

# **HERE IS YOUR FREEDOM**

By Ray L. Baker Jr.

In this paper, I aim to examine the fundamental flaws of our current socioeconomic system critically, outline the alternatives we propose, and point out the steps required to achieve this transformation.

For full disclosure, the words “Here is your Freedom” are said to be the most incredible speech that the great Haitian revolutionary leader, Toussaint L’Ouverture, ever made. When he made this speech, he simply held up and pointed to a rifle. Things are different for us to obtain freedom in our situation and time.

To begin, it is necessary to clarify my understanding of freedom. By freedom, I refer to the complete absence of exploitation and oppression.

The fundamental flaw of our current socioeconomic system is the capitalist system itself. Achieving a world in which true freedom exists necessitates the abolition of capitalism and, with it, the state, political parties, and all hierarchical institutions.

Why capitalism? Capitalism, at its core, perpetuates both exploitation and oppression, serving as a primary vehicle of dehumanization. Its essence lies in the relentless pursuit of profit and the accumulation of private wealth. The capitalist mode of production inherently exploits labor, whether through outright slavery or its modern wage-based equivalent.

The consequences of capitalism are far-reaching, producing widespread poverty and misery in a world of apparent plenty. In the

capitalist drive for profit, essential human needs, such as healthcare, food, and housing, depend on one's financial resources. Furthermore, capitalism contributes to environmental destruction, as seen in the acceleration of global warming featuring more and more devastating storms, droughts, and wildfires, rendering the planet increasingly uninhabitable.

The most powerful tool in the fight against oppression is the clarity of purpose, a deep understanding of the path ahead. A clear understanding of the path ahead comes from a deep understanding of where we've been.

While I reject patriarchy and leadership by age, I have been engaged in the struggle against exploitation and oppression for more than six decades, and both theory and practice inform my arguments in this paper. My direct action experiences and extensive reading over the years have reinforced my conviction that capitalism must be dismantled for true freedom to be realized.

It is easy to become entangled in addressing the numerous societal crises produced by capitalism—poverty, hunger, racism, reparations, prison reform, housing insecurity, street violence, women's rights, gun control, education, healthcare, and eldercare, among many others. While these issues are critical, it is imperative to recognize that they are symptoms of a larger systemic problem. Only by confronting and overthrowing the system of exploitation and oppression itself—capitalism—can we hope to resolve these crises and create a society that fosters free associations and collaborative actions globally that result in the full enjoyment of the fruits of our planet by all.

At the heart of capitalism is the profit motive. Under this system, nearly everything produced—whether it be housing, basic necessities like food and clothing, or even medicine—exists not to fulfill human needs but to generate profit. The means of production, historically and currently, have relied on forms of enslavement.

The Industrial Revolution in the U.S. was the catalyst that propelled the U.S. from having an agrarian, handicraft economy to being an industrial powerhouse. This new system was complete with greatly improved transportation via railroads (built mainly by Chinese wage slaves), massive mechanized production, petroleum refining, steel manufacturing, electrical power, and more. These new innovations placed the U.S. at the top of the heap of world power that it enjoys to this day.

However, the Industrial Revolution was built on the backs of enslaved people, and many of the world's most powerful nations owe their wealth to the exploitation of both indigenous populations and enslaved Africans in the U.S., particularly in the so-called "Cotton Kingdom."

In the Cotton Kingdom, the most significant "invention" was not the cotton gin but the "whipping machine," the brutal use of every tool in the hardware store as punishment employed to coerce enslaved Africans into working faster and more efficiently.

Today, modern wage laborers (wage slaves)—whether they work in prisons, plants, fields of California, poultry plants, or the sweatshops of Asia—continue to sustain this exploitative system.

The oppressive nature of capitalism is as intrinsic to its structure as wet is to water. It is a system that, today, is on a hellish fast track into full-fledged fascism! Capitalism cannot be reformed; it must be dismantled entirely. It is only by uprooting, overthrowing, and preventing its resurgence that we can hope to build a future free from exploitation and oppression.

### **What Will Replace Capitalism?**

The push for overthrowing capitalism at the highest level has involved the replacement of capitalism with socialism. Socialism, as opposed to the vast private wealth of capitalism, features ownership of the major means of production by the people—by the whole society.

Unfortunately, historically, the vehicle for bringing about socialism has been the state. We now have over one hundred years of experience with the exploitative, oppressive nature of the first socialist state in the Soviet Union.

Peter Kropotkin was a Russian prince who denounced his title at the age of 12. Kropotkin became a revolutionary and was forced to flee his homeland in the 1870s. He returned in 1917, exactly the year of the beginning of the Bolshevik Revolution, and he died in 1921, the year that it ended. So it's safe to say he was there. He had this to say: "At the present moment, the Russian Revolution is in the following position. It is perpetuating horrors. It is ruining the whole country. In its mad fury, it is annihilating human lives."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Kropotkin, Anarchism: A Collection of Revolutionary Writings (New York : Dover 1970) 258.

Kropotkin says further: “ The evils inherent in a party dictatorship have been accentuated by the conditions of war in which this party maintains its power. This state of war has been the pretext for strengthening dictatorial methods, which centralize the control of every detail of life in the hands of the government...”<sup>2</sup>

We have seen how what started out to be a dictatorship of the proletariat in the interest of the people turned into a dictatorship of a handful of government officials to the detriment of the masses of the people. Regrettably, this Soviet debacle has been the model for governments emerging from capitalism around the world,

In the “Great Chinese Revolution,” we saw the state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, turn into a horrendous form of state capitalism. Instead of being a world liberator, China, among many other acts of vicious robbery, as one example, is now devastating the continent of Africa. In one example, China is using its superior technology and military might to rob the fish in African waters. For instance, largely because of their theft of fish off the coast of Senegal, the Chinese have displaced 30,000 Senegalese alone. Today, over 10,000 Chinese firms are operating in Africa. In some places in Africa, street signs are in Chinese.

In addressing this dictatorship business, as in the dictatorship of the proletariat, we now believe, and history has shown, that dictatorship in any form is still a dictatorship.

These historical events also help us to grasp the oppressive and exploitative nature of the state system and all governments. “But what is

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<sup>2</sup> *‘ibid 253’.*

the state? It is a political abstraction (really a socio-political corporation), a hierarchical institution by which a privileged elite strives to dominate the vast majority of people. The state's mechanisms include a group of institutions containing legislative assemblies, the civil service bureaucracy, the military and police forces, the judiciary, prisons, and the sub-central state apparatus."<sup>3</sup>

Further: "The government is the administrative vehicle that runs the state. The purpose of this specific set of institutions, which are the expressions of authority in capitalist societies (and in so-called "socialist states), is the maintenance and extension of domination over the common people by a privileged class, the rich in capitalist societies, the so-called communist party in state socialist or communist societies..."<sup>4</sup>

The statist and governmental system on behalf of the capitalist states, on the one hand, and the state socialist governments, on the other, have held sway for so long because they have each, in their own way, prevented people from seeing alternatives to their rule. Here are some alternatives.

In envisioning a post-capitalist society, we must construct a system rooted in human development, prioritizing human needs and eradicating exploitation and oppression. Central to this vision is the elimination of all forms of gender-based exploitation, particularly the oppression of women. Additionally, we must prevent any remnants of the former order from re-emerging.

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<sup>3</sup> Lorenzo Kom'Bao Ervin, Anarchism and the Black Revolution (London: Pluto Press, 2021) 58.

<sup>4</sup> *'ibid'*.

True freedom necessitates the dismantling of hierarchical systems in their entirety. This includes oppressive figures like bosses, monarchs, dictators, queens, oligarchs, and corporate owners and entrenched structures such as boards of directors, political parties, and states, whether capitalist or communist. By their very nature, hierarchies serve the interests of the few over the many, perpetuating systems of domination and inequality.

Political parties, in particular, must be rejected because they are fundamentally hierarchical and characterized by top-down leadership. In contrast, our goal is the establishment of horizontal federations of self-governance, leading to true mass democracy. “This federation will differ from political parties in that it will not seek to seize power, whether through elections or coups. Still, it will empower the working class and oppressed groups to rely on their collective strength. Such a system fosters a distrust of authoritarian parties, which historically aim to take over.”<sup>5</sup>

Turning to the state, it is essential to recognize its historical role as a tool of class oppression. The modern capitalist state, in many ways, parallels one of the earliest and most developed forms of the state, Ancient Rome. Slavery formed its foundation.

The modern state, much like its ancient counterpart, operates as a mechanism of organized violence, serving the interests of the ruling class, “...the state is simultaneously the organized violence of the owning class and the system of its executive will...authority is always dependant on the exploitation and enslavement of the majority of the

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<sup>5</sup> Wayne Price, An Anarchist Response to Trotsky Attack: Review of “An Introduction to Marxism and Anarchism by Alan Woods (2011).

people. And authority without hierarchy, without exploitation and loss of freedom, loses its reason for being.”<sup>6</sup>

The United States, for example, emerged from the overthrow of monarchies and the rise of the bourgeoisie—a class of merchants and slaveholders who consolidated wealth and power. The slaveholding practices of the U.S. founders expose the depths of their depravity and illustrate how deeply entrenched the capitalist state remains in protecting the interests of a wealthy few.

Historically, in the rise of the state as the vehicle through which socialism would be realized, there has pretty much been a consensus that the struggle would be between the working class, the proletariat and its allies, and the rich class, the Bourgeoisie, and its allies. More often than not, these European socialist readers planned and carried out their programs with utter disregard for the Africans and people of color of the world.

A funny thing happened in America in the late 1600s. The ruling class invented “whiteness.” When Black labor was first imported into America, Black slaves and indentured servants had been oppressed right along with whites of the lower classes. But when European indentured servants joined with Blacks and Natives to rebel against their common lot in the late 1600s and destabilized the entire British-controlled colonial system, the propertied class decided to “free” them by giving

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<sup>6</sup> Sam Mbah and I E Igariwey, *African Anarchism, The History of a Movement (Tucson, Arizona, Sharp Press 1997)* 8.



them a special status as “white citizens” and thus a stake in the system of oppression.”<sup>7</sup>

Further: “Although the capitalist used the system of white skin privilege to great effect to divide the working class of the North, the truth is the capitalists only favored white workers to use them against their own interest, not because there was true “white” class unity...*The invention of the white race was just a scam to facilitate this exploitation.*”<sup>8</sup>

However, We must never lose sight of the fact that this racialized system has worked to great advantage for the ruling class, and the white working class has been guilty of mass and deep class collaboration with the ruling class to the detriment of blacks and other people of color.

In Africa today, millions are starving on the richest land on earth. Just as the Eastern European powers have historically robbed Africa of its human and natural resources, today, the so-called socialist powers, China and Russia, have joined them and are on a vicious tear for the resources of Africa.

This week, in December 2024, I saw an ABC Channel 7 news report that said that the average net worth of a white family in Chicago is \$ 210,000, and the average net worth of a black family in Chicago is \$0. “The U.S. class system is based on racialized social, economic, and political oppression. With such a race and class-divided society, to ignore this basic fact is a sell-out or capitulation to white supremacy.

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<sup>7</sup> Lorenzo Kom'Bao Ervin, Anarchism and the Black Revolution (London, Pluto Press, 2021)79.

<sup>8</sup>*ibid*'

Rather than reducing all contradictions to class alone, like most white radicals continue to do, we must understand the workings of racism as part of the structure of overall oppression.”<sup>9</sup>

“In fact, for white radicals to ignore this means that they themselves are engaging in white chauvinism of the worst sort and betraying the very ideal of social revolution.”<sup>10</sup>

Almost all the white left political parties are still mired in a vanguard party stupor driven by all-powerful dictatorial central committees in the backward quest to “seize state power.” Lorenzo Ervin has this to say about those who have managed to move beyond statism and the dictatorship of the proletariat: “Because of their almost total ignorance about race and class issues, white Anarchist radicals don’t even know what questions to ask. And therefore can’t come up with the right answers. So we organize in our own name and for our interests in a Black/POC (people of color) definition mine, Autonomous movement, rather than depend on them.”<sup>11</sup>

As we dismantle the state, we will build cooperative and communal organizations that allow us to unite our resources and energies. We will magnify our strengths and improve our quality of life through collective ownership and cooperation.

A simple analogy illustrates this principle: If one person spends \$5 for a bag of rice, they can purchase approximately 5 pounds of rice for

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<sup>9</sup> *‘ibid’*.

<sup>10</sup> *‘ibid’*.

<sup>11</sup> *‘ibid’*.

their \$5, but if three people put in \$5 each, they could buy a 50-pound bag of rice, and each could get almost 17 pounds of rice for that same \$5. This collective economic model applied broadly, would not only ease the burden on individuals but also erode the capitalist system that exploits and oppresses us.

In this new society that we are building, entrepreneurship—a hallmark of capitalism—will no longer be heralded as the path to freedom. Instead, collective ownership of the means of production within small cooperative and communal units will serve as the foundation of our economy and as a model for the entire world.

These units will provide for the full range of human needs, from food and shelter to healthcare and education, rodent control, and pest extermination, recreation, child care, elder care, home, auto, and computer repair, and whatever the community needs. These collective organizations will be guided by mutual aid and solidarity principles.

We will replace hierarchical systems with horizontally organized, free associations. Within these associations, no one will be coerced or compelled by wages or authority; participation will be grounded in mutual aid and a commitment to the collective good.

We have reached a point in history where we no longer require the superstitions, metaphysics, and religious institutions that have long served to oppress and exploit. The time has come to discard the remnants of these outdated systems.

We will democratically manage our cooperatives, ensuring everyone has an equal voice and vote in the decision-making processes. The proceeds from our collective labor will be distributed equitably,

with decisions on resource allocation made collectively. This model, extended across society, will create a network of cooperative units that collectively own the means of production and operate without regard for artificial state and national boundaries.

### **How Will We Achieve This Freedom?**

The path to true freedom requires resistance against a powerful oppressor equipped with vast military and law enforcement forces. However, much of this oppressive force consists of working-class individuals who have been coerced into serving the state due to economic necessity. Our task is to help these individuals recognize their shared interests with the oppressed and encourage them to turn their efforts against the ruling class.

We must also organize workers locally, nationally, and globally across all industries—factories, plants, plantations, farms, sweatshops, and every workplace. In our view, organizing does not mean leading people but helping empower them to lead themselves collectively. These organizations will resist the oppressive conditions of capitalist labor while simultaneously preparing for broader direct actions, such as work stoppages, strikes, and, ultimately, a general strike to dismantle the capitalist system entirely.

These workplace organizations must be federated or united with all other workplace organizations locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. In each workplace, resistance units must be developed, and they must be federated or united with all the other resistance units

locally, regionally, nationally, and globally—all without regard for the geographical boundaries that the oppressors have set up.

Notably, the goal is not to seize state power, as both capitalist and communist states have proven to be hierarchical structures of coercion. Instead, we aim to build decentralized, cooperative structures from the ground up. There is no need to wait for permission or external guidance—anyone can take the initiative to organize cooperatives, collectives, or resistance efforts in workplaces.

In this process of liberation, the power of collective action will prove to be our greatest strength. By uniting in cooperatives and organizing resistance in the workplace, we can erode the capitalist system and build a society based on equality, mutual aid, and genuine democracy.

## **Conclusion**

It is imperative that we act boldly and courageously, immediately, to help empower the masses of people to resist the current onslaught of fascism couched in the macabre Project 2025, which the upcoming Trump Administration is planning.

We must help the people separate real friends from real enemies. The massive influx of migrants into our cities from south of the border and the Caribbean is the result of dastardly deeds that the rich rulers of the U. S., with one of their tools, The International Monetary Fund, have perpetrated in the countries from which the migrants are fleeing. Dating back to the “globalization” days of the 1980s, the U.S. has run a steady campaign of running the people in South and Central America off their

land, crushing their abilities to feed themselves and flooding their countries with biogenetically engineered foods.

The U.S. has also done a masterful job of destabilizing governments to the south who oppose its capitalistic model of avarice, creating a climate where millions more seek to migrate north to flee starvation and political repression. The united people of the world must overthrow all these governments and all governments.

The great numbers of recent African migrants that we see have been run off their land by the traditional European and American exploiters of Africa and have now been joined by the Chinese and Russians.

We must help the people to see that the massive wealth that we have created with our blood, sweat, and tears is not amassed in the hands of migrants but hoarded at the top in the pockets of the super-rich who run society and are the architects of the misery of us all.

The planned round-ups of 11 million so-called illegals and putting them in concentration camps before deportation sounds so much like Nazi Germany. We must widely spread the word that the real illegals and foreigners are Donald Trump, Elon Musk, Peter Thiel, and their ilk, including Tom Homan.

Tom Homan Is Donald Trump's new border czar. We need to see with crystal clarity that these fascist "round-ups," while couched in terms like "illegal," are a scam to trick us into going along with it, but it is really a pretext to "round up all who disagree with the government.

We must make it plain that Tom Homan is the real foreigner and has already vowed that he will start these planned "round-ups" here in

Chicago. If we think for a moment that we are exempt from these “round-ups,” Tom Homan has already indicated that he will “round up,” in my view, the most progressive mayor that Chicago has ever had, our black mayor, Brandon Johnson.

Let's help the people resist all these “round-ups” of migrants militantly, and definitely, we should militantly resist the “rounding-up” of our mayor.

The stakes have never been higher! The rich ruling class is rapidly moving toward a society where robotics, artificial intelligence, and machines will do the lion's share of labor. This sets the stage for massive genocide of no longer needed workers, especially blacks, people of color, and the poor.

The time has come for us to throw off all patriotism and allegiance to the source of our hundreds of years-long nightmare, the U.S. of A. It is time to recognize, en mass and with crystal clarity, that our real enemies are the rich hoarders of the wealth of the world who have shown us nothing but slavery, Jim Crow, mass incarceration, mass homelessness, redlining, lousy healthcare, inferior education, chemical, and biological warfare through heroin and cocaine, inadequate housing, you name it. Our allegiance and love must be transferred to our liberating institutions.

We must fend for ourselves and unite our resources, strengths, and energies in free associations featuring mutual aid and solidarity, and we will not only survive but thrive. We must consciously work to federate with or unite, not with governments, but mainly with other oppressed

and exploitative people around the world, without regard for the geographical boundaries or borders that the oppressors have set up.

We must also leave the door open for other allies to join us but not to lead us. Their work could be instrumental in breaking up white supremacy and white privilege in their communities.

## **A BETTER WORLD IS OURS, BUT WE MUST WORK AND FIGHT TO MAKE IT HAPPEN!**

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