

Student commends WSWS coverage of economic crisis, NEA-AFT merger vote

18 July 1998

Dear Sir:

I have been a reader of your excellent web site for quite some time now, but the wonderful analysis of your articles never ceases to amaze me. When reading the article entitled 'Not a 'new economic paradigm' but old disorders' I was struck by its clarity of analysis, something that is sadly--although not surprisingly--lacking in articles in the capitalist press.

While I was reading this article, I couldn't help but recall a passage I quoted this year in a paper I wrote for a high school course called Current Global Issues. Although the paper was an attack on Malthus' idiotic ideas, the passage is equally pertinent here:

'The struggle of capital against capital, of labour against labour, of land against land, drives production to a fever pitch at which production turns all natural and rational relations upside down. No capital can stand the competition of another if it is not brought to the highest pitch of activity. No piece of land can be profitably cultivated if it does not continuously increase its productivity. No worker can hold his own against his competitors if he does not devote all his energy to labour. No one at all who enters into the struggle of competition can weather it without the utmost exertion of his energy, without renouncing every truly human purpose. The consequence of this overexertion on the one side is, inevitably, slackening on the other. When the fluctuation of competition is small, when demand and supply, consumption and production, are almost equal, a stage must be reached in the development of production where there is so much superfluous productive power that the great mass of the nation has nothing to live on, that the people starve from sheer abundance. For some considerable time England has found herself in this crazy position, in this living absurdity. When production is subject to greater fluctuations, as it is bound to be in consequence of such

a situation, then the alternation of boom and crisis, overproduction and slump, sets in. The economist has never been able to find an explanation for this mad situation. In order to explain it, he invented the population theory, which is just as senseless--indeed even more senseless than the contradiction of coexisting wealth and poverty. The economist could not afford to see the truth; he could not afford to admit that this contradiction is a simple consequence of competition; for in that case his entire system would have fallen to bits.'

What is, to me, so amazing about this passage, so relevant to today's 'Asian' crisis, is that it was written in 1844 by Frederick Engels in the book, *Outlines of A Critique of Political Economy*.

I would also like to thank you for your article on the NEA merger. Both of my parents are teachers, and my mother was a delegate to the convention (who voted no on the merger, by the way). Although neither share my political views, they did agree that the crux of your article was correct.

Thank you for your wonderful web site,
ARS

See Also:

Officials discuss global economic crisis--Not a 'new paradigm' but old disorders
[14 July 1998]

Why NEA delegates rejected merger of US teachers unions
[11 July 1998]



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