



Exploitation

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

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

No workers receive enough wages from their jobs to buy back the products they have made. They create a surplus which goes into the pockets of the capitalist who employs them.

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

Workers and capitalists are in constant struggle over the division of this surplus, but the capitalist holds the highest cards because the worker is dependent upon him merely to stay alive. In times of mass unemployment workers' wages are driven down and the degree of exploitation rises.

Throughout the 7,000 or more years of class society, exploitation took different forms. Slavery, which employed the chain and the lash, was only too visibly exploitative. Under feudalism the serf knew very well how much he was exploited. When he and his whole family worked 3 or 4 days of every week

on the lord's ample fields and the rest of the week on their own small plots to eke out a meagre living, they could easily measure the degree of their exploitation.

But under capitalism it is indirect and hidden from most workers, who can't see how the system operates. The low-paid typist or file clerk, the ditchdigger or cafeteria dishwasher, are brainwashed to believe that incompetence is the source of their low wages. However, even the relatively high-paid construction worker, though he may not realize it, is still exploited because he adds more value to the buildings he works on than he receives for his labor.

But simple exploitation is not enough for the capitalist class. The capitalist is driven by the contradictions inherent in his own system to look for fields of *super-exploitation*.

Whenever he has enough capital he moves his plants to areas where workers are more desperate and must work for lower pay—to the southern states of the U.S., to Latin America, Africa, Indonesia, south Korea, Malaysia. The practice of paying especially low wages to workers in colonial countries is called *super-exploitation*.

That he cannot exploit the workers of the socialist countries is one of the greatest reasons for his hatred of them. The potential for super-exploitation has been shrinking ever since the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The primary reason the U.S. waged two disastrous wars in Korea and Vietnam was to wrench those two key areas of Asia out of the socialist orbit and bring their millions of working people back into the field of capitalist exploitation.