

Letters from our readers

18 October 2008

The following is a selection of recent letters sent to the World Socialist Web Site.

On "Socialism vs. the government bailout of capitalism"

What this does is to expose the way libertarianism thinks on such matters, as opposed to Marxism.

Marxism sees the history of humanity as characterised by a number of discrete modes of production, each with their own logics and laws of motion, and each enforced by state power and the state machine, which acts in the interest of the dominant "class-as-a-whole" of that mode of production, (and even socialism requires a state power in the beginning, until it eventually becomes superfluous and withers away).

Libertarianism, by contrast, because it sees capitalism simply as the consummate expression of the way humans have always behaved, and always will behave, fantasises that there could be such a thing as capitalism without a state power to enforce it.

It thus replaces the class dialectic of Marxism with a dialectic of its own: a quasi-Manichaeian clash of the eternal market and the eternal state, as two countervailing principles always in conflict with one another. It thus of course ascribes unpleasant phenomena such as wars or social stagnation to the dominance of the state over the market. Since everybody loves capitalism so much, even the proletariat, there is no need for a state to keep it going, since there is no one to keep down!

Such views are going to become increasingly prominent in the next few months and years, and the WSWs must combat them mercilessly. Anything that is "good" in such views insofar as they point out matters normally obscured from the smug "liberal" (sic!) has long since been taken up into and transcended in the Marxist-Trotskyist synthesis, and put to work for, not against, the interests of the working class.

Athanasius G

15 October 2008

On one hand, we say the government is of the people, by the people and for the people, then the next thing you hear from capitalists is "no big government," meaning of course, making the voice of the common person as feeble as possible. What capitalism allows (one bought voice of the purchased presses) was demonized in communism (one newspaper governmentally owned) ... and the difference is? Capitalists also stomp on democracy--NAFTA, for example, and now the North American Union. We simply don't get a say. In Africa, this would be considered corrupt and despotic; we consider it a free-market philosophy. The public has been frightened by the mythologies surrounding "socialism" (they'll take your house and burn your churches) that they virtually hang themselves by voting in people who *will* take your house and health. And there aren't many church basements willing to help the poor, either, since religion is often in line with free-market values). Demonizing socialism has almost become a mind-virus, with few really examining what it actually is. While the corporate section often relies on socialism for the rich, the majority abhor the idea of socialism for themselves--illogical, irrational and, very typical of a mind-virus like religion. No amount of logic can get through. I don't know if we have enough time before the door closes on civilization as we know it, or life on earth, but the only option we have is to keep trying to get the message across. Great movements in history always started with a very small minority that had vision and a window of opportunity to express it. Perhaps that window is upon us.

Stephanie N

Powell River, BC, Canada

15 October 2008

Name one socialist government that has not decayed into Nepotism and Corruption. Name one that is not a thinly veiled pyramid scheme where the top

government officials and their friends receive all the benefits of the Socialist racket. While the notion of Socialism is arguably genuine, it is not practical. Human nature is flawed and those in charge of the public good (private income) will abuse this power. If you disagree, name an example of where this has not happened. Free-market capitalism, while not free of flaws, rewards individual effort justly.

Josh

15 October 2008

On "Obama floats economic plan: tax breaks and austerity"

You write, "These include tax credits for corporations in return for hiring workers in the US." I just finished reading a Democracy Underground paean to Obama for his economic genius in at last tying corporate handouts to performance that benefits the workers--which used the \$3,000 tax credit as illustration. You might want to tell your readers that this is nothing more than a subsidy to businesses that allows them to hire workers at minimum wage, collect the \$3,000, fire the workers after six months, and essentially have paid \$3/hr. below minimum wage for creating a dead-end job. Less rhetoric and more concrete examples helps the folk see how capitalism really works.

Michael G

15 October 2008

I don't think the public is overly inspired by either Obama or McCain. I work as a courier delivering medical equipment throughout south central Florida, and the one thing that is conspicuously absent during this election are bumper stickers supporting either Obama or McCain. In fact, I rarely see any at all.

I also do a little bike riding through the neighborhood where I live. I ride a little 10-mile trek through a middle class neighborhood. During that ride, I've only seen one yard sign (Obama) promoting either the Democratic or Republican candidate.

Brian M

Florida, USA

15 October 2008

On "US government expands bank bailout on Wall Street's terms"

Ok, so the system has received a fillip, but you can guarantee that it will be only a short-term boost, and then it will be back to square one, with the use of even more taxpayers' money to bail out this parasitic system

that George Bush described as Democratic Capitalism. As a result of this transfer of wealth, school budgets will have to be cut, with the likelihood of staff being sacked whether they be teachers, janitors, cleaners or dining room staff. Supplies will not be purchased. The same applies to hospitals where nurses, doctors, porters and cleaners will face the same type of budget cuts.

And as a consequence of this, people will probably die due to the lack of life saving medicines and equipment. In relation to local councils, workers will also pay a high price for the investment of local authority monies in banks that have collapsed or are close to collapsing. You will also see the destruction of thousands upon thousands of jobs in other industries because of this economic crisis. There will be attacks on the unemployed and the more vulnerable in society.

No doubt more draconian powers will be given to the state to defend and protect itself, as the ruling class turns evermore towards authoritarian forms of rule, as workers come into conflict not only with governments, but with their own labour organisations and trades unions, social democratic and so-called left parties. Workers need to prepare themselves for the enormous battles that lie ahead. A more grim and starker picture could not be painted than the one the international working class faces.

Jay

15 October 2008

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