Neoliberalism, Globalization, Nationalism and Socialism

Trump represents a trend through much of the world, namely a growth of nationalism and a rejection of globalization. The United Kingdom is under pressure from the Scots and others to separate and the UK, itself, approved a referendum last year calling for a withdrawal from the European Union. There are nationalist leaders in Poland, Hungary, Russia and Turkey. France and The Netherlands had recent elections with nationalist parties coming in second.

Global governance (the United Nations, and the many trade and security groups (like NATO)) are products of World War II, when a world, tired of two devastating world wars and the development of nuclear weapons, realized there had to be a better way to resolve issues and create a peaceful world. Many of the agreements were flawed because they were drafted by the global political and economic elites. Labor and environmental issues were often absent or given little thought.

Since WWII the world has seen the break-up of the old European colonial powers. The newly formed nations were expected to live independently under the economic rules set by the world’s economic elites. The newly formed nations with exploding populations became targets for corporate exploitation and environmental degradation while acting as havens of cheap labor, corrupt governance and weak environmental protections. The multinational corporations shifted many industries to the new economies to take advantage of cheap labor and used the threat of cheap labor to drive down wages in the developed world. Socialists, with their historically international orientation, were conflicted by globalization’s assault on working people. With the development of many trade agreements, socialists joined the forces opposing the agreements like NAFTA, GATT, the WTO and numerous others that focused on tariffs and investments, while ignoring labor protections and the wage gaps that existed between developed and developing nations.

Needless to say that wages in developed nations have stagnated for the last 3-4 decades. Some communities have faced severe unemployment. Corporate investments in developing nations have disrupted life, are not adequate to resolve problems of poverty, and fail to solve problems of an overabundance of population. Migration has increased as increasing numbers seek a better life in the developed nations. Resentment throughout the world has grown against the migrants. The result is a fascist nationalism and increasing tensions between different ethnic groups.

We should not be fooled into supporting neoliberals, Germany’s Angela Merkel and France’s Emmanuel Macron. Both of whom are leading supporters of the EU and have admirably stood up to racist nationalism. They still have anti-labor agendas.

Socialists should demand revisions of trade agreements to protect the world’s workers and the world’s environment. Socialists need to promote political integration that will lead to peace and prosperity for all! DS

Scenes from the 2017 Picnic

Bill Douglas Speaks
As usual the 2017 SP-Picnic was marked by excellent conversation. Activist Bill Douglas from Iowa, gave a great presentation comparing anti-war protesters 100 years ago to today’s world, which did not seem too different.

Words for thought

“Trump mistakes cruelty for strength.” Maureen Dowd
Beware of Walker’s “Good Government” Deceptions

Back in Wisconsin, we have an impasse as the GOP dominated legislature and the GOP Governor cannot agree on a budget. When the GOP gained control over the Wisconsin government in 2011 all branches were in complete agreement in their assault on workers, especially those employed by state and local governments. The assault championed by the cry of reducing and freezing taxes overcame any public opposition. While public employees became the new targets of GOP wrath, the poor continued to be targets. There have been efforts to tie food stamps and Medicaid to employment (too bad for those unable to get jobs in a tough economy). The number of state employees investigating recipient fraud increased from 1 to 23 (yes, Walker created 22 jobs!). Recently Walker claimed that this investment in new investigators saves about $10,500/year per investigator (These numbers are from Walker’s weekly e-newsletter). These investigators are probably paid $30-40,000 each year, so we can see how Walker’s arithmetic works.

The transportation budget appears to be the primary stumbling block. Thanks to the Highway builders lobby, the GOP has advanced an aggressive expansion and repaving block. Thanks to the Highway builders lobby, the GOP gained control over the Wisconsin government in 2011 all branches were in complete agreement in their assault on workers, especially those employed by state and local governments. The assault championed by the cry of reducing and freezing taxes overcame any public opposition. While public employees became the new targets of GOP wrath, the poor continued to be targets. There have been efforts to tie food stamps and Medicaid to employment (too bad for those unable to get jobs in a tough economy). The number of state employees investigating recipient fraud increased from 1 to 23 (yes, Walker created 22 jobs!). Recently Walker claimed that this investment in new investigators saves about $10,500/year per investigator (These numbers are from Walker’s weekly e-newsletter). These investigators are probably paid $30-40,000 each year, so we can see how Walker’s arithmetic works.

The transportation budget appears to be the primary stumbling block. Thanks to the Highway builders lobby, the GOP has advanced an aggressive expansion and repair program of the state’s highways. To continue the investment, some want to borrow money to pay for the roads; others want to increase gas taxes and/or vehicle registration fees. One cost savings proposal calls for allowing highway builders to ignore the prevailing wages so that they can employ workers at wages below the union scale.

Another suggestion is to allow governments to use “design and build” contracts for public works jobs. Most public construction is designed by a unit of government or, if a project is too large or complicated, by an engineering/architectural firm. The design phase allows the governing body to control what they want in the project. Then, depending on the complexity and capability of the governing body, the design is put out to bid. While there is room for some corruption in the design process, the bid for the construction should result in the lowest bid and the best buy for the taxpayers. Using design and build contracts opens the door for domination by the contractor, who determines what is needed undermining democratic oversight and the bidding process. “Design and build” also increases the likelihood of bribery. The GOP claims that “design and build” will speed up projects and result in savings, when in fact it will increase the likelihood of corruption.

Instead of introducing ways of wasting taxpayer dollars, the GOP should save taxpayer dollars and maintain the bid process that was developed by Milwaukee Socialists over 100 years ago! DS

Beyond the Tweets, Trump & GOP Proposals Are Deceptive and Anti-Worker

Listening to claims from Trump and the GOP about their health care replacement plans providing better coverage at lower costs, logically, we expect of a single-payer plan.

The healthcare proposals have demonstrated, along with Trump’s attack on environmental protections, a consistency in Trump’s and the GOP’s programs for the USA. Trump’s tweets are mostly a distraction and a means of deception. While the tweets may reveal an underlying and frightening level of incompetency along with a pattern of inconsistent thought, Trump’s choice of a cabinet and what he and the GOP settle for in proposed legislation have been consistent if not seemingly bizarre to our sensibilities. Trump’s budget blueprint is a document that is dangerous not only for the USA, but also for the world. The GOP tax plan, which will probably surface by the end of summer, will at best be a boondoggle for the very wealthy, and more likely a disaster for the rest of us. We need a strong movement pushing a democratic socialist agenda protecting workers! DS

SP-Wisconsin Local Meeting: Saturday, August 5 at 1:30 p.m. at the Washington Park Library, 2121 N. Sherman Blvd., Milwaukee

Socialist Party of Wisconsin
2025 N. Martin Luther King Dr #305– Milwaukee, WI 53212 – Phone: 414-332-0654
Email: demsocvanguard@gmail.com Website: http://www.socialistpartyofwisconsin.org