

# SOCIALISM!



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# For an independent labor candidate for U.S. president!

## Labor candidates can fight for:

A \$10/hour minimum wage with automatic increases in line with price increases.

A 35/hour work week without cutting pay.

Workers' control of health and safety standards and enforcement by law.

Top quality education, healthcare, pensions for all, funded by public, non-profit funds.

Stop privatization of public resources; toward public ownership and workers' control of essential resources.

Stop discrimination against youth, women, peoples of color, indigenous peoples, immigrants, lesbians, gays, all oppressed. Abolish anti-drug laws. Treat drug mis-use as a medical problem. Abolish the death penalty. Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, all political prisoners.

Stop U.S. attacks on labor of other countries. Stop sanctions against Cuba, Iraq. U.S. forces out of Cuba, Iraq, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosova, all foreign lands and waters. For the right to self-determination for all oppressed peoples — Cuba, Panama, Colombia, Quebec, Ireland, Iraq, Palestine, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosova, Chechnya, East Timor.

An independent labor government based on a mass mobilization to carry out these policies; military training for working class people under union control. □

As we enter the 21st century, the U.S. is still passing through one of the longest "economic booms" in recent history.

Yet this economic boom is not resolving the problems facing working class people in the U.S. or anywhere else.

Official statistics say unemployment is at an all-time low. But when you add together those who are officially unemployed, those who have given up looking for work, those who are working part-time but would like to be working full-time, and those who are working full-time at poverty wages, one out of three U.S. residents is unemployed or underemployed.

The gap between rich and poor is growing. The average workers' paycheck has increased 68% since 1980; the average CEO's 1,596%. The average CEO makes \$10.6 million a year, 417 times what the average blue-collar worker makes. (These figures don't take inflation into account; real wages have been falling since the 1970s.) While the average net worth of all U.S. families has risen to \$59,500 during this "economic boom," the net worth of African-American families has fallen, from \$8,400 to \$7,000.

At least 6.1 million workers in the U.S. continue to suffer injury or illness on the job every year; over 6,000 suffer death.

The number of people in prison is growing — from approximately 600,000 in 1980 to nearly 2 million today. 60% in federal prisons are there for drug charges; only 2% for allegedly violent crimes. (These percentages are different for state and local prisons.)

U.S. sanctions and military attacks on Iraq have killed at least 500,000 Iraqi children and continue to kill at least 5,000 every month.

None of the leading candidates for president has any solution to these problems. Both Republicans and Democrats, both Bush and Gore, defend the policies of deregulation of industry, tax cuts for the rich, discriminatory anti-drug laws and mandatory sentencing, and attacks on Iraq, Serbia, Kosova and other countries that are enriching the richest, making it hard for workers to make a living, killing workers on the job, sending working class youth to prison, and killing working class people and their children in Iraq and other countries attacked by the U.S.

Buchanan claims to be against the policies of the "elite." He wants to put "America first." But his alternative is to try to pit U.S. workers against workers of other countries. He wants to close U.S. borders, particularly to those from Mexico, when, if anyone has a right to be in what is now U.S. territory, it is the descendants of the indigenous peoples in this hemisphere, who were here long before anyone else.

It's not surprising that none of these candi-

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# Albert Einstein speaks on "Why socialism?"

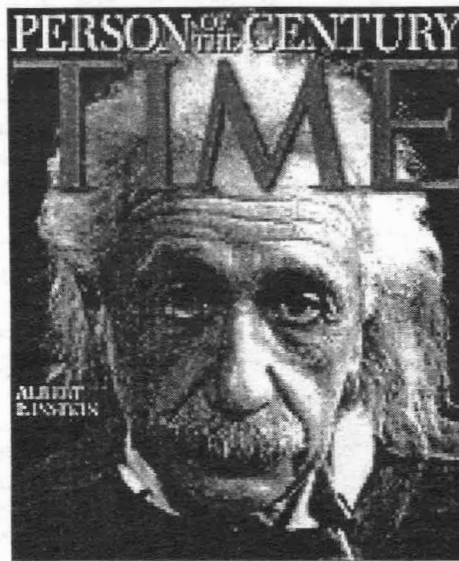
*Time magazine recently named Albert Einstein the "person of the century." They failed to mention that he was not only a partisan of the theory of relativity, he was also a partisan of socialism. He wrote "Why Socialism?" in 1949 as the U.S. government was developing its infamous witchhunt against socialists and communists. Today, many of the older generation have abandoned the fight for socialism. Building a socialist society has proven more difficult than some anticipated. The first attempts — in Russia, Eastern Europe, China — saw the rise of a privileged, dictatorial bureaucracy that took more than its share of the benefits of the planned economy for itself and persecuted workers. Today this same bureaucracy is working closely with U.S. and European capitalists to destroy all the gains of the socialist revolution in these countries and restore a particularly poor and miserable form of capitalism. The road forward lies not in succumbing to these "predatory" types, but in overthrowing them, in establishing workers' revolutionary democracies that progress towards socialism and expand possibilities for individual. Here are excerpts from Einstein's famous essay "Why Socialism?"*

... most of the major states of history owed their existence to conquest. The conquering peoples established themselves, legally and economically, as the privileged class of the conquered country. They seized for themselves a monopoly of the land ownership and appointed a priesthood from among their own ranks. The priests, in control of education, made the class division of society into a permanent institution and created a system of values by which the people were thenceforth, to a large extent unconsciously, guided in their social behavior.

But historic tradition is, so to speak, of yesterday; nowhere have we really overcome what Thorstein Veblen called "the predatory phase" of human development. The observable economic facts belong to that phase and even such laws as we can derive from them are not applicable to other phases. Since the real purpose of socialism is precisely to overcome and advance beyond the predatory phase of human development, economic science in its present state can throw little light on the socialist society of the future.

Second, socialism is directed toward a social-ethical end. Science, however, cannot create ends and, even less, instill them in human beings; science, at most, can supply the means by which to attain certain ends. But the ends themselves are conceived by personalities with lofty ethical ideals and — if these ends are not stillborn, but vital and vigorous — are adopted and carried forward by those many human beings who, half-unconsciously, determine the slow evolution of society.

For these reasons, we should be on our guard not to overestimate science and scientific methods when it is a question of human problems; and we should not assume that experts are the only ones who have a right to express themselves on questions affecting the organization of society.



Innumerable voices have been asserting for some time now that human society is passing through a crisis, that its stability has been gravely shattered. It is characteristic of such a situation that individuals feel indifferent or even hostile toward the group, small or large, to which they belong ... It is the expression of a painful solitude and isolation from which so many people are suffering in these days. What is the cause? Is there a way out? ...

Man is, at one and the same time, a solitary being and a social being. As a solitary being, he attempts to protect his own existence and that of those who are closest to him, to satisfy his personal desires, and to develop his innate abilities. As a social being, he seeks to gain the recognition and affection of his fellow human beings, to share in their pleasures, to comfort them in their sorrows, and to improve their conditions of life. Only the existence of these varied, frequently conflicting strivings accounts for the special character of a man, and their specific combination determines the extent to which an individual can achieve an inner equilibrium and can contribute to the well-being of society. It is quite possible that the relative strength of these two drives is, in the main, fixed by inheritance. But the personality that finally emerges is largely formed by the environment in which a man happens to find himself during his development, by the structure of the society in which he grows up, by the tradition of that society, and by its appraisal of particular types of behavior. The abstract concept "society" means to the individual human being the sum total of his direct and indirect relations to his contemporaries and to all the people of earlier generations. The individual is able to think, feel, strive, and work by himself; but he depends so much upon society—in his physical, intellectual, and emotional existence—that it is impossible to think of him, or to understand him, outside the framework of society. It is "society" which provides man with food, home, the tools of work, language, the forms of

thought, and most of the content of thought; his life is made possible through the labor and the accomplishments of many millions past and present who are all hidden behind small word "society."

It is evident, therefore, that the dependence of the individual upon society is a fact of nature which cannot be abolished — just as in the case of ants and bees. However, while the whole life process of ants and bees is fixed down to the smallest detail by rigid, hereditary instincts, the social pattern and interrelationships of human beings are very variable and susceptible to change. Memory, the capacity to make new combinations, the gift of oral communication have made possible developments among human beings which are not dictated by biological necessities. Such developments manifest themselves in traditions, institutions, and organizations; in literature; in scientific and engineering accomplishments; in works of art. This explains how it happens that, in a certain sense, man can influence his life and that in this process conscious thinking and wanting can play a part.

Man acquires at birth, through heredity, a biological constitution which we must consider fixed and unalterable, including the natural urges which are characteristic of the human species. In addition, during his lifetime, he acquires a cultural constitution which he adopts from society through communication and through many other types of influences. It is this cultural constitution which, with the passage of time, is subject to change and which determines to a very large extent the relationship between the individual and society. Modern anthropology has taught us, through comparative investigation of so-called primitive cultures, that the social behavior of human beings may differ greatly, depending upon prevailing cultural patterns and the types of organization which predominate in society. It is on this that those who are striving to improve the lot of man may ground their hopes: human beings are not condemned, because of their biological constitution, to annihilate each other or to be at the mercy of a cruel, self-inflicted fate.

If we ask ourselves how the structure of society and the cultural attitude of man should be changed in order to make human life as satisfying as possible, we should constantly be conscious of the fact that there are certain conditions which we are unable to modify. As mentioned before, the biological nature of man is, for all practical purposes, not subject to change. Furthermore, technological and demographic developments of the last few centuries have created conditions which are here to stay. In relatively densely settled populations with the goods which are indispensable to their continued existence, an extreme division of labor and a highly productive apparatus are absolutely necessary. The time — which, looking back, seems so idyllic — is gone forever when individuals or relatively small groups could be completely self-sufficient. It is only a slight exaggeration to say that mankind consti-

**“... a planned economy, which adjusts production to the needs of the community, would distribute the work to be done among all those able to work and would guarantee a livelihood to every man, woman and child. The education of the individual, in addition to promoting his own innate abilities, would attempt to develop in him a sense of responsibility for his fellow-men in place of the glorification of power and success in our present society...”**

tutes even now a planetary community of production and consumption.

I have now reached the point where I may indicate briefly what to me constitutes the essence of the crisis of our time. It concerns the relationship of the individual to society. The individual has become more conscious than ever of his dependence upon society. But he does not see dependence as a positive asset, as an organic tie, as a protective force, but rather as a threat to his natural rights, or even to his economic existence. Moreover, his position in society is such that the egotistical drives of his make-up are constantly being accentuated, while his social drives, which are by nature weaker, progressively deteriorate. All human beings, whatever their position in society, are suffering from this process of deterioration. Unknowingly prisoners of their own egotism, they feel insecure, lonely, and deprived of the naive, simple, and unsophisticated enjoyment of life. Man can find meaning in life, short and perilous as it is, only through devoting himself to society.

The economic anarchy of capitalist society as it exists today is, in my opinion, the real source of the evil. We see before us a huge community of producers the members of which are unceasingly striving to deprive each other of the fruits of their collective labor — not by force, but on the whole in faithful compliance with legally established rules. In this respect, it is important to realize that the means of production — that is to say, the entire productive capacity that is needed for producing consumer goods as well as additional capital goods — may legally be, and for the most part are, the private property of individuals.

For the sake of simplicity, in the discussion that follows I shall call “workers” all those who do not share in the ownership of the means of production — although this does not quite correspond to the customary use of the term. The owner of the means of production is in a position to purchase the labor power of the worker. By using the means of production, the worker produces new goods which become the property of the capitalist. The essential point about this process is the relation between what the worker produces and what he is paid, both measured in terms of real value. In so far as the labor contract is “free,” what the worker receives is determined not by the real value of the goods he produces, but by his minimum needs and by the capitalists’ requirements for labor power in relation to the number of workers competing for jobs. It is important to understand that even in theory the

payment of the worker is not determined by the value of his product.

Private capital tends to become concentrated in few hands, partly because of competition among the capitalists, and partly because technological development and the increasing division of labor encourage the formation of larger units of production at the expense of the smaller ones. The result of these developments is an oligarchy of private capital the enormous power of which cannot be effectively checked even by a democratically organized political society. This is true since the members of legislative bodies are selected by political parties, largely financed or otherwise influenced by private capitalists who, for all practical purposes, separate the electorate from the legislature. The consequence is that the representatives of the people do not in fact sufficiently protect the interests of the underprivileged sections of the population. Moreover, under existing conditions, private capitalists inevitably control, directly or indirectly, the main sources of information (press, radio, education). It is thus extremely difficult, and indeed in most cases quite impossible, for the individual citizen to come to objective conclusions and to make intelligent use of his political rights.

The situation prevailing in an economy based on the private ownership of capital is thus characterized by two main principles: first, means of production (capital) are privately owned and the owners dispose of them as they see fit; second, the labor contract is free. Of course, there is no such thing as a pure capitalist society in this sense. In particular, it should be noted that the workers, through long and bitter political struggles, have succeeded in securing a somewhat improved form of the “free labor contract” for certain categories of workers. But taken as a whole, the present-day economy does not differ much from “pure” capitalism. Production is carried on for profit, not for use. There is no provision that all those able and willing to work will always be in a position to find employment; an “army of unemployed” almost always exists. The worker is constantly in fear of losing his job. Since unemployed and poorly paid workers do not provide a profitable market, the production of consumers’ goods is restricted, and great hardship is the consequence. Technological progress frequently results in more unemployment rather than in an easing of the burden of work for all. The profit motive, in conjunction with competition among capitalists, is responsible for an instability in the accumulation and utilization of capital which leads to increasingly severe depres-

sions. Unlimited competition leads to a huge waste of labor, and to that crippling of the social consciousness of individuals which I mentioned before.

This crippling of individuals I consider the worst evil of capitalism. Our whole educational system suffers from this evil. An exaggerated competitive attitude is inculcated into the student, who is trained to worship acquisitive success as a preparation for his future career.

I am convinced there is only one way to eliminate these grave evils, namely through the establishment of a socialist economy, accompanied by an educational system which would be oriented toward social goals. In such an economy, the means of production are owned by society itself and are utilized in a planned fashion. A planned economy, which adjusts production to the needs of the community, would distribute the work to be done among all those able to work and would guarantee a livelihood to every man, woman, and child. The education of the individual, in addition to promoting his own innate abilities, would attempt to develop in him a sense of responsibility for his fellow-men in place of the glorification of power and success in our present society.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to remember that a planned economy is not yet socialism. A planned economy as such may be accompanied by the complete enslavement of the individual. The achievement of socialism requires the solution of some extremely difficult socio-political problems: how is it possible, in view of the far-reaching centralization of political and economic power, to prevent bureaucracy from becoming all-powerful and overweening? How can the rights of the individual be protected and therewith a democratic counterweight to the power of bureaucracy be assured? □



Albert Einstein, as a young man

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# For independent labor candidates in 2000! ...

*Continued from the front*

dates or parties is inspiring much enthusiastic support among working class people or the oppressed population. Poll after poll has shown the majority of labor unionists think it time to form a political party fighting for labor's interests. Polls also show the majority of U.S. residents think it time to form another political party fighting more for the majority's interests.

Nevertheless, the leadership of the U.S. labor movement continues to support Republicans, Democrats and now Buchananites. John Sweeney, head of the AFL-CIO, endorses Gore. Jimmy Hoffa, Jr., head of the Teamsters' Union, says we need a new policy; we shouldn't keep endorsing Democrats all the time, we should endorse Democrats and Republicans! Hoffa also proclaims himself a fan of Buchanan. The Teamsters and the United Auto Workers have refused to endorse Gore in the primary elections. But they are campaigning for Republicans and/or Democrats on the local level and plan to endorse the Republican or the Democrat in the fall. Even unions that endorse the Labor Party plan to call for voting for Republicans or Democrats.

That the labor leadership continues to endorse and campaign for Republicans and Democrats when so many working class people oppose this is anti-working class and undemocratic. While there may be one or two Republicans or Democrats somewhere who should be supported, by-and-large this is not the case. Endorsing and campaigning for Republicans or Democrats should be the exception, not the rule.

The alliance between the rich owners of the banks and corporations, the Republican and Democratic Parties, and union officials is a serious problem for working class people and anyone who wants to make big changes in this society. It means that the unions, the only organizations in which workers once had some rights, in which they could speak out and organize, are being policed by forces working directly with the owners and bosses. It means that these organizations, the only mass organizations workers have had in the U.S., are, at best, crippled, at worse, tools of the owners and bosses. How is it possible to loosen the grip of this alliance on the unions, a grip that then extends throughout the entire population? How is it possible to drive a wedge between the direct agents of the owners and bosses and labor unionists simply confused by the constant propaganda saying if they don't support some Republican or Democrat, something terrible is going to happen?

One way is for young people and working class people to demand a referendum on labor support to Republicans and Democrats in the 2000 elections. The rank-and-file should have a right to vote on this issue. Another way is to demand that the labor movement run an independent labor candidate for U.S. president and independent labor candidates for other key offices. These candidates can use this election as a forum in which to speak out for working class



**Youth and workers demonstrate against the WTO in Seattle and close it for a day!**

and middle class needs, to build a movement to fight for their needs, and to discredit the policies and candidates of the rich. Wherever they win, they can use their positions in public office to do the same.

It would be a mistake to suggest it is possible to make fundamental changes in society simply through running candidates in elections. But it is also a mistake to say working class activists can't gain anything through running in elections. They can use elections the way they use any forum in which working class people are listening – to speak out, to reach out. And working class people are listening in elections; the turnout in working class cities like Detroit is over 50% and much higher than in many suburbs.

The Labor Party and other working class political organizations should make a united fight for an independent labor candidate for U.S. president and run independent working class candidates to build support for this struggle. Labor Party members can run as independents to promote this struggle.

Some workers will undoubtedly vote for Ralph Nader and the Green Party to protest against the status quo. Others will vote for Workers World Party or Socialist Workers Party candidates for the same reason. This is understandable. But campaigning for Nader, the Green Party, Workers World Party, or Socialist Workers

Party is not the best way for the working class to progress at this time. None of these campaigns is capable of unifying working class forces. Nader has not taken a strong stand against attacks on immigrant workers, which is a critical issue at this time. The Green Party's program does not recognize that classes exist, and will exist, until the working class sees it can do what needs to be done, that there is no need for a special class of owners, managers, and politicians. The Green Party does not set as its goal unifying working class people of all ethnic groups and nationalities. The Workers World Party and the Socialist Workers Party recognize that classes exist and the working class needs to free itself, but their campaigns and parties are very sectarian, oriented toward building small homogenous socialist factions, not toward building a big working class or labor party movement.

All forces for a big labor movement and a big labor party movement fighting for the needs of labor and the oppressed population need to join forces. They need to make a united fight for labor to stop all support to Republicans and Democrats and run its own independent labor candidates for U.S. president and other key offices. They need to run their own independent working class candidates to build support for this struggle. This is the road forward in 2000. □

## Stop U.S. labor attacks on labor of other nations!

"Globalization," the expansion of the dictatorship of the richest U.S. and European enterprises to all corners of the planet, demands international labor solidarity. Yet the U.S. labor movement is not rising to the occasion. First, the United Steel Workers' union called for restricting steel produced by workers in other countries. Now the Teamsters' union has called for, and gotten, a ban on Mexican truck drivers in the U.S. Clinton and the Teamsters claim they are banning Mexican truck drivers because 50% of their trucks don't pass certain safety tests. But 25% of U.S. trucks don't pass these same tests. If they are concerned about safety, why aren't they banning all unsafe trucks instead of all Mexican trucks? At the same time, the U.S. labor movement is doing almost nothing to stop the U.S.'s vicious sanctions against Cuba and Iraq, its occupation of Bosnia and Kosova, its aid to anti-labor regimes in Colombia, Israel, Russia, Indonesia ... This is disgraceful. The U.S. labor movement should be uniting with labor movements throughout the world to fight for decent jobs and wages for all, not uniting with U.S. capitalists against labor of other countries. □