

End Poverty and Unemployment

The reason why millions and millions of people, especially young people, are unemployed and live in poverty around the world is because of the capitalist and state systems. Capitalism and the state lead to all sorts of problems including unemployment, inequality and the oppression of workers, women and people of colour.

Unemployment and poverty are part of capitalism. Anarchists always said that while workers produce all the wealth under capitalism; through the wage system and the law, this wealth is stolen by the ruling class - made up of the rich and politicians. It is this theft that causes poverty. So while the rich and politicians own almost everything, including the land and factories, most people end up owning almost nothing and are stuck in poverty. It is this which also forces people to sell themselves as workers to members of the ruling class: it is the only way they can survive. This too allows for our continued exploitation - we get only a tiny amount of what we produce in the form of a wage; while the boss and state takes the rest as profit and tax. In effect, under capitalism, workers and the poor are endlessly robbed. The state is then used by the rich and politicians to keep this unfair situation in place - it is the state that protects the rich and politicians and if people protest against how unfair capitalism is, the state that steps in to stop them.

People also become unemployed under capitalism because the ruling class hire the smallest number of people possible, and force them to work very hard, to make bigger and bigger profits. This means millions of people don't have work because bosses want to cut costs by hiring only a few workers not everyone.

This means a strange situation is found under capitalism where most workers are over-worked; while millions of other people are unemployed.

While we need to struggle for decent jobs and against poverty today, we also need to realise that the state and capitalism are the root causes



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of these evils. As such, the struggle against unemployment and poverty needs to be based on the goal of changing the economy from capitalism to socialism. If unemployment and poverty is to be ended, all wealth would have to be socialised. Only when there is social property - where everything is owned by everyone - can unemployment and poverty be ended. We also need to change the economy to meet the needs of all - like decent housing, public transport, food and clothes - and not make profits. Only then will all people have work as the

long hours and forced hard work that lead to unemployment would no longer be a built-in part of the system. Only when we produce for need will poverty be ended and the conditions that lead to the oppression of the working class, women, and people of colour be ended. To get to this world, however, workers need to take over the factories, socialise wealth and get rid of the bosses. Only then, along with planning from below via direct democracy, can everyone run the economy to end poverty, and only then will we be in a position to share all wealth.

To do so, however, we need to get rid of the state. The state protects the politicians and rich; not us. It is hierarchical, centralised, and oppressive. Under all forms of states, a small group of people rules while most people have little or no say and are punished if they are seen as stepping out of line. States cannot end poverty, unemployment and oppression; rather their role is to force people to accept these evils. We, therefore, need to replace the state with direct democracy, using federated assemblies and community councils, where everyone can be involved and have a direct say. Only under stateless socialism - anarchism - will we end poverty, unemployment, and only then will everyone be free.

End Unemployment and Poverty: End the State and Capitalism!

Text based on that taken from the invitation to the Soundz of the South (SOS) Struggle and Poetry Slam held in Khayelitsha, Cape Town on Saturday, 25th June 2011

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