

Seven Questions and Answers

[From an email correspondence between Shrinath M Mithanthaya, Mumbai, India (19-09-2012) and Binay Sarkar of the World Socialist Party (India), Kolkata, India (25-09-2012)]

Dear Shrinath,

Thanks for your questionnaire. My answers are as follows:

1. WSP India's manifesto seems to be ready since March 1995. What is the progress in the last 17 years?

Ans:

During the last seventeen years the party has numerically decreased from 17 to 7 (and some supporters) owing to mainly religion factor. Our party doesn't allow its members to actively participate in religious rites. Anyway, I do appreciate your concern about our numbers, perhaps! However, during our 17 years of existence we've advanced a lot knowledgeably and analytically. The point is whether our *Object* and *Declaration of Principles* and our explanations about how capitalism works are correct or not. Yes, we certainly require both *knowledge* and *number* to make a headway towards raising working class consciousness from its present stage as a *class-in-itself* to the *class-for-itself* i.e., by replacing their conservative motto: "A fair-day's wages for a fair-day's work!" with the revolutionary watchword: "*Abolition of the wages system altogether.*" The tininess of our party today may grip one by pessimism. But our theory and practice are scientific, and we adhere to Marx's principle as follows: "The weapon of criticism cannot, of course, replace criticism of the weapon, material force must be overthrown by material force; but theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses. Theory is capable of gripping the masses as soon as it demonstrates *ad hominem*, and it demonstrates *ad hominem* as soon as it becomes radical. To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But, for man, the root is man himself. The evident proof of the radicalism of German theory, and hence of its practical energy, is that it proceeds from a resolute *positive* abolition of religion. The criticism of religion ends with the teaching that *man is the highest being for man* – hence, with the *categorical imperative to overthrow all relations* in which man is a debased, enslaved, forsaken, despicable being, relations which cannot be better described than by the exclamation of a Frenchman when it was planned to introduce a tax on dogs: Poor dogs! They want to treat you as human beings!" – Karl Marx, *Contribution to Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law. Introduction*, Marx Engels Collected Works, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1975, p. 182; Also see:

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1843/critique-hpr/intro.htm>

And when does the situation arise? In Hegel's words, "When philosophy paints its gloomy picture a form of life has grown old. It cannot be rejuvenated by the gloomy picture, but only understood. Only when dusk starts to fall does the owl of

Minerva spread its wing and fly." (Cited by Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, Merlin Press, London 1983, p. 59)

2. If capitalism is a curse to humanity, why has it managed to survive for so long?

Ans:

We don't hold that "capitalism is a curse to humanity". Rather capitalism had once been a "boon" to the humanity during its progressive i.e., *ascending* era. Actually capitalism is a relation of production between wage-labour and capital, which has developed the forces of production immensely outweighing the sum total of the progress made by all the pre-capitalist formations. However, its progress has been bloody and sweaty. History shows us and theory tells us that all relations of production pass through two stages – *ascendance* and *decadence*. Capitalism has accomplished its mission by developing the productive forces to the high point where it has, for some time now, turned from the form of development of the productive forces into their fetter. The system has entered its decadence since about the beginning of the past century. Decadence in the sense that *objective condition* for its revolutionary overthrow remains ripe while the *subjective condition* – i.e., revolutionary knowledge, will and organization – remains yet to be realized. Capitalism has grown extremely old, yet continues to live as a reactionary system. It has to be replaced with socialism.

Secondly, out of some 1 lak 95 thousand years of human life only hardly 10 thousand years cover class societies – slavery, serfdom, feudalism and capitalism. Advent of capitalism occurred in an embryonic form by the 16th century, practically getting into its take off to become the dominant relation of production with the industrial revolution during the second half of the 18th century and the first half of the 19th century.

3. In the least, why have socialists/Marxists been able to form one united front to effectively overcome the weaknesses of the capitalist model e.g. in India alone, there are at least 4 large socialist/Marxist organizations - (i) CPI, (ii) CPI (M), (iii) Socialist Unity Centre (India) and (iv) World Socialist Party, coincidentally, all based in Kolkata.

Ans:

We are against any form of "united front". Simply because socialism is the science of the working class and science doesn't compromise. We hold that our Object and Declaration of Principles along with our analyses of Capitalism are scientific, and for that matter, we cannot form any "united front" with other so-called "socialist/Marxist organizations – (i) CPI, (ii) CPI (M), (iii) Socialist Unity Centre (India)" as you suggest. They are pseudo-socialist, pseudo-Marxist. They are left-capitalist parties defending capitalism's left-wing by using/misusing Marxian phraseology. They have erected the most demeaning impediment against any correct understanding of Marxism which comprises three interrelated principles – *Materialist Conception of History, theory of surplus value and class struggle*. They have distorted Marxism in the name of Marxism. More

appropriately, they are out-and-out anti-Marxist masquerading as 'Marxist'. We share nothing with their garbage views about history, society and social change.

4. WSP seems completely against capitalism, which in its purest form is merely an economic system of producing and distributing goods and services. The key question is - "Is capitalism the problem or are capitalists the problem?" If the same system is managed by compassionate and conscientious people, can the desired goals not be achieved?

Ans:

Yes, we are "completely against capitalism". In fact, capitalism is a relation of production whereby past labour i.e., dead labour sucks living labour like a vampire. It works objectively through its *law of value*. Thus capital is *essentially* a capitalist. Just as a wage worker is a slave of wage, so also a capitalist (no matter what its form – individual, joint-stock or state) is a slave of profit; capital coerces both to get accomplished its sole objective of expanded reproduction – self-expansion, self-motivated accumulation. As world socialists our one single objective is to end capital; we are against capital. We reject a false view of some pseudo-Marxists that we need capital and not capitalists. Actually, the capitalist ceases to exist when capital ceases to exist. So "capitalism is the problem." Its motive force is *profit*; Capitalism is *production for profit*. Even if, for arguments sake, "the same system is managed by compassionate and conscientious people" profit is a must, hence exploitation of the working class is a must, since "the desired goal" of the system is to maximize profit. Capitalism is all about profit. Capital is accumulated and animated profit. Its nature remains the same no matter how it is managed and who manages it. Without profit there is no capital. Whereas the working class's "desired goal" is emancipation from exploitation which, however, is the sole source of capital. How can it be achieved if capitalism exists?

5. What is the status of World Socialist Party in other countries?

Ans:

Please read a little bit from the *Manifesto of the World Socialist Party (India)* in our website: www.worldsocialistpartyindia.org to have an idea about the ongoing World Socialist Movement and you should at the same time consider this website: www.worldsocialism.org/spgb for more details.

6. Are you open to abandoning the war against capitalism, and instead taking up a whole new path to global peace and prosperity?

Ans:

No, we cannot abandon our struggle against capitalism. Simply because we cannot abandon the path towards working class emancipation and thereby human emancipation from the clutch of division of society into classes.

In fact, it is only we, the world socialists, who are genuinely holding on to "a whole new path to global peace and prosperity". Global peace and prosperity are at stake under capitalist relations of production. Today capitalism is the cause of war, terrorism and destruction. An exploitative and oppressive system cannot be

peaceful – slavery hadn't been peaceful, serfdom and feudalism weren't peaceful, and capitalism isn't peaceful. You cannot put a square peg into a round hole. You cannot make a tiger eat grass. World capitalism and world peace are opposed to each other. There will be no peace until we achieve *equality* that is *socialism*.

7. Finally, how do you explain the fact that socialists/Marxists denounce capitalism, but themselves take full advantage of all the so-called capitalist goods and services - mobile phones, internet, airplanes, cars, movies, etc.

Ans:

Well, the truth of the matter is, however, the other way round. There are no "capitalist goods and services" anyway; workers produce only goods and services which under capitalist relations of production turn into commodities. Capitalists do not work. They are the parasites of society. They consume from the *surplus value* produced and handed over to them by the working class in the first place. Workers consume just a portion – only a historically diminishing portion (relative wage i.e., share of the collective working class in comparison to that of the collective capitalist class in the total global production) of what they themselves have produced. Actually, all workers cannot buy all that you have listed; majority of them are forced to live in poverty, temporary and permanent unemployment and misery, in spite of the global *abundance* (both real and potential) they have already created. It is the working class who produces, stocks, preserves and protects everything capitalism needs; they run and defend all the affairs of the system. On the other hand, the capitalists do nothing but consume what they haven't produced but appropriated from the working class. For us, abundance for all – that is socialism.

Regards,
Binay Sarkar,
General Secretary,
The World Socialist Party (India)