and criticize its evil twin brother: the idea that a class of "state capitalists" was created by the government in the USSR. Socialism is a desperate attempt to save capitalism by maximizing state ownership and calling it "workers' rule." "State capitalism" is a sales pitch for those who didn't buy it the first time around.

Socialist groups claim to be "workers' parties" because they advocate workers' revolts. Do politics determine class content? No. The reverse is true. The content of the "alphabet soup" as a dual-class alliance determines its liberal, pro-capitalist politics—with "Marxist" dogma mixed throughout as the recipe for attracting workers. The intervention of capitalists into the working-class movement, and its debasement as self-dividing radical-liberal sects, is capitalist resolve to prevent even the possibility that anti-property demands could ever be raised. Comrades from capitalist family origins are the living counterrevolution within revolutionary organizations. They don't know starvation amid plenty, lingering sickness without the money to pay for treatment, homelessness surrounded by empty buildings—and they don't care. For rich comrades, no need is urgent; smashing the property system can wait till the undetermined future.

Should working-class communists participate in the petty-bourgeois socialist movement? Yes of course! We must be involved wherever working-class people raise their demands. We should form local study-and-action groups of all working-class activists regardless of other memberships. In these groups we can exclude our oppressors and build unity toward the establishment of the party of the working class.

COMMUNISM IS ACTION NOT A BELIEF

February 1, 2002 by Floyce White

Many working-class people are drawn into struggle through an initial contact with one or another petty-bourgeois movement. Most are disgusted and repelled; those who remain are slowly won to liberalism. They come to see the totality of bourgeois causes as "the movement." Activists get jerked from one urgent campaign to another. The ever-present need for an immediate show of numbers causes the "struggle within the struggle" to be nicely and conveniently suppressed. Slogans, writings, and actions are adopted that do not threaten property relations. Anger is channeled into sham confrontations of "civil disobedience" rather than takeovers. As activists get involved in more issues, their struggles become increasingly distant from the material distress that set them into political action.

Lacking any process of long-term development of struggle, the "proletarian milieu" gets defined by opinions on issues instead of as the condition of being working-class people in struggle to end class society. The presence of capitalists within each organization ensures that any position on any issue must be pro-property. The presence of many small capitalists is what keeps a petty-bourgeois movement petty bourgeois. Capitalists are class conscious because of their business activity; any idea that challenges their domination is viciously expunged. Each multi-class faction develops a basketful of positions as its manifesto, platform, or program to guide action. The long-term process of ongoing discussion, debate, criticism, and self-criticism is replaced by quoting authority figures or reciting the "party line." Particularly odious is the wholly-false concept of *group opinion* that pressures each member to participate in actions and distribute statements already decided by some majority vote, consensus, committee, or "leader." Disagreement is labeled "petty bourgeois" even though agreement is always for a pro-capitalist solution. Disagreement means quitting, splitting, or acting against one's beliefs. Spontaneity, flexibility of tactics, multiple approaches, individual initiative—all are stifled by conformity. Bossed over as if employees, the circle is complete when working-class activists announce the work orders to the masses.

Many working-class activists try to wash their hands of bourgeois politics by concentrating on workplace or neighborhood issues. This strategy is not effective. The property system always generates sellouts among the dispossessed. To save their privileged positions, traitors always silence any talk of overthrowing the system. These labor lieutenants of capital create conservative company unions or liberal "us only" unions, but never build long-term relations with meaningful acts of support. Token solidarity is limited to "our" industry, country, or local. Traitors turn community-action groups into voter-turnout machines, parapolice, or "poverty pimps" for government grants. Anti-worker politics limits the choices to various liberal reforms. "Throw the bums out" instead of explaining why all reformers are sellouts. "The workers aren't ready" instead of raising the anti-property demands that make workers

ready. Lifelong reformers become the slickest practitioners of bourgeois politics and the slimiest apologists for the capitalist system. Working-class activists face the same underhanded methods and the same ulterior motives in every political arena. The absence of capitalists merely opens the possibility for working-class solidarity. Fearless and persistent struggle with communist ideas is necessary to win workers away from anti-worker politics.

In the course of writing these articles, people ask me if I am a “left communist” or an anarchist. No. These flyers are a criticism of the petty-bourgeois socialist movement and a self-criticism of my participation in it. The struggle of the poor against the rich is named for its goal: communism. If it were called something else, the rich would have dirtied that name. As working-class activists raise their demands in petty-bourgeois movements, the names of those movements get soiled too. The search for a “New Left,” a third way, or a special appellation reveals the shallowness of petty-bourgeois “anti-capitalism.”

Communism is not a specialization to be vaunted or a program to be waved. Communism is not accidentally created during endless repetition of the mistakes of the past. Communism is the definitive state of being, expressed in the words and deeds of the dispossessed. There is no such thing as a “capitalist communist.” We must not pussyfoot around the bourgeoisification of struggle by calling rich comrades “intellectuals”—or worse, “workers” due to belief. Comrades from capitalist family origins are, at best, sloppy reporters and wannabes who consciously and unconsciously use every trick, humiliation, and malfunction as their actual anti-communist being. To emulate them or to accept their limited goals is to play the fool and traitor. In opposing the routines of daily life—going to work, going to bed, going to the store—we find the threads of communism. Our slogans must be:

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NO COMPROMISE WITH CAPITALISM

March 1, 2002 by Floyce White

You are facing north. East is to your right? True. You turn to face south. East is to your right? False. Any idea, such as "east is to your right," is only temporarily and conditionally true.

A woman is facing north. East is to her right? Maybe. She could be standing at the South Pole, where north is in every direction of travel. Every rule has exceptions.

The concept of "absolute truth" is easily defeated by examples such as these. True or false depends on the position of the observer. What is true to one person is false to another. Even these statements are only partially true, and may in time be superseded by better theory. For communists, ideas come from practice and are tested in practice. Communist theory changes with every new experience of struggle. But to those who defend class society, truth is whatever authority figures say. Dogmatism, supernaturalism, and chicanery become "true" as dishonest methods serve dishonest goals. East or west, "all roads lead to Rome" for the elitist. When a theory has no apparent flaws and cannot be beaten, the purveyors of "absolute truth" resort to logical fallacies and other cheap debaters' tricks. No method is too low to defend "absolute truth" from those who expose its falsehoods. This is the class struggle in the world of ideas.

"Communism" is the dirtiest word in any language; there is an external taboo against calling oneself a "communist" or discussing the struggle of the poor against the rich. Within the communist movement coexists an internal taboo against discussing the unwanted presence of the rich. As with all taboos, it originates from class society and serves to support class society.

What role do capitalists have in the self-organization of the working class? None. How can it be the self-organization of the working class if capitalists are involved? It cannot be. This simple logic has no apparent flaws and is confronted by roundabout contortions. Some argue that communism does not come from the self-organization of the working class. In this series of articles, I show that the movement of the poor is undermined by the intervention of the rich. Without self-organization, capitalist-led dual-class alliances use liberalism to divide and conquer working-class activists. Capitalist-led workers' revolts help small capitalists replace big capitalists as the ruling exploiters. Any compromise on the principle of workers' self-organization condemns humanity to another generation of class warfare.

Another way to attack the self-organization of the working class is to define classes as something other than property classes. In this way, capitalists can pretend to be working-class people and can continue to infiltrate workers' groups and prevent self-organization. For example, classes could be defined by occupation. Butcher, baker, candlestick maker—all are forms of work, so all doers of work are supposedly working class. Managers, executives, and "the bosses" are seen as "real" capitalists. If the butcher also owns a rent house, we are told to ignore it. Of course, the butcher's tenants are still exploited. They continue to rent according to the conditions dictated by property owners. The tenants pay off the mortgage and the landlord gets the deed. The landlord then takes out another mortgage and uses it to buy yet another rent house. The family of the butcher inherits the property and continues the cycle of capital circulation and accumulation. The tenants are exploited in exactly the same way regardless of whether the rent house is sold to a bank, a management company, a government agency, a co-op, or a family. The relation of landlord to tenant is a social relation of violence. It is a form of capitalist rule. To tell tenants that some landlords are their friends and allies is to betray the struggles of hundreds of millions of working-class families who have small landlords, small employers, or buy from small merchants. The kicker is that this method also looks at

ownership to determine whether a “real” (big) capitalist is “really” exploiting tenants. Defining classes by occupation has such glaring flaws as to be a way of disguising capitalist relations rather than exposing them. As long as the landlord, employer, merchant, or investor can successfully hide the extent of his family’s business activity, he can use definition of classes by what-little-you-know-about-his-occupation to suppress your struggle against his capitalism.

Since occupation is usually a source of income, defining classes by occupation is a subset of defining classes by amount of income. Small capitalists generally do not take high incomes from their business activity—capital is circulated rather than being consumed. The income from rental properties is zero, so the occupation of being a landlord seems insignificant compared to the income from any day job. Defining classes by income intentionally overlooks the accumulation of assets. This dishonest method further disunites the working class by profiling and stereotyping people with very little income as a “lumpenproletariat” or “underclass” of “bums,” “criminals,” and “welfare mothers.” These loathsome and vile labels go hand-in-hand with the racism, anti-foreigner bigotry, and superiority trips that increased their unemployment and lowered their wages in the first place. Besides the long-term underemployed, other non-income-earning occupations such as “student” or “retired” are posers for this method, which cultivates the mystique of individual “classlessness” or nihilistically slams all human relations as “exploitation.”

The false method of defining classes by known occupation puts blinders on any analysis of socialist countries such as the former Soviet Union. Socialist countries have money, wage labor, commodity exchange, and all the other forms of capitalism—so they must have the substance of capitalism. Who are the capitalists? The lot of hired bureaucrats are arbitrarily labeled “capitalists” because their jobs have well-known perquisites and involve known managerial tasks. Meanwhile, tens of millions of family-owned small businesses circulate and accumulate capital in petty-capitalist agriculture, and in the “free,” parallel, underground, or black markets of the little-monitored “informal economy.” This actual class of capitalist families is ignored because their reported business activity seems so small compared to the gross exaggerations of production in state-owned business. The massive corruption, theft, wastage, and spoilage in state-owned industry is the wink-and-nod subsidy to family-owned business, whose members get into management jobs so that they too can steal raw materials to resell as finished consumer goods. It is putting the cart before the horse to say that employment as government or state-business bureaucrats is the cause of being capitalists, and once they become capitalists, some start little businesses on the side. The Soviet system was not a degeneration, feudalism, or a troubled new system as many socialists suggest. The Soviet economy was the finest example of the normal functioning of socialism: to assist capital accumulation while hiding the extent of family-owned business under the guise of “workers’ rule.” Nationalized property in any country is owned by the state on behalf of whatever capitalists there are. Nationalizations of heavy industry are especially useful when capitalists are tiny and scattered. The petty-bourgeois socialist movement predictably and chronically fails to develop a logically-true analysis of the Soviet Union due to foggy definitions of classes.

The discussion keeps returning to what you know as the basis for determining facts. Truth is relative to what you know and what you want to do about it. Petty capitalists don’t want you to recognize them as capitalists. They say whatever is needed to advance their property interests. To you it is dishonesty—to them it is “Marxism” or some other dogma of “absolute truth.” They ask you to compromise on the principle of self-organization. They ask you to compromise on the definition of classes. Previous generations of working-class activists compromised and compromised until there were no principles left to concede. Then workers slaughtered each other in world wars and wars for the “liberation” of local small capitalists. To avoid the inevitable consequences of compromise, we must compromise no more. Big or small, all capitalists are the enemy.

SUPERIORITY OR SOLIDARITY

April 1, 2002 by Floyce White

As a boy, I endured privation along with my family. Of course, the full extent of our want was kept hidden from me—children are protected from the awful truth. Yet no matter how wise the parents, the children learn at school: some people have more than others, and for this reason they are treated better. I asked why, and was reassured that we were part of the “lower middle class.” This certainly sounded better than being called “poor.” In many ways, it was a denial of ourselves and the community around us. Looking back, I can’t blame them—folks just repeated the “lower middle class” tale because it represented the facts as best they knew.

I grew up hearing the family stories. As a girl, Mom had to go out barefoot in the Illinois winter to break the ice and fetch water every morning. Sometimes she returned with numbed feet and chunks of ice. Like everyone else, Dad’s family stole coal off rail cars, and had to put up with cruel bosses whenever they could find work. For many months, Dad supported the whole family by enrolling in the CCC. Both Mom and Dad nearly starved to death during the Great Depression, and often had nothing to eat but beans. Both Mom and Dad lost a parent during those hard times.

By the 1970s, surrounded by luxuries such as the ice box, the TV, and the little car called “NSU,” they still lived from hand to mouth. The ordinary setbacks and disappointments of life were just too much to overcome. Mom and Dad came down with serious chronic illnesses that made them unable to work. Even so, it wasn’t hard to find people who were worse off—white, black, or brown. We made what money we could by picking pecans. Dad played the horses, so the rare trip to Juarez or Mexicali race books showed a living example of a society in permanent depression. There were always poorer folks, so this tended to reinforce the belief that we too were superior in some way to the lower class.

Boys become men, and illusions get dispelled. At six-foot-one, 137 pounds, with a mouth full of black cavities, I made it to adulthood. As a boy, I was told that being skinny or fat, having cavities or none, and other characteristics were due to personal hygiene. As a man, I learned that underweight and overweight are the twin diseases of malnutrition. I learned that juvenile dental decay occurs when a malnourished body robs minerals from the teeth to support bone growth. And I learned that millions of poor people repeat the same tales that reinforce the belief in individual superiority and inferiority. But long before I learned these lessons, I had already decided that the most important thing in life is how you treat others—and capitalism is a terrible way to treat people.

Capitalism is based on commodity exchange. Every person and every thing is constantly measured and evaluated as equal or unequal, better or worse. Every exchange occurs under conditions of advantage and disadvantage, for the purpose of increasing one’s advantage—and the poor are extremely disadvantaged when it comes to trade. If one person says “no” to a job offer, another poor person can be found to take the job at the same miserably low wage. If one household says “no” to an overpriced rent, plenty of other poor families face impending homelessness and will pay. The rich always win at “fair trade.” By increasing their advantage—by accumulating property—the rich increase the dispossession and desperation of the poor.

From time to time, every wage worker is unemployed. Many have been hungry and homeless. Others go without desperately needed items such as a car, diapers, or medicine. Savings are used up and credit cards are maxed out. These periods of destitution mean that most workers never save enough money to stop working, and retire with money worries. Generation after generation of poor people sell themselves into servitude. Generation after generation of rich people hire and fire. Society is divided into a rich upper class and a poor lower class. This theory matches the actual experience of life. Since this theory explains so much, it must be destroyed.

The idea of a “middle class” does not originate among the poor. High school and college textbooks, the news and entertainment media, business, and government promote this belief. Practically all professional “leaders” of the social hierarchy are obsessed with spreading this belief. They gush and prattle incessantly about the specialness of the “middle class” and the “Americaness” of the “middle class.” Behind it all is the idea that having more money makes some people better than others.

The idea of a “middle class” apologizes for the exploitation of the small employer, landlord, merchant, or investor. Calling the petty capitalists “middle class” makes their accumulation of assets (from a position of social advantage) seem similar to the struggle for higher wages by employees (from a position of disadvantage). Calling well-paid or white-collar workers “middle class” looks at their temporary high incomes or better working conditions and denies their family histories of wage labor. Behind it all is a deliberate anti-communism that tries to annihilate the concept of a distinct class of capitalists and a distinct class of not-capitalists.

Within the supposedly “anti-capitalist” movements, rich people appoint themselves as the representatives of the poor. Comrades from capitalist family origins use every advantage they have to advocate their views, which means that they dominate the discussion. Furthermore, ordinary poor people are shushed in deference to preachers, union executives, party bosses, journalists, and other professional representation. Using this process, it is impossible to find out what poor people think—only the opinions of those already in positions of social superiority. Therefore, this process cannot possibly represent the poor. Democratic representation and dictatorial rule are opposite sides of the same capitalist coin.

There is only one way for working-class people to represent our views, and that is to speak for ourselves. We must abandon and criticize the method of allowing others to speak for us. Instead of relying on chosen speakers, we must grab the microphone and proclaim what we know to be true from our actual life experiences. Instead of relying on books by long-dead rich “leaders,” we must use the pencil, the typewriter, the computer, and the photocopier. We must read, copy, distribute, and respond to each others’ writings and speeches. Not everyone is good at writing. Mass expressions of resistance and rebellion, such as shoplifting, employee theft, absenteeism, and rioting and looting must be seen as genuine indicators of the political will of the working class. We must pay particular attention to the song, dance, drawings, and other artistic, sporting, religious, and cultural expressions of the poor. Only by listening to this voice can we learn how to organize. Only by speaking out do we announce our solidarity and give others the chance to learn from us. The process of long-term development of working-class unity resides in us—not in the say-so of the rich. The power to change the world always was and forever will be in our hands.

COMMUNISM MEANS COMMUNES

October 1, 2002 by Floyce White

Father, son, and the property inheritance they claim: the holy trinity of class society. Nothing is more sacred to the propertied class save sanctity itself. Nothing is more accursed to the dispossessed class than their birthright. Degraders and degraded, both are grateful to receive a coin. Both become something less than human by the knowledge that a coin in their hands means one fewer for someone else. After years of such disease comes the welcome release, and begins anew the cycle of inheritance or lack thereof.

Property is no mystery. Every small child is taught the system of "yours" and "mine." Transgression is punished with threats and physical harm. Without the stupid brutality of police, the dispossessed would not allow others to treat them as chattel. Without the organized violence of the state, there could be no familial inheritance classes.

Terrorism by special small bodies is the method of struggle of the propertied. Direct mass action is the method of struggle of the dispossessed. Police, courts, and jails are not classless forms that could be filled with any class content. Their opposite—the self-mobilization of the working class—is also not a classless form that could "follow" hierarchical "leadership." The strategy of arming a special body to rule over others cannot be reconciled with the strategy of the masses arming themselves to end the system of rulers and ruled. Before, during, or after the revolution, to subordinate working-class struggle to the functions of governmental bodies is unrepentant liberalism.

Over the past year I've had many discussions about this series of articles. Many comrades tell me that they agree almost completely with the points I've raised. Then they "dialectically" try to square them with the "Marxist" half-truth that "the state is a form of rule of one class over another." They too disagree with forming a typical capitalist nation-state after a workers' revolution, but want to create a state of a "totally different" type. The caricatures of conformity labeled as "workers' states" cause us to look elsewhere for working-class forms of post-revolutionary organization.

Throughout class society, the dispossessed have taken direct mass action to separate from the oppression of property. The more-successful attempts, such as the Spartacist uprising in Ancient Rome, involved an entire city or region. In the modern era, two world-shaking rebellions stand as our examples: the 1871 Paris Commune and the 1927 Shanghai Commune. There were other attempts to make communes, most notably in Shanghai in 1967. However, socialists usually were successful at discouraging and diverting the sort of self-organized direct action that culminates in local rebellions.

The commune is a form of struggle against exploitation. So is the similar soviet, or council form. By any name it is the comprehensive local organization of working-class struggle. In many ways it is an *anti-organization*, akin to the anti-formula movie. Anti-organization rejects the divisiveness that organized power traditionally uses to maintain its rule. Anti-organization achieves the most-rapid completion of its tasks using the most-irreversible methods. Anti-organization is highly organized, unlike riots that are not at all organized, or anarchist "networks" or socialist "vanguards" that have

only superficial participation by the masses. Anti-organization is the distinctive feature that makes working-class struggle an anti-class struggle.

When the revolution begins and the commune is formed, the lower class takes the initiative and moves from defense to offense. The slogan “defend the revolution” is exposed as a provocation to snarl revolutionary advance. Previously separate from the many reform groups of varied class composition, the party of the working class becomes the same as the commune, while the commune becomes the same as the activity of the working class. The victory of a commune—the abolition of property and therefore the end of familial inheritance classes—is the conversion of a commune into a community: the natural social unit of the species.

Pro-state socialists argue that communes “can’t win” against the armies of nation-states. According to them, workers must wait to rebel until they can “take power” over a whole country. A political-not-social revolution would then re-form the nation with a new government. A regular army and police would be raised to protect property rights in the territory. Workers would go back to work as usual and wait until socialists divide and conquer the whole world, country by country. Only then could socialist practices be fully instilled in the masses so that our descendants could create communism. The USSR and the People’s Republic of China are cited as practical examples of this theory—examples that were flawed and failed yet were correct in their basic approach. Hah! Ask it the other way. Are the failures of the USSR and China the practical results of flawed theory? No. “Socialist countries” or “workers’ states” are not failures at being nation-states. The theory of “dictatorship of the proletariat,” when put into practice, co-opted the soviet form and immediately drained it of the substance of direct mass action.

Were the Paris and Shanghai Communes practical examples of correct theory? Hardly. The Communists lacked ideological preparedness—evidenced by their naive use of bourgeois jargon. They were motivated by nationalism and stuck to parliamentarism. These communes were defeated by external pro-capitalist forces while working-class activists were losing the internal anti-capitalist struggle. If anything, theory about communes lagged miserably behind practice.

Ten years after the Russian capitalist revolution gave the bum rush to the soviet movement—and then dressed down as “Soviet Socialist Republics”—the re-emergence of the commune form was startling. The significance of the Shanghai Commune was not lost on Chinese communists, who repeatedly tried to make commune building the focus of laboring-class activism. Communist Party “leaders” co-opted this movement by dividing it into weak micro-communes that were, in reality, Russian-style co-ops (units of property ownership and accumulation) and mere wards in ordinary county government. Chinese capitalists later privatized the faux communes.

If it were possible to use the customs, traditions, and institutions of class rule to end class rule, we would have won long ago. The failures of previous communist uprisings were not—as socialists suggest—that the upper class did not create the proper conditions. Their failures were in trying to use forms of rule to end rule. Form and substance are the external and internal characteristics of the same process. Something “totally different” from capitalist property relations is no property at all. Something “totally different” from the nation-state is no state at all.

AGAINST CONSERVATISM—FOR COMMUNISM

April 1, 2003 by Floyce White

If you no longer had to earn money to pay rent and buy food, would you ever go back to work? No, of course not. Casinos and race tracks are full of people trying to escape the misery of work. So are bars and churches. There are any number of self-help schemes and fantasies for evading capitalism, for making the system “work for you,” and for numbing one’s mind against harsh reality. Whenever any of these methods partially and temporarily succeed for a few people, many rush in and disturb the conditions whereby the scheme formerly worked. Thus, any self-help plan strives to conserve the existing system in order to take advantage of its contradictions. For the masses, however, the choice is always to be a hammer or a nail, and we all know what happens when a nail raises its head.

“Use or be used” is the false dilemma presented by the users. Working-class solidarity is the simple solution to create another possibility. There is no reason to try to appease the exploiters, and it only encourages them. Nevertheless, traitors and sellouts within the labor movement try to reconcile employee with employer, and underbid others with conservative company unions or “get ahead” with liberal, “us only” unions. Their anti-solidarity approach neutralizes the labor movement. When “labor” agrees with management, it is hard to convince workers to bring their grievances to approved, harmless channels.

Without anti-business organization, working-class dissatisfaction erupts as mass riots and as millions of individual acts of resistance. Police and social workers have an easy time convincing isolated rebels that they are “bad persons,” and that a few rotten apples spoil things for everyone instead of the issue being the sociopathic system of property exchange. Demoralized and stressed-out youth are easy prey for the *jailhouse counterculture*. Just as with the hip counterculture of the Baby Boom generation, its purposes are to provide a loyal opposition and scapegoat to the mainstream culture, to confuse rebellion with living down to society’s lowest expectations, and to recruit an army of unpaid social activists who disrespect and abuse themselves and others. The jailhouse counterculture appears as T-shirts and dungarees, tattoos, earrings, and goatees, foul language, and a whole slew of affected mannerisms that glorify behavioral disorders. Alcoholism and drug addiction, homosexuality, bestiality, and child molestation, exhibitionism and voyeurism, sadism and masochism, womanizing, wife beating, and rape, greed and kleptomania, fear and hatred of dark hair and skin, and adults without mental maturity become as acceptable as locks and bars on windows and doors and security guards and cameras following you through stores. The jailhouse counterculture is such a familiar aspect of developed capitalism that the airport closure following the 911 attacks was explained as a “lockdown.” Homelessness is mocked by games and fashion such as the “shopping bag lady” look or by suburban skateboarders playing the street urchin. Political postings and graffiti are overwhelmed by “taggers” with wannabe gang messages and advertisements for night-club acts. The broader social effect of cringing, pro-business ideology within the labor movement is a cowardly society that taunts the mentally ill and suspects and criminalizes the unemployed, pedestrians and bus riders, and anyone who seems to be spending less money.

Liberals see the anti-social aspects of capitalist development and call these changes “normal.” Conservatives see the multitude of disturbed individuals, ignore causality, and call them “degenerate” and “decadent.” By blaming individuals, conservatives deny that only a profoundly sick system could generate mass mental illness.

To the capitalists, liberalism means changes that help the groups of capitalists who are not currently in power, and conservatism means resisting those changes to help the groups of capitalists who currently rule.

The big-capitalist families are generally in firm control of state power, and their attitudes define the conservative approach to current affairs. However, conflicts among various blocs of big and middle capital result in one or another faction renting liberal politicians to line up support for change. Under dictatorships, changes are done by rewarding generals for coup attempts. The many small-capitalist families flip-flop in support of whichever faction seems to help them accumulate capital faster, but generally begrudge the big capitalists' ability to dictate governmental policy. In the same way, colonial bourgeoisies change their business ties from one imperialist homeland to another, with every realignment called "national liberation."

To the workers, liberalism means small, token changes, and conservatism means no change at all. Traitors and sellouts amid the working-class movement falsely counterpose reform to revolution—as though they were separate and distinct processes. Perpetual reformism for reversible changes tail-ends the liberalism of the capitalists. Business unionists, "community leadership," and liberal politicians paint each other as working-class heroes for having advocated giving the dog a bone. Conservative politicians sell flags, wax nostalgic over past glories that never were, and warn workers to obey. Neither liberalism nor conservatism is the politics of working-class struggle. To the contrary: the goal of liberalism and conservatism is to conduct business, which is capitalist-class struggle.

Conservatives believe that social change occurs only through business functions. They foster reliance on labor-management schemes such as TQM, ESOP, 401(k), or "Buy American" rather than on the united action of working-class people. This is an insular view of the world. Individual businesses are affected by the actions of masses—not the other way around. Only by crushing, corrupting, or co-opting organized resistance do businesses have any power over the resulting mass of alienated individuals. The problem with conservatism in the labor movement is the same as the problem with liberalism in the labor movement. Both are concerned with motivating workers to work, when workers really just want to stop being workers.

The only sure way to stop paying the rent or mortgage is to organize the whole neighborhood to all stop paying rent at the same time. Then, to make sure no one ever returns to collect rent, destroy the records of banks and insurance companies, of bill collectors, management companies, and credit card companies, of document storage companies, and of the county recorder. Homelessness ends as the homeless organize themselves to occupy empty buildings and to build housing on vacant land. Likewise, the only sure way to stop buying food is to organize the whole neighborhood to tear down fences and plant gardens, orchards, and vineyards. Empty land becomes fields of grain and cotton. Neighborhood stores become mere storage instead of merchant shops. The same method must be applied to prisons, to police stations, to military bases, and to all of the oppressive apparatus. In this way, business loses its ability to keep the working class organized as a labor force but disorganized as a political force. When workers no longer need to go to work, the necessary precondition exists for workers' control of the workplace (instead of the other way around).

Socialists often express shock and disbelief when liberal revolutionaries succeed, form a government, and turn their attention to conserving the new order. Liberal before the revolution, conservative after—the switch is as predictable as night follows day. Socialists blame "Stalinists" or Contras for the change, or say that conditions were "not ripe." Hah! Liberalism and conservatism are complimentary co-processes in capitalist politics. Liberals never prepare the conditions for anything but a conservative regime. In condemning the lies of liberal-oriented socialism, the "struggle within the struggle" remains the same: against conservatism—for communism!

AGAINST ANARCHISM—FOR COMMUNISM

October 1, 2003 by Floyce White

When I tell people that I cannot see green, they always grab something green and ask "What color is this?" Deuteranopia is rare enough that I cannot expect others to understand why I say "Grass is orange." I have the responsibility to learn to distinguish color by association.

Petty capitalists have a sort of self-induced color blindness when it comes to politics. They would rather not see any harm in the claim to own things used by others. They would rather not see the violence behind property exchange. As with Bible beaters, persons who deceive themselves also deceive others. Upper-class people never live up to the responsibility to speak about red and black with the same meaning as does the lower class.

In this series of articles I expose the petty-capitalist deception about communism. When capitalists claim to support communism, they always mean Marx's hypothetical "lower order of communism," which Lenin labeled "socialism." This "lower stage" or "transitional period" was achieved in Russia and China, and turned out to be no different from capitalism in other countries except for more nationalized big business. Petty-capitalist-led socialists overthrew those states and built much stronger ones that could own and manage big business. To petty capitalists, "socialism is communism" just as "capitalists" means only those capitalists richer than themselves. Petty capitalists talk trash about capitalism and private property, while turning a blind eye to their own business properties.

Some petty capitalists take a different tack. They want to eliminate their bigger rivals, but try to do so by eliminating every currently-big organization. To increase the social power of petty proprietors, they want to break up corporations and privatize state lands, roads, and schools. They seek to overthrow the state and immensely weaken and destabilize its successor regimes. In this way, they hope both to grab state property and to diminish the ability of the state to protect big proprietors. As with socialism, anarchism ignores the combined effect of masses of small exploiters and fights only the few big ones. Socialism tells working-class people that nationalized businesses are "not capitalism," and alleges that any opposition to socialism is "anti-communism." Likewise, anarchism tells the dispossessed that co-ops, syndicates, and other temporary asset combinations are "not capitalism," and warns that any opposition to anarchism is "authoritarianism." To petty capitalists, "anarchism means no hierarchy" above their rule, just as "property" means any claim of possession but their own.

Property claims are made by individuals, but the property system is not a matter of personal initiative. Classes of rich and poor were created and maintained through generations of organized violence. Private property and public property are complimentary co-methods to maintain the dispossession of the lower class. The state owns everything not claimed by families or other institutions. It is just as ridiculous to speak of property exchange without its armed guard as it is to speak of a state without exploitation to defend. Independent or collective, forms of possession and dispossession cannot exist without the state.

Many working-class activists are disgusted with “lower-order-of-” “communism.” They never heard the word “communism” used to promote anything else, so they advocate anything but communism (ABC). They discover that they merely replaced one dummed-down theory with all the others. Socialism and anarchism are mannequins that substitute for any reasoning beneath today’s fashionable slogans. As with all anti-communism, ABC is used to divert working-class action into passive support of liberal causes. ABC is also a rationale for conservative “lifestyle politics.” The anarchist wears black as if a sulky clown—in the same way that gangster rap portrays the stereotypical angry clown. Discussion and action are replaced with narcissism. As with socialism, anarchism has its taxonomy, euphemisms, and clichés that reinforce its struggle for petty-bourgeois semantics—and therewith, the petty-bourgeois outlook.

Some working-class activists understand that “Marxism” is not communism, yet persist in calling themselves “anarchists” or “socialists.” To these comrades I say: your candor is needed now, not sometime later when speaking up is easy. How can you advance the goal of a stateless, classless society with the theory and practice of petty-bourgeois hypocrisy?

With its explicit rejection of communism, anarchism is always *tres chic*. It remains a perennial pole of attraction to the petty bourgeoisie and a staple of leftism. A discussion of anarchism is not important because of capitalist interest or lack thereof. It is not important because of anarchist writings; they dogmatize the slogans of the bourgeois, anti-feudal revolution. For example, anarchists yearn for freedom as if it meant something other than the coexistence of slavery. Chaining workers to the work was despicable, but freedom from chattel slavery was not the end of servitude by the lower class. The upper class gained the freedom to exploit in all the other ways such as land rent, merchantry, and wage labor. Sowing illusions is one way that anarchism is used to recruit working-class activists to a great variety of pro-capitalist causes. Anarchist dual-class organization is also used to forestall the self-organization of the dispossessed. In the absence of a mass, working-class party, it is necessary to discuss the many obstacles to working-class unity—one of which is anarchism. Instead of repeating the wording and thinking of the petty bourgeoisie, our slogans must be:

SHARE NOT TRADE
ABOLISH EMPLOYMENT—END WAGE SLAVERY
NO RENT—NO MORTGAGE—NO HOMELESSNESS
COMMUNISM IN OUR LIFETIME

This article is the tenth in a series, available at <http://www.geocities.com/antiproperty>

WHOSE CLASS STRUGGLE?

October 1, 2005 by Floyce White

The struggle over semantics is one facet of the overall struggle against capitalism. The conflict over wording does not “go away” no matter what well-intentioned temporary truce you make before a meeting. Pro-capitalists treat your acquiescence as gullibility, and redouble their efforts to impose their terminology. To “play politics” with what you believe to be true is to tell a lie.

In response to the previous article in this series, *Against Anarchism—For Communism*, many anarchists say that those who use the word “anarchism” as I describe are abusing the term. They insist that its “true meaning” is something else. Most define the term according to its etymology—“no ruler”—and assert that “anarchism means no state.” Hah! The concept of “true meaning,” as with all versions of “absolute truth,” originates from class society and serves to support class society. There is no single definition of any political term that is true to both poor and rich, or among all factions of the rich. Interpretations are prejudiced by property interests or the lack thereof. Without a doubt, all upper-class reasoning defends exploitation. Regardless of how they say it, anarchism means a state.

Some anarchists respond by quoting authority figures such as Proudhon, and cite his 1840 essay *What Is Property?* This bourgeois social reformer approved of claims of ownership of things of personal use, while he condemned claims of ownership of things used by others. His semantics exaggerated subtle differences between the meanings of the words “possession” and “property.” Nonsense! Personal possession is just as odious as any other form of property. A “claim” is something you make to other people; property is a method of interacting with others. In the hypothetical absence of any conflict, to say that “I own my shirt,” “you own your shirt,” and “we own our shirts” is not interaction, therefore it is the *trivial* case—as in mathematics when all variables are set to zero. The claim to own some things used by only you and your kin would be entirely unnecessary—and the implied threat of violence to enforce that claim would be anti-social—if not for the need to put up a passive defense against the system of accumulation of wealth and its encroaching dispossession that does not distinguish between things used by one or by many. Personal property is a method of struggle on terms set by the oppressors. Bourgeois radicals such as Proudhon are like college students who become professors without any experience in their fields. They are unaware of this way of putting the question because the point of view of the lower class is not in the books they read. Proudhon saw only an abstract “people” who throughout history all tried to get personal property, so he deduced the false conclusion that personal property must be a cornerstone of every society. In the language of the capitalist, anti-feudal revolution, ownership was a “right” or a “natural law” of which violation was “theft.” The production and distribution of goods and services were not envisioned as sharing, but as “exchange of personal possessions.” In this way, Proudhon created a legalistic loophole for “personal” business properties as well as their association as limited partnerships, co-ops, syndicates, and “employee ownership.”

Proudhon opposed big business and the vast state-owned properties because these are not forms of personal property. Proudhon also opposed the state because police protect claims of non-personal property. Hah! Do a little semantical struggle here. Replace the idea of “exchange of personal possessions” with the phrase “small business,” and it is clear that Proudhon’s interpretation of

"anarchism" is a political movement in the interests of petty capitalists. Since almost all capitalists are small capitalists, his words were not rebellion but apologetics. In the years to follow, the many contradicting definitions of "anarchism" by upper-class authorities mirrored the many competing property interests.

As long as there are capitalists, they will recruit working-class activists to do political labor. Many lower-class anarchists, socialists, and radical liberals struggle to raise broad anti-property demands instead of the intrigues of petty-capitalist interests. This is one form of the struggle for communism. The existence of communist struggle within the anarchist movement does not prove that "anarchism is communism" any more than the existence of lower-class struggle within the radical-liberal movement proves that "radical liberalism is communism." In conflict with the idea that anarchism is a form of capitalism, a few comrades counterpose the expression "anarcho-communism." This phrasing does not work—precisely because it defines "anarchism" as meaning "no state." Along with its corollary, "state capitalism," these terms induce the pair of false opposites "stateless capitalism" and "state communism." False opposite proves false posit. Anyone can compound words as a rhetorical device, but it does not imply any reasoning.

A few comrades make the argument that the self-aware struggle of lower-class activists within the anarchist movement is not different from or inferior to struggle that calls itself "communist." They correctly point out that bourgeois definitions of "communism" are not the meanings used by lower-class activists who call themselves "communists." They insist that quibbling about labels is sectarian divisiveness, so they continue to call themselves "anarchists." No. Speaking up is honest; the refusal to discuss differences is divisive. Activists frequently work out disagreements about events, and often resolve conflicts over semantics. Words have meanings that are defined by the social and political movements of property classes—not by dictionary authors. The worldwide dispossessed class has no factions with property interests; therefore, the poor can build overwhelming unity in speech and action. It is sheer nihilism to suggest that, for the lower class, "communism" and "anarchism" and "socialism" and "liberalism" and any number of other words all have similar, overlapping meanings, or to suggest that one single word can not and must not have the unique definition of "the struggle of the poor against the rich." "Communism" has this meaning—that is why upper-class repression of this struggle is called "anti-communism."

Some comrades say that "socialism" is the name of the rebellion of the poor, but never show me the leaflets they mass distribute denouncing comrades of capitalist family origins as "the living counterrevolution within revolutionary organizations." Some comrades say that "anarchism is a method" of opposing the violence that upholds property claims, but never show me where they write that employers, landlords, merchants, and investors are incapable of this method and "must step aside and become sympathizers without voice and vote." What I call "communism" cannot be achieved by fighting only the external oppressor while surrendering the "struggle within the struggle." Communism cannot be achieved through a populist appeal to "class struggle" in general that does not differentiate itself from the intra-class struggle within the upper class. Communism can be achieved only when lower-class people unite in action, in organization, and in diction. The principle of *preference is exclusion* is forever used to divide and conquer us; now we must use it to prefer association with fellow poor people, to organize independent of exploiters big and small, and to reject their excuses for being exploiters.

This article is the eleventh in a series, available at <http://www.geocities.com/antiproperty>