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Warning! Capitalist Sharks

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Trying to reform capitalism makes about as much sense as trying to convert a shark to vegetarianism. It is also dangerous, as the two liberal protesters in the shark's maw on the cover of this book are about to discover. They forgot that some capitalist sharks have learned to pretend to be vegetarians the better to eat us up. So, children, beware of sharks labeled 'clean' coal, 'humanitarian wars,' 'green' oil corporations, 'compassionate' conservatives and the like.

Are all capitalists sharks? The sorry history of five hundred years of capitalist 'progress' points to the conclusion that by its nature capitalism can't grow without chewing up workers' lives and devouring the environment – no more than a shark can grow without devouring fresh blood and flesh. Your humble Author has been closely observing the evolution of capitalist sharks for more than fifty years, and the anatomical descriptions presented in this Taxonomy are designed to help readers recognize the different species as they swim across the aquarium of your TV screens.

The first capitalist sharks were observed on these shores as early as 1492, ravaging the Americas. In their savage hunger for silver and gold, they nearly exterminated the Native Americans, so the Colonial sharks had to replace the dead natives with African slaves. The capitalist sharks' original breeding ground was in Western Europe, where they were busy devouring the commons, driving formerly free yeomen farmers off the green land and into dismal factories; creating homelessness and hanging the homeless as 'vagabonds;' devaloring women's work and burning them as witches.

The European sharks grew larger and bolder over time, battenning on generations of working men women and children, slowly chewing their substance through 14 daily hours of dreary labor in soot-darkened Satanic mills or under the lash on estates and plantations. As the capitalist sharks grew their appetites increased, and by the end of the 19th century imperialist sharks were swarming in a feeding frenzy, driven by a desperate urge to devour the teeming populations and fabulous natural wealth of Africa and Asia.

As the 20th Century dawned, the imperialist sharks began attacking each other (as sharks in a feeding frenzy will), sometimes individually sometimes in schools under the banners of Democracy, Communism and Nationalism. The larger sharks naturally devoured the smaller and the surviving giants continued slashing and biting each other all over the planet. By the 21st Century, the old European sharks were being pushed out of their former feeding grounds by younger breeds of fast-growing Chinese, Indian, Iranian, Russian and Brazilian sharks, better adapted for preying on the local varieties of fish and increasingly more competitive.

For years the oceans churned with blood, but with so many sharks competing, the supply of game fish was soon depleted and there were few left to prey on. The most successful sharks in this war of all against all tempered their ferocity with guile. As the pickings got slimmer, these smarter sharks adopted protective coloration and passed themselves off as vegetarians in order to lurk in shallow shoals where they could sneak up on the littler fish (the only ones left) and devour them. Recent studies in political ichthyology have identified seventeen new species of Vegetarian Sharks, including the Great Green Oil Derrick Shark, the Oxymoronic Clean Coal Shark, the Elusive Trickle-Down Economics Shark and the Bleeding-Heart Humanitarian War Shark.

All of these 'vegetarian' species flourish, despite the increasing mistrust of the little fish, some of whom even want to ban sharks of any kind from entering the shoals (!) Indeed, since through natural selection the surviving little fish have become more intelligent, fish scientists wonder why they continue to be fooled by their predators' apparently transparent 'vegetarian' disguise.

Observations indicate that various species of Corporate Sharks have evolved glowing, multicolored media eyes with which they are able to hypnotize their prey. Other Corporate species inject a poisonous green substance called 'campaign contributions' into the Small Fish Assembly effectively paralyzing it. The Corporate Sharks also fatten the Judas Goatfish who 'represent' the little fish by luring them into the open jaws of Lurking Privatizer Sharks who swallow up the very Schools in which the fish children learn to swim.

As the German specialist Bertolt Brecht hypothesized in the 1930's: 'If sharks were men there would be an end to all little fish being equal, as is the case now. Some would be given important offices and be placed above the others. Those who were a little bigger would even be allowed to eat up the smaller ones. That would be altogether agreeable for the sharks, since they themselves would more often get bigger bites to eat. And the bigger little fish, occupying their posts, would ensure order among the little fish, become teachers, officers, engineers in box construction, etc.'

Today, new breeds of Supernational Capitalist Sharks have learned to disguise themselves as 'vegetarians,' and some of them are very good at it. But watch out! Never forget they really are man-eating sharks. No point in trying to get them to give up human flesh or even go on a diet, as liberal reformers would have it. They can't.

The Author, an avid amateur revolutionary, has spent a half-century patiently collecting specimens of vegetarian sharks from every part of the globe and from both the left and the right. This humorous Taxonomy is his modest scientific contribution to the

cause of the working people in the class struggle – a struggle the rich have been waging far too long against the poor as a one-way affair.

The cream of this painful jest is that the Billionaire sharks keep bleating 'class war!' every time some moderate Liberal dares to suggest the anathema solution of 'taxing and spending' – taxing their bloated corporate profits at 1960's levels and spending on desperately needed public goods like education, housing, hospitals, infrastructure, the environment, healthcare, retirement, childcare, mass transit, drug and alcohol treatment, etc. Since 1980 the Neo-Liberal sharks waging this globalized one-sided class war have succeeded in devouring most of these public goods in the so-called 'developing' world, while taking great bites out of the 'advanced.'

And so, children, the Capitalist Sharks first sighted off South America in 1492 continue devouring the planetary commons, privatizing the water and fouling the air in their ever-increasing hunger for more profits. Today, with their phony financial system on the ropes, a world-wide depression settling in and catastrophic climate change looming over our heads, it is high time for the Billions of us smaller fish to turn the tables by uniting globally to prosecute class war against the Billionaires.

Not by fighting capitalist violence with more violence, terror against terror, barracuda vs. shark, but through solidarity and united resistance. In any case, they have all the guns. But just remember this: the day we all wake up and go on a planetary general strike together is the day when the power of the bankers and corporations dissolves into thin air. Thanks to the Internet, mass global civil disobedience can be organized in real time. That day could be tomorrow.

The name of today's game is 'Billions vs. Billionaires,' and this book is devoted to the art of winning at that game. Numbers is our strong suit. "We are many, they are few" famously said the poet Shelley. So if there is even one chance in a hundred of winning, organization is the card for us to play. Learning how to win begins with examining the inevitable 'mistakes' made by earlier generations of rebels and revolutionaries in their attempts to organize and with scrutinizing those rare moments when revolutionary masses have 'stormed the heavens,' briefly illuminating the landscape of possible futures. These flashes are the beacons that light our way forward.

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