

The Worm in American Capitalism

The apple the 13 English colonies bit into when they signed the Declaration of Independence had a worm. In the aftermath of their successful resistance to the military effort of the English king's determination to retain the colonies, the worm transformed into a snake. Whereas the 1776 Declaration of Independence declared all men to be free and equal, the first government of the independent States of America, based on the 1777 Articles of Confederation, admitted slavery as did the second government based on the 1787 Constitution.

The worm/snake was, and still is, slavery. By the early 1800s most American enslaved people labored in the Southern cotton industry, an industry whose products and profits fueled Northern industry and finance. American capitalism was, by 1850, firmly based on slavery.

The notion of white male privilege among the large landowners was endemic in the antebellum South.

Modern American capitalism relies on slavery for profits and on white male privilege for its control of governments. Workers are not technically slaves, but they are not allowed to organize, many are paid poverty-level wages, and have virtually no job protections and legal rights. Jobs are offered on a take-it-or-leave-it basis with all the power in the hands of the capitalist business owners.

The labor protection laws of earlier decades have been eroded.

This wage slavery is reinforced by the tax laws, more artifacts of capitalism's control of the government.

Current political discourse is full of male capitalist privilege. As in the earliest days, slave owners will not be denied. Voters acquiesce, unwilling, if not unable, to see the historical parallels and anticipate the likely future.

How many people shivered when President Bush, in the aftermath of 9/11, advised us to go shopping? Modern American capitalism is based on control of government, a consumer public, and a powerless labor force. Black cotton slavery has morphed into multicolor wage slavery.

How do you like them apples? How does the worm taste?