

The Co-operative Alternative to War

A plan for peace, through Co-operative Socialism

Labour Action for Peace, 25 November 2015

In a word, the Co-operative Alternative to War is peace.

But how can peace be achieved?

The key book, 'The Spirit Level', gives the clue. From the evidence, there, that more income-equal societies are more peaceful, we can see that the creation of greater levels of income equality – and economic equality generally – will produce peace.

Two years' ago, Labour Action for Peace adopted the plan for Co-operative Socialism (as printed overleaf) as a plan to deal with the five mechanisms that create income- and economic-inequality. On this side I've rearranged that seven-point plan in order to highlight the inter-national aspects of this plan for Co-operative Socialism.

Objectives:

- 1) All our sisters are our brothers: and all our brothers are our sisters
- 2) Make capital **grants (not loans)** to developing countries and developing communities.
- 2) Global stewardship for needs - **not private resources for profit**
- 3) Maximise human needs provision on a **co-operative, free-at-the-point-of-use basis,**
- 4) **Fair, guaranteed incomes for all**
Introduce guaranteed fair income for all, including a **guaranteed livable Citizens' Income**, and, so, do away with personal, income and sales taxes,

How?

- 1) **End global exploitation through financial speculation**
Reintroduce international exchange controls as necessary,
- 2) **Banking as public service - not as global warfare**
Abolish money-lending and credit-creation for profit,
- 3) **Predistribution not Redistribution**
Through local, democratically-controlled, not-for-profit Community Co-operative Banks,
- 4) **Co-operation not Coercion**
Convert all workplaces into appropriate co-operatives (see the 'Statement on the Co-operative Identity' from the International Co-operative Alliance – attached).

Why?

Economic Equality has to be humanity's next key step, since:

A) Economic equality – particularly equal incomes for all humans - is the **key** necessity for personal, family, social and international peace and well-being: This is why we have to work on the five mechanisms** that create economic inequality, and,

B) Abolition of profit-seeking and hierarchy has to occur: This has to be, if we are to quickly and sustainably limit human impact on the planet - so that, eventually, there will be fewer people doing less stuff, longer-lived stuff and, thus, more sustainable stuff.

** (ie TRIP-UP: Theft of and from the commonweal, Rent, Interest, Profit and Unequal Pay for work, including no pay for work).

So, A plan for peace, through Co-operative Socialism

So, the plan for Co-operative Socialism – as above, but laid out, here, starting with co-operative acts of wealth-production in a nation, through more-equal distribution in that nation, and finishing at the international relationships.

All to help sustainably create economic- and income-equality and -equity and, thus, peace:

>> A Seven Point Action Plan for Co-operative Socialism >>

A) Co-operatives and peace, not corporations and coercion

Convert competitive, market-based activities into workplace co-operatives and remodel monopoly activities as community co-operatives: each co-op demonstrably operating according to the International Co-operative Alliance Co-operative Values and Principles, and with each co-op having respectful, time-limited, non-heritable, non-transferable 'co-operative care-ship', from the commonwealth, of appropriate land and knowledge resources, *(See points two and five for the funding mechanism to achieve this);*

B) Not-for-profit banking and financial structures as co-ops

Distribute the added-value created wealth from these workplace co-ops through nationally collected, co-operative corporate taxation, distributed into local, democratically-controlled, Community Banks, and, so, make money and credit available for eco- and socially-responsible wealth creation, community development and global care - and the conversions referred to above;

C) Step-wise abolition of money as access to needs – global co-operative care-ship for needs and care, not private resources for profit

Maximise necessary service provision (health, education, libraries, transport, and so on) on a co-operative, free-at-the-point-of-use basis: retaining money only as a mechanism for access to discretionary purchases;

D) Fair, Guaranteed Incomes – Far-greater Equality and Equity of incomes for all - Predistribution, not Redistribution

Introduce guaranteed fair income for all, within upper and lower brackets: based upon a liveable, fair Citizen's Income/Living Income for Everybody (a 'LIFE'), and, so, do away with the need for direct and indirect personal taxation – income tax, sales taxes, and so on;

E) Abolition of for-profit money - An end to usury/riba, - ie banking as global warfare

Abolish money-lending and credit-creation for profit, and, so, operate banking as a community-controlled co-operative public service (*See point two above*);

F) Regulated inter-national relations – An end to global exploitation through financial speculation

Reintroduce international exchange controls, a Tobin Tax, etc, as necessary

G) All our sisters our brothers, and all our brothers our sisters – One in all, one for all, all as one, all in one

Make capital grants (not loans!) to developing countries.

At www.interestfreemoney.org there is a collection of papers, including a set of five articles published by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives as a 'Readings on Co-operative Socialism'.

Finally, below, are two Parliamentary Motions that could help bring about the replacement of violence (ie capitalism) by peace (ie Co-operative Socialism).

These key Parliamentary Motions could be tabled in any national parliament or national assembly.

I hope these help!

DRAFT Interest-free money Petition to the Canadian House of Commons

The following motion could be used to create interest-free, inflation-proofed, sustainable funding for public services:

"That this House is concerned that the costs of dealing with the recent credit crunch is only a foretaste of the much larger sums that will be necessary to cope with climate change, extreme weather conditions, an ageing population and physical infrastructure, increasing education and ill-health expenditures, and social discord costs; believes that instead of raising the money by increased taxation or borrowing commercial interest-bearing debt, the Canadian Federal Government should now increase the proportion of publicly-created money in the economy by issuing interest-free credit to capitalize sustainable public services; notes that the use of such publicly-created, interest-free money would substantially cut the cost of public investment by eliminating the need to pay interest; thus recommends that within its inflation targets the Bank of Canada be instructed by this House to create sufficient interest-free money for deposit as an interest-free credit to the Federal Treasury for allocation by this House as it, from time to time, shall determine."

For related UK House of Commons activity, see:

<http://www.interestfreemoney.org/>

<http://www.forumforstablecurrencies.org.uk/index.htm>

DRAFT Citizen's Income Petition to the Canadian House of Commons

The following motion could be used to create such a 'Canadian Citizen's Income' as a guaranteed, liveable, humane income, payable to all persons normally resident in Canada:

"This House recognizes the adverse effects, both for all humans and for the whole global commonweal, of economic inequality, and the consequential economic insecurity and ecological damage; further it recognizes that constructive individual and social action for economic equality and ecological care require access to economic resources, and further recognizes that such resources are beyond the reach of the overwhelming majority of Canadians; it therefore calls on the Canadian Federal government to legislate two actions:

- Firstly, to immediately create a 'Canadian Citizen's Income' as a guaranteed, liveable, humane income, payable to all persons normally resident in Canada, and payable at such a level that all Canadians can be active in their communities for the security and well-being of the whole of Canada, through the creation of sustainable economic equality, and so that all Canadians, and thus Canada as a whole, can play their part in helping create global well-being,
- Concurrently, to immediately establish, and fully fund, an Annual Meeting of a Canadian Federal Citizen's Assembly randomly-selected from all those normally resident in Canada to determine the level of the said 'Canadian Citizen's Income' and make relevant annual recommendations to the Canadian Federal government for annual implementation."

The International Co-operative Alliance Statement on the Co-operative Identity

(Manchester, UK 1995)

Definition:

A co-operative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.

Values:

Co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. In the tradition of their founders, co-operative members believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

Principles

The co-operative principles are guidelines by which co-operatives put their values into practice.

1st Principle: Voluntary and Open Membership

Co-operatives are voluntary organisations, open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2nd Principle: Democratic Member Control

Co-operatives are democratic organisations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions. Men and women serving as elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary co-operatives members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote) and co-operatives at other levels are also organised in a democratic manner.

3rd Principle: Member Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4th Principle: Autonomy and Independence

Co-operatives are autonomous, self-help organisations controlled by their members. If they enter to agreements with other organisations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their co-operative autonomy.

5th Principle: Education, Training and Information

Co-operatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their co-operatives. They inform the general public - particularly young people and opinion leaders - about the nature and benefits of co-operation.

6th Principle: Co-operation among Co-operatives

Co-operatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the co-operative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7th Principle: Concern for Community

Co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members.

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