

How This System Works— And Why It Must Be Overthrown

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Capitalism is a “mode of production”—the specific way that society is organized to produce and distribute the necessities of life. Billions of people worldwide work collectively to produce these necessities. Yet the means of producing this wealth are privately owned and controlled by a much smaller ruling class, the capitalist-imperialists. These capitalists **exploit** the billions on the planet who own no such means and must exchange their ability to work for a wage, or search desperately for some other way to survive.

The capitalist-imperialists on top *set the terms* for all of society, including the hundreds of millions “in the middle” who may own a small business, or work as a professional, a manager, a teacher, etc. And these capitalists **compete** with each other, in a ruthless, expand-or-go-under struggle to stay on top. On the basis of that ownership and the control over the wealth that comes with it, the capitalist-imperialist class dominates politics, culture, and ideas—and builds up a massive machine of repression and military might to maintain its rule. **They use force—they dictate to—those who do not go along with those terms.** And they fight with each other over *how* to rule.

All the forms of oppression today—**one people or nationality dominating another, men dominating women, the senseless wars of plunder**—benefit these capitalists, either economically or politically. At the same time, attempting to uproot these sources of outrage, abuse and oppression would NOT benefit these capitalists. The social upheaval that would result would disrupt all of society, including production. The resources needed to heal the scars of oppression, or on the other hand, to stop the destruction of the environment, would be vast, and would cut into “profitability.” And these oppressive structures actually economically benefit the capitalists in many ways—through forcing oppressed people to work for less, taking advantage of their conditions to “skin them twice” (using discrimination in lending, for instance, to charge extra high mortgage rates to Black people).

Because of this, the system keeps them going.

Even more important: **the capitalists could not solve these problems even if they wanted to.**

Here’s why. Capitalism “works” and can only work through the competition of one capitalist, or bloc of capital, against another. Each capitalist **must** pursue profit and more profit. To do so, they **must** carry out production ever more efficiently and cheaply, on an ever larger and more technologically advanced scale, and exploit the workers at their command as thoroughly and ruthlessly as possible. If they do not, some other capitalist will seize the opening and drive them under.

This compulsion to expand or go under underlies and has ultimately driven every crime of capitalism. It drives and shapes every change in the way people work and go about their daily lives. But it is blind, and out of the control of society. Today, with the development of capitalism into the worldwide system of imperialism, the shark-like dynamic plays out on a worldwide political scale, in gangster-like wars of one power against another.

The point is this: even if somehow one set of capitalist-imperialists were to be convinced, against all their “bottom-line” interests, to agree to the social upheaval needed to abolish and transform the oppression that mark and dominate this society; and even if these capitalists could be convinced to redirect the necessarily massive resources in an attempt to solve these problems... they would, very immediately, run up against the very way this system works: eat or be eaten. They would be crushed.

This is how the economic and political system we live under works. These are the rules of the game. For these reasons, in order for humanity to breathe freely, nothing short of, and nothing less than, a revolution against capitalism-imperialism—a revolution which *defeats and dismantles the institutions of violent repression which capitalism-imperialism deploys for its protection and expansion*—is absolutely necessary.