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Introduction

The National Catholic Forensics League has announced the LD topic for the 2003 NCFL Nationals. The topic is "Resolved: Capitalism is the most just economic system." It is listed at their website -- <http://www.wacfl.org/2003Nationals/2003Topics.htm>

Although Planet Debate does not have a schedule release for this LD topic, we have gathered some evidence, including some from our policy database, that is relevant to the topic.

There are also a number of links to the capitalism good/bad debate under "LD Research Links" at <http://www.planetdebate.com/scripts/research.asp>. If you are not a PD subscriber, you can log on with Planet (username) and Planet (password) temporarily to access these links

We hope that you find it useful.

Good Luck!

GENERAL: CAPITALISM IS IN CRISES

AMERICAN CAPITALISM IS IN CRISIS

The American Prospect, August 12, 2002 v13 i14 p22(5)
Can liberals save capitalism (again)? Seven decades after the Great Depression,
Democrats have their work cut out for them. Robert Kuttner.

How serious is the corporate meltdown? Very serious. It's likely that American capitalism is facing its most dire crisis since the 1930s. The parallels are eerie. The crash of October 1929, like the current slide, was an accurate if belated appraisal by investors that many billions of dollars of speculative capital investments turned out to be worthless. The market's unsustainable prices, in turn, reflected diverse stock-kiting schemes in which insiders made a killing at the expense of ordinary investors. One of the most notorious industries where such practices were common, appropriately, was electric power. In a fine anticipation of Enron, unregulated utility holding companies watered stock, manipulated profits, enriched insiders, and bilked investors and ratepayers alike. A second cause of the '29 crash was the ability of Wall Street houses such as Morgan to be both commercial banks and investment banks. As such, they could float securities, peddle them to customers and profit handsomely from fees, mark-ups and insider trades. They thereby abandoned their first fiduciary duty as bankers--to certify the soundness of the enterprise--and steered a lot of other people's money to sterile investments

THE CREDIBILITY OF CAPITALISM IS UNDER ASSAULT

Newsweek, Feb 24, 2003 p41
Capitalism Must Develop More of a Conscience: In today's trust-starved climate, our market-driven system is under attack. Businesses need to adopt more of a social philosophy. Klaus Schwab.

Today, large parts of the population feel that business has become detached from society—that business interests are no longer aligned with societal interests. And it is not enough to say that business has been discredited by the behavior of some greedy or even fraudulent CEOs, and that tightening the rules will demonstrate to the public that the majority of business leaders are trustworthy. What has come under attack now is the credibility not only of our business leaders, but of business itself--or, in other words, of capitalism and our market-driven system.

GENERAL: CAPITALISM IS IN CRISES

GLOBALLY, CAPITALISM IS IN DECLINE

Monthly Review, April 2002 v53 i11 p1(14)

The new face of capitalism: Slow growth, excess capital, and a mountain of debt.

For a long time now, the U.S. economy and the economies of the advanced capitalist world as a whole have been experiencing a slowdown in economic growth relative to the quarter-century following the Second World War. It is true that there have been cyclical upswings and long expansions that have been touted as full-fledged "economic booms" in this period, but the slowdown in the rate of growth of the economy has continued over the decades. Grasping this fact is crucial if one is to understand the continual economic restructuring over the last three decades, the rapidly worsening conditions in much of the underdeveloped world to which the crisis has been exported, and the larger significance of the present cyclical downturn of world capitalism.

GLOBAL GROWTH SLOWDOWN NOW

Monthly Review, April 2002 v53 i11 p1(14)

The new face of capitalism: Slow growth, excess capital, and a mountain of debt.

In order to illustrate what is happening to growth in advanced capitalism, the changes in the growth of Gross Domestic Product in the United States over the entire post-Second World War period are shown in chart 1 below. The vertical axis of the chart is designed to bring out rates of change. Termed a semilog chart, the vertical scale differs from the usual arithmetic scale. Thus, the difference between 2,000 and 3,000 represents an increase of 50 percent, whereas the distance between 3,000 and 4,000 is scaled to show an increase of 33.3 percent. In this sort of chart, the straight line portrays an equal rate of change for the period 1950 to 1970, smoothing out the minor fluctuations. Individual years are thus slightly above and below the trend line, but there is a fair consistency in the average rate of growth of the total goods and services produced in the first two decades. Now look at the ever-widening gap between the trend for 1950--1970 and the actual growth rates between 1980 and 2000. The implication of the slowdown is indicated by the fact that if the 1950--1970 growth rate had continued unabated, the economy would have been approximately 20 percent larger than it actually was in 2000.

CAPITALISM BAD: IMPERIALISM

GLOBAL CAPITAL, NOT U.S. IMPERIALISM, DRIVES GLOBAL EMPIRE

Michael Hardt, Literature Professor, Antonio Negri, former political science professor, U Paris, 2000 (EMPIRE,
<http://textz.gutenberg.net/text.php?id=1034709069754&search=hardt+negri+empire>)

These three means of control refer us again to the three tiers of the imperial pyramid of power. The bomb is a monarchic power, money aristocratic, and ether democratic. It might appear in each of these cases as though the reins of these mechanisms were held by the United States. It might appear as if the United States were the new Rome, or a cluster of new Romes: Washington (the bomb), New York (money), and Los Angeles (ether). Any such territorial conception of imperial space, however, is continually destabilized by the fundamental flexibility, mobility, and deterritorialization at the core of the imperial apparatus. Perhaps the monopoly of force and the regulation of money can be given partial territorial determinations, but communication cannot. Communication has become the central element that establishes the relations of production, guiding capitalist development and also transforming productive forces. This dynamic produces an extremely open situation: here the centralized locus of power has to confront the power of productive subjectivities, the power of all those who contribute to the interactive production of communication. Here in this circulating domain of imperial domination over the new forms of production, communication is most widely disseminated in capillary forms.

CAPITALISM BAD: BIOPOWER

CAPITALISM SUPPORTS BIOPOWER

Michael Hardt, Literature Professor, Antonio Negri, former political science professor, U Paris, 2000 (EMPIRE,
<http://textz.gutenberg.net/text.php?id=1034709069754&search=hardt+negri+empire>)

The danger of the discourse of general intellect is that it risks remaining entirely on the plane of thought, as if the new powers of labor were only intellectual and not also corporeal (Section 3.4). As we saw earlier, new forces and new positions of affective labor characterize labor power as much as intellectual labor does. Biopower names these productive capacities of life that are equally intellectual and corporeal. The powers of production are in fact today entirely biopolitical; in other words, they run throughout and constitute directly not only production but also the entire realm of reproduction.

Biopower becomes an agent of production when the entire context of reproduction is subsumed under capitalist rule, that is, when reproduction and the vital relationships that constitute it themselves become directly productive. Biopower is another name for the real subsumption of society under capital, and both are synonymous with the globalized productive order. Production fills the surfaces of Empire; it is a machine that is full of life, an intelligent life that by expressing itself in production and reproduction as well as in circulation (of labor, affects, and languages) stamps society with a new collective meaning and recognizes virtue and civilization in cooperation.

CAPITALISM IS CRITICAL TO BIOPOWER

Michael Hardt, Literature Professor, Antonio Negri, former political science professor, U Paris, 2000 (EMPIRE,
<http://textz.gutenberg.net/text.php?id=1034709069754&search=hardt+negri+empire>)

The huge transnational corporations construct the fundamental connective fabric of the biopolitical world in certain important respects. Capital has indeed always been organized with a view toward the entire global sphere, but only in the second half of the twentieth century did multinational and transnational industrial and financial corporations really begin to structure global territories biopolitically. Some claim that these corporations have merely come to occupy the place that was held by the various national colonialist and imperialist systems in earlier phases of capitalist development, from nineteenth-century European imperialism to the Fordist phase of development in the twentieth century. This is in part true, but that place itself has been substantially transformed by the new reality of capitalism. The activities of corporations are no longer defined by the imposition of abstract command and the organization of simple theft and unequal exchange. Rather, they directly structure and articulate territories and populations. They tend to make nation-states merely instruments to record the flows of the commodities, monies, and populations that they set in motion. The transnational corporations directly distribute labor power over various markets, functionally allocate resources, and organize hierarchically the various sectors of world production. The complex apparatus that selects investments and directs financial and monetary maneuvers determines the new geography of the world market, or really the new biopolitical structuring of the world.

CAPITALISM BAD: BIOPOWER

NO LIFE ESCAPES THE CONTROLS OF CAPITALISM

Michael Hardt, Literature Professor, Antonio Negri, former political science professor, U Paris, 2000 (EMPIRE,
<http://textz.gutenberg.net/text.php?id=1034709069754&search=hardt+negri+empire>)

The most complete figure of this world is presented from the monetary perspective. From here we can see a horizon of values and a machine of distribution, a mechanism of accumulation and a means of circulation, a power and a language. There is nothing, no "naked life," no external standpoint, that can be posed outside this field permeated by money; nothing escapes money. Production and reproduction are dressed in monetary clothing. In fact, on the global stage, every biopolitical figure appears dressed in monetary garb. "Accumulate, accumulate! This is Moses and the Prophets!"^[21] The great industrial and financial powers thus produce not only commodities but also subjectivities. They produce agentic subjectivities within the biopolitical context: they produce needs, social relations, bodies, and minds—which is to say, they produce producers.^[22] In the biopolitical sphere, life is made to work for production and production is made to work for life. It is a great hive in which the queen bee continuously oversees production and reproduction. The deeper the analysis goes, the more it finds at increasing levels of intensity the interlinking assemblages of interactive relationships

CAPITALISM BAD: ANSWERS TO: “CAPITALISM CHECKS TYRANNY”

CAPITALISM WON’T CHECK TYRANNY

Ted G. Fishman is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine and a former currency trader. Harper's Magazine, August 2002 v305 i1827 p33(9)
Making a killing: the myth of capital's good intentions. (Essay). Ted C. Fishman.

The world's warring states hardly represent the kind of future responsible free marketers hope for. None will soon join the WTO, and most would have had more than their share of conflict no matter how the world economy was structured. Greed is a violent impulse in any system. What has changed is how prolonged wars fought on the cheap are enabled and rewarded. Booty converts easily into profit in a world market where governments and enterprises must constantly struggle for competitive advantage. Companies that lose opportunities to extract oil, minerals, or timber cheaply don't face mere lost profits; they face competitors who will destroy them. Banking and financial centers that service worldwide capital markets resist punishing companies that patronize tyrants; they fear frightening off businesses that prefer to shop for financing where executive decisions won't be judged. That's the genius of capitalism.

CAPITALISM BAD: ENVIRONMENT

CAPITALISM IS ECOLOGICALLY UNSUSTAINABLE

Whole Earth, Fall 2002 p85(1)

Ecology, capitalism, and sustainability. Randy Hayes.

"The principal lesson to be learned from [analyses of recent natural disasters] is that the causes of most of our present environmental and social problems are deeply embedded in our economic systems. As I emphasized previously, the current form of global capitalism is ecologically and socially unsustainable, and hence politically unviable in the long run. More stringent environmental regulations, better business practices and more efficient technologies are all necessary, but they are not enough. We need deeper systemic change.

CAPITALISM PROFITS FROM ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION

John Bellamy Foster, Socialism 2002 conference in Chicago on June 15, 2002, 2002

(Monthly Review, Sept 2002 v54 i4 p6(11) II. Capitalism and ecology: the nature of the contradiction)

It is my contention, however, that there is no such feedback mechanism--at least for capitalism as a whole. As the German Greens have said, the system will recognize that money cannot be eaten only when the last tree has been cut--and not before. + We should not underestimate capitalism's capacity to accumulate in the midst of the most blatant ecological destruction, to profit from environmental degradation (for example through the growth of the waste management industry), and to continue to destroy the earth to the point of no return--both for human society and for most of the world's living species. In other words, the dangers of a deepening ecological problem are all the more serious because the system does not have an internal (or external) regulatory mechanism that causes it to reorganize. There is no ecological counterpart to the business cycle.

GLOBAL CAPITALISM IS DESTROYING NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCES

Gregory Shank is a member of the Social Justice Editorial Board, 2002 (Social Justice, Spring-Summer p1(12) Overview: globalization and environmental harm)

Global capitalism, which is depleting nonrenewable resources and potentially renewable ones, depends structurally on growth and on increasingly global monopolies and huge global corporations to achieve that growth. Thus, it has become increasingly difficult to transform, or even to envisage alternatives. Half of the largest 100 economic entities in the world are large corporations. (3) Among them are the largest toxic polluters, who form a powerful lobby in Washington.

CAPITALISM BAD: ENVIRONMENT

CAPITALISM RISKS MASS EXTINCTION

John Bellamy Foster, Socialism 2002 conference in Chicago on June 15, 2002, 2002
(Monthly Review, Sept 2002 v54 i4 p6(11) II. Capitalism and ecology: the nature of the contradiction)

There is no reason to believe that the damage inflicted on the environment is most serious where it principally affects the conditions of production, which by definition involve elements of the natural-physical environment that have been substantially incorporated into the system. The Amazon forest may have provided hardwood timber and other resources for capital, but most of it has until recently been outside what can be called the conditions of production of capitalism. The fifty percent of all species that are believed to reside in the tropical forests and are currently threatened with extinction in a matter of decades, are not only for the most part not incorporated into the global accumulation process, most of them remain undocumented, still unknown to science. If we take the case of the ozone layer, which has been thinned enormously, imperiling the very existence of life on earth, it would clearly be a mistake to try to squeeze this into an analysis of the conditions of production-as if it were simply a precondition of the economy and not a precondition of life as we know it. All of this suggests that an argument that focuses on conditions of production and the "second contradiction" of capitalism tends to downplay the full dimensions of the ecological crisis and even of capitalism's impact on the environment in the process of trying to force everything into the locked box of a specific economic crisis theory. Given capitalism's tendency to displace environmental problems (the fact that it uses the whole biosphere as a giant trash can and at the same time is able to run to some extent from one ecosystem to another, operating, as Marx said, under the principle of "after me the deluge"), suggests that the earth remains in large part a "free gift to capital." Nor is there any prospect that this will change fundamentally, since capitalism is in many ways a system of unpaid costs.

RISING PRICES WON'T LIMIT RESOURCE EXHAUSTION

John Bellamy Foster, Socialism 2002 conference in Chicago on June 15, 2002, 2002
(Monthly Review, Sept 2002 v54 i4 p6(11) II. Capitalism and ecology: the nature of the contradiction)

There are also empirical problems, I believe, with this theory of ecologically induced economic crisis. Logically, it is true, rising raw material costs and other costs associated with natural scarcity could undermine profit margins and generate economic crisis. This factor played a role in nineteenth century accumulation crises, as reflected in the classical theory of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall. It is always important to capital that such costs, associated with natural scarcity, be kept down. Yet, there is no evidence that such costs constitute serious, insuperable barriers to accumulation for the system as a whole today. As Marx indicated in his time, the exhaustion of coal mines may eventually increase the cost of coal, but in the meantime production is often boosted by falling energy costs.

CAPITALISM BAD: ENVIRONMENT

PROPERTY RIGHTS PROTECTION ENABLES DOMINATION

SOCIAL JUSTICE, Spring-Summer 2002 p82(21) Environmental harm and the political economy of consumption)

As an instrument of class domination, the primary and most important function of the state is the defence of private property. Because under capitalism, the system of property relations is synonymous with the class structure of society, the use of the state for class domination is the same as its use for the protection of private property. These property relations enable one class of owners to dominate another class of non-owners, to reap material, political, and social advantages, while the other class suffers material and other disadvantages.... By guaranteeing the monopoly of the means of production by the ruling class, the state sustains inequalities in the distribution of wealth, the income from that wealth, and in the distribution of social opportunities and facilities.

GLOBALIZATION REDUCES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTIONS

SOCIAL JUSTICE, Spring-Summer 2002 p82(21) Environmental harm and the political economy of consumption)

To fully appreciate the context and limitations of environmental regulation, a broader analysis of globalization as an economic and ideological phenomenon, and its political equivalent, the "new world order," is needed (see, for example, G. White, 1997). Globalization, as administered via neoliberal state policy, makes ordinary workers extremely vulnerable economically. In such conditions, there is even greater scope to reduce environmental protections, or to increase environmentally destructive activity, to the extent that existing state legislation and company practices are seen to limit the profit-making enterprise. Politically, the problems generated in and through capitalist restructuring are also reflected in the scapegoating of green activists, immigrants, and indigenous people, who the media frequently portray as impeding the immediate job prospects of workers in industries associated with resource exploitation (e.g., logging, mining), industrial production (e.g., manufacturing), and project development (e.g., tourist resorts). Intensified competition between workers for jobs thus has major implications for environmental regulation and for environment-related politics.

CAPITALISM BAD: ENVIRONMENT

CAPITALISM CAUSES NEVER-ENDING ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL CRISES

Fred Magdoff is professor of plant and soil science at the University of Vermont, 2002
(Monthly Review, September, v54 i4 p1(5))

History has provided us with numerous examples of economic stagnation and breakdown, as well as environmental degradation caused by human activity, even before capitalism existed. But capitalism's central characteristic--the incessant drive to invest and accumulate wealth--gives birth to never-ending economic and environmental crises.

CAPITALISM CAUSES ECOLOGICAL CRISES

Fred Magdoff is professor of plant and soil science at the University of Vermont, 2002
(Monthly Review, September, v54 i4 p1(5))

Although the tendency toward economic crises is an intrinsic characteristic of capitalism, there is a second fundamental form of contemporary crisis that is also derived from the relentless pursuit of profits--namely, the rapid growth of ecological degradation. The environment is best viewed as a whole, with interactions and exchanges going on among the living organisms and between organisms and the physical aspects of water, soil, and air. (There is also exchange and interaction between substances in the water, soil, and atmosphere.) Millions of years of evolution have made most natural systems efficient at cycling nutrients and water and allowing energy, generated by green plants using sunlight, to flow as in a gentle stream from one organism to another (that uses the previous one for food), to another, and so on. Most natural systems produce high quality air and water conducive to the continuation of life. Taken together, the vast multitude of organisms large and small fill all available ecological niches (which they partly create) and few resources are wasted.

CAPITALISM BAD: ENVIRONMENT

PROFIT MAXIMIZATION INCREASES POLLUTION

Fred Magdoff is professor of plant and soil science at the University of Vermont, 2002
(Monthly Review, September, v54 i4 p1(5))

With the search for profits as the goal that overrides all others, adverse effects on the environment are inevitable. Pollution of water, air, and soil are natural byproducts of production systems organized for the single goal of making profits. Under the logic of capitalist production and exchange, there is no inherent mechanism to encourage or force industry to find methods that have minimal impact on the environment. For example, new chemicals that are found useful to produce manufactured goods are routinely introduced into the environment without the slightest assessment of whether or not they cause harm to humans or other species. Another example is the routine misuse of antibiotics, added to the feeds of animals that are being maintained in overcrowded and unhealthy conditions on factory farms. This has caused the development of antibiotic resistant strains of disease organisms. In addition, the way an automobile-centered society developed in the United States and elsewhere has had huge environmental consequences. Vast areas of suburbs sometimes merge into a "megatropolis," partially erasing the boundaries between communities. The waste of fuel by commuting to work by car is only part of the story of suburbanization, as some people work in the city while others work in different suburbs. Shopping in malls reachable only by cars and taking children to school and play require transportation over significant distances. While this drains nonrenewable fossil fuels and metals, the emissions of harmful gasses cause ecological damage.

CAPITALISM BAD: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

AIR POLLUTION IN THE NORTH CAUSES WIDESPREAD FAMINE AND DEATH IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Gregory Shank is a member of the Social Justice Editorial Board, 2002 (Social Justice, Spring-Summer p1(12) Overview: globalization and environmental harm)

There are also North-South disparities. A respected British medical journal, *The Lancet*, estimates that millions of people, mostly in developing countries, will die over the next 20 years from global warming-driven outbreaks of dengue fever, malaria, cholera, encephalitis, and pulmonary diseases (Gelbspan, 2002). Three million people, mostly women and children, die annually from indoor air pollution in countries ranging from Mexico to Tanzania to India (Shogren, 2002c). Moreover, a recent study (CSIRO, 2002) indicates that a combination of natural variability and air pollution from burning fossil fuels and smelting metal in the northern hemisphere is likely to have contributed to the catastrophic Sahel drought in Africa, which caused widespread famine and death.

CAPITALISM BAD: HEALTH CARE

CAPITALISM RESPONSIBLE FOR INCARCERATING MENTALLY DISABLED

Marta Russell and Jean Stewart, disability activists, Monthly Review, Volume 53, No. 3, July 1, 2001, p. 61 (HARV0776)

The structure of capitalist America plays a central role in the life of any group, including that of people with disabilities. Given the historic segregation of disabled persons not only from American society but from the accumulation process, disabled people living in the so-called free world have a grim commonality with their disabled compatriots behind bars. Institutions in general, including prisons, have functioned to support the accumulation of capital and the social control of surplus population, including the reserve army of unemployed left adrift by an economic system which dictates that large numbers of workers must be unemployed.

CAPITALISM NEEDS PRISONS TO DEAL WITH THE POOR AND DISABLED

Marta Russell and Jean Stewart, disability activists, Monthly Review, Volume 53, No. 3, July 1, 2001, p. 61 (HARV0777)

As Christian Parenti explains in Lockdown America, capitalism, the creator of poverty, simultaneously needs and is threatened by the poor. In order to manage and contain its surplus populations and poorest classes, American capitalism has developed paramilitary forms of segregation, containment, and repression. [3] Not coincidentally, it has created the social condition which we are calling "disablement" by excluding disabled persons from full participation in society through segregation, containment, and repression. It is this theory of disablement which we intend to explore here.

SOCIETY RESPONDS TO DISABILITY WITH INSTITUTIONALIZATION

Marta Russell and Jean Stewart, disability activists, Monthly Review, Volume 53, No. 3, July 1, 2001, p. 61 (HARV0778)

Let us not be lulled into thinking that disabled persons living outside of prisons have autonomous lives. Institutional life, whether in a prison, hospital, mental institution, nursing home, or segregated "school" (and many receive no schooling), has been the forced historical reality, not the exception, for disabled persons.

CAPITALISM BAD: HEALTH CARE

POOR TREATMENT OF DISABLED IS A RESULT OF CAPITALISM

Marta Russell and Jean Stewart, disability activists, Monthly Review, Volume 53, No. 3, July 1, 2001, p. 61 (HARV0780)

Disability activists and theorists, however, have laid a materialist groundwork for understanding disability oppression. If we trace how work evolved under capitalism, we can observe its effects on the disabled population. While one cannot claim that working-age disabled persons in pre-capitalist societies had achieved full integration and economic well-being, many occupied a niche in small workshops and family-based production, where they could contribute according to their ability. Economic historians Earl Polanyi and E. P. Thompson point out that early capitalism required a major shift in both the social organization of work and the concept of human labor. As human beings were gathered into the "dark satanic mills" to accomplish the sacred task of capital accumulation, circumstances arose which became barriers to disabled people's survival. Nondisabled workers had value because, as bosses pushed them to produce at an accelerating pace, they generated higher profits. But as work required increasingly precise mechanical movements of the body repeated in quick succession, disabled individuals were less capable of performing the tasks required of factory workers, and thus were viewed as of lesser value. Newly enforced factory discipline, time-keeping, and production norms replaced the slower, more self-determined and flexible work pattern into which many disabled persons had been integrated. Disabled workers were increasingly excluded from paid employment on the grounds that they were unable to keep pace with the new, mechanized, factory-based production system. [4]

CAPITALIST SYSTEM SEEKS TO INSTITUTIONALIZE THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

Marta Russell and Jean Stewart, disability activists, Monthly Review, Volume 53, No. 3, July 1, 2001, p. 61 (HARV0781)

Thus "the operation of the labour market in the nineteenth century effectively depressed handicapped people of all kinds to the bottom of the market." [5] Industrial capitalism commodified the human body, creating both a class of proletarians and a class of "disabled" whose bodies did not conform to the standard worker physique and whose laborpower was effectively ignored. Over time, as disabled persons came to be regarded as a social problem, it became justifiable to remove individuals with impairments from mainstream life and segregate them in a variety of institutions, including workhouses, asylums, prisons, colonies, and special schools.

CAPITALISM BAD: HEALTH CARE

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF DISABLED PEOPLE PERPETUATES POVERTY

Marta Russell and Jean Stewart, disability activists, Monthly Review, Volume 53, No. 3, July 1, 2001, p. 61 (HARV0783)

Institutions of all descriptions thus became formidable, formalized containment devices. It is now the disability rights movement's primary revolutionary goal to reverse this trend. The impact on disabled people of this kind of segregation has been profound. They are the least likely to be employed, the most likely to be impoverished and undereducated. Only a third of working-age disabled individuals are currently employed, compared to more than 80 percent of the nondisabled population. One-third (34 percent) of adults with disabilities live in households with an annual income of less than \$15,000, compared to 12 percent of those without disabilities -- a 22-point gap which has remained virtually constant since 1986. Disabled persons are twice as likely not to finish high school (22 percent versus 9 percent). A disproportionate number of disabled persons report having inadequate access to health care (28 percent versus 12 percent) or transportation (30 percent versus 10 percent). [7] Of course, one must acknowledge that disabled people live on the economic margins of all societies throughout the world, not merely in capitalist countries. But nowhere else are we witness to the jarring disconnect between a society's vast wealth and its refusal to provide more than the barest means of survival for its most vulnerable citizens.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION DRIVEN BY CAPITALIST DRIVE TO BOLSTER MEDICAL INDUSTRY

Marta Russell and Jean Stewart, disability activists, Monthly Review, Volume 53, No. 3, July 1, 2001, p. 61 (HARV0784)

Social control does not tell the complete story of disabled peoples' segregation and ensuing institutionalization. By placing the focus on "cure," and by segregating "incurables" into the administrative category of "disabled," the medical industry bolstered capitalist business interests and shoved less exploitable workers with impairments, or those who obstructed capital accumulation, out of the workforce.

CAPITALISM BAD: HEALTH CARE

DEINSTITUTIONALIZATION WAS DRIVEN BY COST CONSIDERATIONS OF CAPITALIST SYSTEM

Marta Russell and Jean Stewart, disability activists, Monthly Review, Volume 53, No. 3, July 1, 2001, p. 61 (HARV0786)

To better understand the relationship between disability and prison, it is instructive to focus on the treatment of those who are mentally ill. [13] In the second half of the twentieth century, the dominance of the mental health institution began to decline as the capitalist economy underwent restructuring. Economic stagnation and low profits, the fiscal crisis of the seventies, were met with Reaganomics, i.e., tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy, an attack on labor, deregulation of health and safety regulations and cuts in state spending on education, welfare, and social programs, including those institutions housing people with mental illnesses. Deinstitutionalization, as it related to those who had been labeled mentally ill, was a government policy change driven by cost-cutting motives. Spending by the fifty states on treatment for people with mental illness, for instance, was lower by a third in the nineties than it was in the fifties; fewer than half of Americans diagnosed with schizophrenia receive adequate services today. When the awful snake pits of neglect and abuse we called "mental institutions" were closed, necessary new structures and solutions, including community housing, employment services (a vital component for populations experiencing severe labor market discrimination), and other appropriate programs designed and run by disabled individuals themselves, were never put in place.

CAPITALISM DRIVES THE CRIMINALIZATION OF MENTALLY ILL

Marta Russell and Jean Stewart, disability activists, Monthly Review, Volume 53, No. 3, July 1, 2001, p. 61 (HARV0788)

This "criminalization of mental illness" has its roots in the U.S. capitalist health care system and the growth of the prison industry. The great majority of "mentally ill" people in New York jails and prisons, for instance, are Medicaid recipients or have no insurance at all. To qualify for Medicaid, low-income individuals must be extremely debilitated and indigent (which many achieve by spending down savings), and they must stay indigent.

CAPITALISM BAD: HEALTH CARE

MENTALLY ILL ARE INSTITUTIONALIZED IN JAILS AS "SURPLUS PEOPLE"

Marta Russell and Jean Stewart, disability activists, Monthly Review, Volume 53, No. 3, July 1, 2001, p. 61 (HARV0791)

People with so-called mental illnesses are generally deemed to have little or no production value. Their unemployment rate is the highest among the disabled population at 80 percent, and disproportionately high within the incarcerated population. Perhaps the term "social junk," as coined by criminologist Steven Spitzer, best describes how society views this cast-off segment of the population. People labeled "mentally ill" experience harsh discrimination in many arenas, among them housing, employment, and health insurance. Increasingly they have become a part of what Christian Parenti calls "a growing stratum of 'surplus people' [who, because they are not] being efficiently used by the economy must instead be controlled and contained and, in a very limited way, rendered economically useful as raw material for a growing corrections complex." Thus the old "snake pit" mental institution is being replaced with yet another institution, the prison, where incarcerated "social wreckage" contributes to the GDP by supporting thousands of persons associated with expanding and maintaining the prison industry.

CAPITALISM DRIVES INEQUITY IN INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR MENTALLY ILL

Marta Russell and Jean Stewart, disability activists, Monthly Review, Volume 53, No. 3, July 1, 2001, p. 61 (HARV0789)

Adding insult to injury, mental health parity does not exist in the private U.S. insurance system. For instance, private long-term disability plans, most of them employer-sponsored, provide benefits to eligible recipients with "physical disorders" through age sixty-five, while they impose duration limits of twenty-four months or less on benefits to eligible recipients with "mental disorders." In defending its refusal to provide mental health parity, the insurance industry claims the extra coverage would place a demand on the for-profit system which would cause everyone's premiums to skyrocket. In order to protect its profit margin, the corporate health care industry denies this segment of the population treatment and services.

CAPITALISM BAD: GENDER VIOLENCE

CAPITALISM CAUSES GENDER VIOLENCE

John Bellamy Foster, Socialism 2002 conference in Chicago on June 15, 2002, 2002
(Monthly Review, Sept 2002 v54 i4 p6(11) II. Capitalism and ecology: the nature of the contradiction)

grew up around abusive men. With some combination of physical, sexual, verbal, or psychological abuse, they all taught me one crucial lesson: males can do whatever they want and get away with it. Unfortunately in this cruel global capitalist system, aggressive and dominating behavior is rewarded. So why wouldn't those values be infused into the culture as well? People constantly wonder why rape exists. In my mind it's easy...rape is an integral part of the capitalist system. Profits over people, aggression rather than compassion, and establishing control are the main tenets of capitalism. Capitalism teaches people to take what they want from the less powerful. It does this by creating an environment that no sane human could live in and remain compassionate. This "only the strong survive" mentality that drives the system forces people to abandon their hearts and souls in order to clinch the cold, immoral business deals that will earn them money. The capitalist system causes alienation from self, from others, and from the land. This is the foundation upon which rape is allowed to thrive. Once people are disconnected from their true nature and are detached from feeling compassion for others, they are emotionally capable of raping another person's body. The very fact that rape exists proves how detached people have become. It is one of the most vile and horrific acts humanly possible, yet it is an extremely common occurrence. I was raped because capitalism taught this rapist to take what he wanted. It didn't teach him that i had feelings and a memory that would carry this around for the rest of my life, but that I was an object for him to conquer, a thing that existed for his pleasure. Recently I read about how a woman in North Carolina who is married to an enlisted military man was sexually assaulted for stating her opposition to the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan. Since the military is the protector of capitalism and rape/sexual assault is a tool of capitalism, it's easy to understand why this woman was assaulted. She was actually questioning the capitalist regime! (and rightly so.) She was attacked in order to "teach" her that it is NOT okay to do. Another example: I read an article in FORBES magazine that exposed corporate executives who rape and sexually assault their employees (July 22, 2002). Apparently the problem is so widespread in corporate America that even those whose vested interests lie in promoting the capitalist economy are reporting it! However, the most crucial point to acknowledge about the article is to what extent big corporations will go to in order to protect these rapists. From minimizing (he is just "difficult" and "a bit eccentric"), to justifying ("hell bent pursuit of revenues pushed the company to extremes") to complete denial ("she claimed [he attacked her] but I can't see that happening. She's not a good looking woman."), the companies' policies of dealing with the accusations made it clear that big business will protect rapists who bring in the big money. Period.

CAPITALISM BAD: WAR

THE INFLUX OF CAPITAL PULLS MANY TOWARDS WAR

Ted G. Fishman is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine and a former currency trader. Harper's Magazine, August 2002 v305 i1827 p33(9)

Making a killing: the myth of capital's good intentions. (Essay). Ted C. Fishman.

The freeing up of the world's markets may have nothing to do with the declining fortunes of many of its citizens, but the capitalist impulse can just as powerfully prolong poverty as end it. And even as the influx of capital helps some countries prosper, it pulls others relentlessly toward war.

CAPITALISM IS MILITARIZED

Herizons, Summer 2002 v16 i1 p7(1)

Taking a bite out of global capitalism: who let the dogs out? (Nellie Grams). (Group of 8 Summit in Alberta, Canada, July 2002)(Brief Article) Penney Kome.

The militarization of the neo-liberal agenda -- and the failures of the political left, everywhere except Brazil -- point to the need for new strategies. We need an analysis of the links between the neo-liberal agenda, the 'war on terrorism' and Israeli aggression in the Middle East. I believe we are witnessing a new, highly militarized stage of corporate capitalism, a new form of imperialism. Accounts of pre-war Nazi Germany sound eerily familiar. Yet in North America there is but a tiny anti-war movement.

CAPITALISM BAD: WAR

WORLD CAPITALISM CAUSES MASS VIOLENCE

Ted G. Fishman is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine and a former currency trader. Harper's Magazine, August 2002 v305 i1827 p33(9)

Making a killing: the myth of capital's good intentions. (Essay). Ted C. Fishman.

Should we be surprised, then, that the freeing up of world financial markets and world trade has spread an epidemic of violence? The dictators, warlords, corporate partners, banks, law firms, and nations that thrive on deadly business have known it all along. The profits extracted from teetering states, masses of poor, and gaps in the law move as quickly and expertly around the globe as the profits of a hot-money hedge fund. No business has moved faster than arms makers to exploit the free flow of goods and money, distributing weapons as widely as cotton. The ties that bind Nike to Third World sneaker manufacturers bind Wall Street to war as well. Yet whereas the sneaker business offers some hope to the dirt poor that they may eventually make automobiles, the war business rewards only the players who can provide cheap human lives. There is no market mechanism for resurrecting the lives of the millions killed for profit. No incentives can reclaim half a billion small weapons sold into the world or the suitcase nukes bought out of secret bank accounts. World capitalism does not distribute insight into how many deaths are too many or into how to save a world that profits in its own destruction. Like the tide, it cares not the slightest on which shore we land.

CONVENTIONAL WARS KILL MILLIONS

Ted G. Fishman is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine and a former currency trader. Harper's Magazine, August 2002 v305 i1827 p33(9)

Making a killing: the myth of capital's good intentions. (Essay). Ted C. Fishman.

The wars we watch on TV, the carefully branded fights for which CNN and Fox News work up trademark graphics and theme music, are not especially lethal. The highest estimate of direct enemy and civilian casualties in Afghanistan is 5,000--about the same as the number of Americans killed last year by food poisoning. The latest count of the dead in Israel is less than half that. The deadliest wars--forty around the world--are unseen. They slog along for years, often ending briefly only to start again. They kill millions. They are enterprises with global aspirations and connections, their prosecutors' ambitions and links to the world at large like those of Coca-Cola or Sony. For the warlords, mass killing is a corporate strategy executed with indifference once seen only in ideologues.

CAPITALISM BAD: WAR

CIVIL WARS THAT KILL MILLIONS ARE DRIVEN BY PROPERTY RIGHTS CLAIMS

Ted G. Fishman is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine and a former currency trader. Harper's Magazine, August 2002 v305 i1827 p33(9)
Making a killing: the myth of capital's good intentions. (Essay). Ted C. Fishman.

Civil wars are where the action is. In a tally of only the bloodiest wars waged between 1965 and 1999--those in which more than 1,000 people were killed a year--seventy-three were civil wars. Of the twenty-seven armed conflicts being fought in 1999, only two were the old-fashioned cross-border kind. (4) Ethnic and religious divisions, grievances over political participation and class, matter little in today's private wars. With, few exceptions, wars have become conflicts over property rights. The prize is control of the goods that attract the tides of anonymous and mobile global capital that sweep up oil, diamonds, copper, bananas, cacao, and coca.

PRIVATIZATION CAUSES WAR

Ted G. Fishman is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine and a former currency trader. Harper's Magazine, August 2002 v305 i1827 p33(9)
Making a killing: the myth of capital's good intentions. (Essay). Ted C. Fishman.

Privatization is another benchmark of successful globalization, and it is practiced with increasing vigor in Africa, where enterprising national governments are finding that mineral rights can be converted easily into long-term power and riches. In a world where state-run monopolies are frowned upon, it turns out that the best solution is to sell the monopoly to another state. This novel approach to privatization has found its highest expression in the war currently taking place in the Democratic Republic of Congo, often referred to as "Africa's First World War." What began as a civil war in a country rich in gold, copper, diamonds, and timber is now being fought with aid from six neighboring countries, all of them economic basket cases.

CAPITALISM BAD: WAR

WARLORDS BENEFIT FROM PRIVATIZATION

Ted G. Fishman is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine and a former currency trader. Harper's Magazine, August 2002 v305 i1827 p33(9)

Making a killing: the myth of capital's good intentions. (Essay). Ted C. Fishman.

Entrepreneurial warlords and dictators are also reaping the benefits of a more traditional brand of privatization. Liberia's Charles Taylor, Africa's most Promethean war maker, pioneered the route from booty to hard cash. Before international sanctions were imposed in 2001, diamond centers in Belgium, Britain, and New York absorbed all the loot Taylor could supply. In 1998, \$298 million worth of diamonds made its way from Liberia into Belgium, the world's largest diamond center. Now that diamonds are out, timber is in; it matters not to the world's buyers that Liberian logs come from the same bloody conflicts-up to 200,000 dead since 1989--as Taylor's diamonds. Business is robust. Seventy-two percent of Liberia's \$106 million timber trade in 2000 was facilitated by French and Chinese companies. Taylor has been a tireless privatizer, selling rights to his country's land and resources to private concerns. The stream of proceeds goes directly back into his war machine.

CAPITALISM BAD: ANSWERS TO: ‘CAPITALISM REDUCES POVERTY’

GLOBALIZATION HAS NOT REDUCED POVERTY

Ted G. Fishman is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine and a former currency trader. Harper's Magazine, August 2002 v305 i1827 p33(9)

Making a killing: the myth of capital's good intentions. (Essay). Ted C. Fishman.

The lethal double dynamic begins with the dirt poor whom the spread of global capitalism has not helped. Half the planet lives on less than two dollars a day, a billion people on half that. For them, globalization has meant little in terms of real income gain. Oxfam recently recalculated the statistics in the World Bank study on developing countries, this time not weighted for population, and determined that incomes for people in countries that are pursuing a global program grew just 1.5 percent. For one in three of these countries, incomes actually rose more slowly than in states that resisted reforms.

POVERTY INCREASES SOLDIERS FOR HIRE AND WAR

Ted G. Fishman is a contributing editor of Harper's Magazine and a former currency trader. Harper's Magazine, August 2002 v305 i1827 p33(9)

Making a killing: the myth of capital's good intentions. (Essay). Ted C. Fishman.

There's profit in all that poverty, and it is most cheaply extracted in the form of war. Africa's battles are fought by a labor pool whose wages average 65 cents a day. An enterprising warlord can buy hundreds of willing combatants for the cost of a single American marine. (3) A low value on human life makes war an attractive option; most of the world's battles pit one group of profiteers fighting with cheap soldiers against another.

CAPITALISM BAD: ANSWERS TO: “RESISTANCE TO CAPITALISM IS FUTILE”

CHANGE IS POSSIBLE – CRACKS IN CAPITALISM ARE APPEARING

Earth Island Journal, 2002 (Autumn 2002 v17 i3 p42(1)
The Post-Corporate world. (book review) Scott London.)

Korten's agenda, impractical and poorly worked out as it is, weakens what is otherwise a very compelling book, one which I would recommend to anyone concerned about the direction of the global economy. Korten admits that his proposals are likely to be fiercely resisted by the establishment. Nevertheless, he says--and here he has more than a point--"the unanimity of the present power holders should not be assumed." Cracks are now appearing in the elite consensus, as more and more corporate leaders, bankers, and even economists acknowledge the economic dislocation, social instability, and ecological destruction wrought by globalization.

A MASSIVE PUBLIC MOVEMENT IS NEEDED TO REPLACE CAPITALISM

Fred Magdoff is professor of plant and soil science at the University of Vermont, 2002 (Monthly Review, September, v54 i4 p1(5))

The illusion that the economic and/or environmental crises will cause the capitalist system to fall all by itself obscures the need for critical evaluation and education on how these twin phenomena are intimately tied to the very heart of the system. It also ignores the resiliency demonstrated by capitalism in the face of these crises. The truth is that we can't wait for capitalism to fall apart and die due to its own internal contradictions. It will take a mass movement encompassing a large proportion of the population to replace capitalism with a humane, democratic, and environmentally sound socialism.

CAPITALISM GOOD: SOLVES POVERTY

CAPITALISM IS THE ONLY MORAL SYSTEM: IT PROTECTS THE MEANS OF AN INDIVIDUAL TO THINK

Houman Shadab, philosopher, CAPITALISM: FAQS, 1996, p.

<http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~shadab/capit-2.html#6>. (DRG/E739)

In regards to morality, capitalism is the only moral (meaning pro-human-life) social system because it safeguards a human's primary means of survival: his mind. Through upholding individual rights, capitalism recognizes the fact the each and every human being must use his own mind to grasp reality and act accordingly to better his own life. Capitalism is the only political system that is based upon man's true nature as a being who possesses the faculty of reason -- capitalism is the only system that recognizes that human beings can think. Indeed, individual rights and capitalism not only protect the individual person and property of each human being, but most importantly, they protect the individual mind of every human being.

POVERTY & INEQUITY ARE THE RESULT OF LIMITING CAPITALISM'S REACH

Michael Boskin, Senior fellow at the Hoover Institution and the Tully M. Friedman Professor of Economics at Stanford University, CAPITALISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS, 1999, p. 32. (DRG/E740)

To be sure, large segments of mankind were left behind, both economically and politically. As a gross historical generalization, they were in societies that lacked both economic and political freedoms and competition. Although the capitalist economies have wide dispersions in the distribution of consumption, the average poor family in the United States has a standard of living well beyond that of the average Russian family, for example, and above that of the average American family of a couple of generations ago. And the most entrenched poverty in the American economy occurs in pockets of a quasi-socialist economy, with little competition, private capital, or private incentives, such as inner-city public housing and schools.

CAPITALISM GOOD: PROTECTS FREEDOM

CAPITALISM GOOD: FREEDOM

1. CAPITALISM PROTECTS HUMAN FREEDOM AS ABSOLUTE

Houman Shadab, philosopher 1996 (CAPITALISM: FAQS,
<http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~shadab/capit-2.html#6>)

Freedom means the absence of physical force, including all forms of fraud. An individual is free when force is not being initiated against him, which means that there is only one source of unfreedom for any individual: other men. That is, a man's freedom can only be infringed upon when another person or group of persons initiates the use of physical force against him. The fact that an individual is unfit to run a mile in under four minutes or too poor to buy food is not a violation of his freedom. Why? Because in both of these cases no one is forcibly stopping the individual from attaining his ends. However, the fact that an individual cannot start his own electric company is a violation of his freedom. Why? Because in this case his actions are impeded by the use of force -- the government's legal monopoly on utility companies prevents him from starting his own electric company through the threat of force. Freedom is only a negative, it imposes no positive constraints on other people's actions. In a free (or capitalist) society all men may act as they choose as so long as they do not infringe on the freedom of others -- by violating their rights through force. Subsequently, it is only a government limited to protecting individual rights that fails to violate the freedom its citizens. Since capitalism upholds individual rights as absolutes, capitalism upholds freedom as absolute.

2. EACH PERSON HAS THE RIGHTS TO THE PRODUCTS OF HIS OR HER OWN LABOR

Houman Shadab, philosopher 1996 (CAPITALISM: FAQS,
<http://www.ocf.berkeley.edu/~shadab/capit-2.html#6>)

That is, each of them deserves what they earn, and what they earn is the result of how much wealth each of them creates (Incidentally, this is not to say that the athlete is morally superior to the scientist because he is wealthier). Since each man has the right to the product of his labor, it is completely just for the disparity in incomes to exist, and the only injustice to occur would be for the government to take money from the athlete and give it to those who supposedly deserve it on the basis of their "need."

CAPITALISM GOOD: SOLVES INSIDE/OUTSIDE

CAPITALISM ELIMINATES THE INSIDE/OUTSIDE DICHOTOMY

Michael Hardt, Literature Professor, Antonio Negri, former political science professor, U Paris, 2000 (EMPIRE,
<http://textz.gutenberg.net/text.php?id=1034709069754&search=hardt+negri+empire>)

It is useful to remember here (and we will develop this point further in Section 3.1) that the capitalist market is one machine that has always run counter to any division between inside and outside. It is thwarted by barriers and exclusions; it thrives instead by including always more within its sphere. profit can be generated only through contact, engagement, interchange, and commerce. The realization of the world market would constitute the point of arrival of this tendency. In its ideal form there is no outside to the world market: the entire globe is its domain.[12] We might thus use the form of the world market as a model for understanding imperial sovereignty

CAPITALISM GOOD: MARXISM BAD

MARXISM IS EUROCENTRIC

Michael Hardt, Literature Professor, Antonio Negri, former political science professor, U Paris, 2000 (EMPIRE,
<http://textz.gutenberg.net/text.php?id=1034709069754&search=hardt+negri+empire>)

The only "alternative" path Marx can imagine, however, is that same path that European society has already traveled. Marx has no conception of the difference of Indian society, the different potentials it contains. He can thus see the Indian past only as vacant and static: "Indian society has no history at all, at least no known history. What we call its history is but the history of the successive intruders who founded their empires on the passive basis of that unresisting and unchanging society." The claim that Indian society has no history means not that nothing has happened in India but that the course of events has been determined exclusively by external forces, while Indian society has remained passive, "unresisting and unchanging." Certainly Marx was limited by his scant knowledge of India's present and past. His lack of information, however, is not the point. The central issue is that Marx can conceive of history outside of Europe only as moving strictly along the path already traveled by Europe itself. "England has to fulfill a double mission in India," he wrote, "one destructive, the other regenerating—the annihilation of old Asiatic Society, and the laying of the material foundations of Western society in Asia." India can progress only by being transformed into a Western society. All the world can move forward only by following the footsteps of Europe. Marx's Eurocentrism is in the end not so different from that of Las Casas.

MARXIST IDEAS WILL NEVER TRICKLE OUTSIDE OF ACADEMIA

INDEPENDENT REVIEW, 1996 (2/6,
http://www.independent.org/tii/content/pubs/review/books/TIR24_Fernandez.html)

It is a rare treat to review a book with which one is in nearly complete agreement. Darío Fernández-Morera writes about the prevalence of Marxist and sub-Marxist ideas in American academic life with awareness and concern. Discredited globally (one would have thought), Marxism and its offspring and assigns—the vast array of critical theory, postcolonial studies, sectarian feminism, multiculturalism, structuralism (regular and "post"), and all the postmodernisms—thrive in American universities, where they work to undermine whole disciplines. Like the Old Dope Peddler of the Tom Lehrer song, they do well by doing good.

CAPITALISM GOOD: MARXISM BAD

MARXISM WILL NOT PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

THE NEW REPUBLIC 9/27/01
(http://www.tnr.com/100101/wolfe100101_print.html)

Even if one does believe that Marx is worth consulting about the trajectory of capitalism, the notion that Marxism was concerned with an impending ecological catastrophe is the second mortal flaw in the question that Hardt and Negri pose. Marx himself was a celebrant of industry over agriculture, a determined modernist quite happy to see "the idiocy of rural life" destroyed once and for all. And the twentieth-century writers who extended Marxist theory to the relationship between capitalist societies and their colonies--Lenin and Luxemburg are the two most prominent intellectuals in this regard, and the two most discussed by Hardt and Negri--were similarly oblivious to any limits that nature might impose on man's capacity to expand. Lenin, having shed so few tears over the killing of one of nature's more interesting creatures (I mean us), was hardly likely to weep at the demise of the snail darter. It is equally difficult to imagine Luxemburg--urban, cosmopolitan, Jewish--as a lover of the Polish landscape. Ecology, far from being a term identified with the left, was actually coined by Ernst Haeckel, a German writer with distinctly fascist sympathies. Thus one has to read Hardt and Negri's question many times over, so flat-out wrong are its assertions and its assumptions, in order to judge whether they can possibly be serious.

CAPITALISM GOOD: RUSSIAN ALTERNATIVE FAILS

SOVIET EXPERIENCE PROVES ALTERNATIVE TO CAPITALISM FOR HEALTH CARE FAIL

Thomas Szasz, Professor of Psychiatry Emeritus, State University of New York, Independent Review, Volume 5, No. 4, March 22, 2001, p. 485 (HARV0247)

Like Beauchamp, Waitzkin is more interested in creating "state power" and eliminating private medicine than in letting individuals choose the kind of health care they prefer. Physicians, Waitzkin declares, "hold class interests that often impede progress toward a more egalitarian distribution of goods and services. Doctors, like bankers and corporate managers, possess economic advantages and customary life styles that they do not willingly sacrifice on behalf of the poor" (2000, 211). Waitzkin evidently believes that degrading the rich would elevate the poor. The Soviet experience, one would have thought, has decisively disproved this fantasy, but not in Waitzkin's socialist construction of reality: "The Soviet Union eliminated its chronic problems of epidemics and cut its infant mortality rate by more than half in one generation" The Soviet Union also succeeded in increasing its adult mortality rate, reducing the life expectancy of its citizens by some two decades below that of people in the West or in Japan.