

Socialist Vanguard

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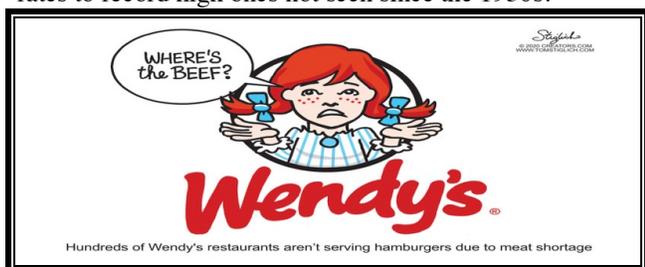
Presenting Democratic Socialist Viewpoints

COVID-19: Failures of Capitalism!

For the first half of 2020, the world has faced the threats of the new CoronaVirus or COVID-19. The Virus exposed the failures of capitalism!



Economics classes and mass media, teach that capitalism is the most efficient way of producing and distributing goods and services. We witness to economies crumbling. There are long lines of people waiting for hours for a bag of rations. At the same time farmers are declaring bankruptcy because they need to destroy their produce for lack of buyers. Unemployment has gone from record low rates to record high ones not seen since the 1930s!



Adam Smith, the economist/philosopher who described the workings of the market place, painted a picture of supply and demand, which encouraged investments and ownership of the means of production. Smith's description has been seized by capitalists to describe a free, inventive society. The driving force is profits and greed, which will maximize one's well-being. Greed and investments worked hand-in-hand to move societies forward. In Smith's hypothetical world everything is driven by an "invisible hand", which is best unregulated and things balance out for the best.

To be fair, Smith did see problems with his description. In 1776 there was great inequality, with some very rich and many very poor. A truth that is often ignored by "free-market" economists and political advocates.

For many, governmental responses to COVID-19 has been an unmitigated disaster. This view is the result of

many incompetent leaders and a rejection of scientific evidence. While political leadership (or lack of such) has caused many problems, today's problems are the product of the austerity governance, which has plagued many governments for the past 20 to 40 years. Austerity results in wealth shifting toward those with more wealth a tenet of 'free-market' beliefs. The rich are stealing from the poor!

In the USA has a partial health care system that provides only partial health coverage. Few enjoy full benefits, most have to make do with only partial coverage (for many nothing gets covered). This means that a significant part of the population avoid medical care because it is financially a disaster! Add a lack of income support, and many cannot afford to miss work, especially those with lowest of paying jobs.

An important principle of a socialist society is cooperation and the focus on the common good. Public policy should recognize that humans are social creatures. We need policies that do more than merely protect life, which in a complex global society is an impossible goal. Isolation policies are at best temporary, we need to reexamine our value systems to determine how best to stimulate cooperation and sharing.

Should we force people to not only accept, but continue to work in large meat processing plants, even when we know that such places a ideal breeding grounds for COVID-19? Thanks to the 'free-market' ideology promoting the centralization of wealth and power, we have created many unsafe situations like the meat processing factories. In the name of economy, our farming/food system has become dominated by such organizations. Capitalism is at its roots.

We look to the scientific community to test and observe to develop cures and vaccines. This is best done through collaboration and cooperation. For the most part this is probably taking place without any incentives than helping fellow humans. However, we allow capitalistic greed to enter the game and for some it becomes competition. The most successful will be able to get a large reward from a pharmaceutical company. The large drug and chemical companies are waiting to buy their monopoly. In many respects COVID-19 research is falling prey to the capitalist system.

The exploitive nature of capitalism undermines the struggle to overcome a serious pandemic! The unequal playing field created by capitalism is failing us! DS

Words for thought

"Viruses underscore the reality that in many ways, whether we like it or not, in this country and on this planet, we sink or swim together." By Susan E. Rice

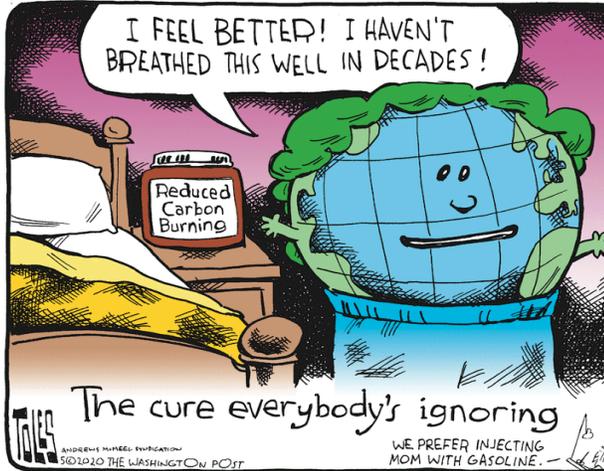
"The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing."- Edmund Burke

Speculating On The Remainder of 2020

COVID-19 has come and hopefully is going away. Will we experience the rapid recovery that is predicted by the US President? Will the recovery take ten years or more as predicted by some of the greatest doomsayers? Most likely it will be something in between.

Many businesses will not come back, the jobs will be lost. In many situations the business was already struggling thanks to trends in technology and other changes to society. Online businesses will continue to get stronger. Some retailers who rely on in-person interactions may transition to online sales. Education will become dominated by distance learning.

Environmentally, alternative energy sources will continue to increase. The earth will stay cleaner for a little longer. One of the benefits of the pandemic was the curtailing movement and economic activity, with the result carbon emissions returned to levels not seen in decades. Hopefully, this will result in the shutdown of some of the worst sources of pollution. One of the lessons we witnessed was the increased tensions between scientists and those who were addicted to fossil fuel consumption. One of the tragedies during the pandemic was the number of politicians who were more interested in retaining power than in the welfare of the earth. The reluctance of some political leaders to work with the scientific community to develop strategies for containing the spread of the virus, does not bode well for a more deadly crisis looming over the planet, namely, GLOBAL WARMING. DS



Dump Trump! VOTE!

However, we need to rid this world of one of the worst political leaders, namely US President Donald Trump.

Trump is likely going to be judged the worst president the USA has ever had.

Comic Tom Toles lists eight reasons to dump Trump, it does not mention his policies or blatant racism. Trump is a second (or third) rate politician, interested in enhancing himself. He is not a leader. In times of a crisis, a leader brings people together. Trump picks fights and separates. China does not have the best human rights record and is “communist” in name only, but it is a world player and deserves respect as such. Rather than reaching out to share information and resources with China, Trump recklessly blames China for maliciously introducing COVID-19 to the world and restarted threats of trade wars, which hurts both nations.

Trump did not just ignore most of the advice of the World Health Organization, which is the UN’s effort to provide medical expertise to the world, but claimed that the organization is out to get the USA. He then called for cutting the USA’s financial assistance to the organization.



Wanting to make a plea for people to get out and vote (hold your nose if necessary). The one power all citizens have is the **VOTE! USE IT!** Then in 2021 work to rid this nation of single-member districts, plurality voting and other practices that strengthen the hold of 2 major parties. WE NEED A STRONGER DEMOCRACY!

PBS Will Air Program On Milwaukee Socialism

America’s Socialist Experiment, a documentary produced locally in Milwaukee will be airing in early June (9 p.m. in Madison and Green Bay on June 8 and on Channel 10 in Milwaukee at 8 p.m.). It will awaken citizens to what socialism can do. However, its primary actors are conservative leaning Milwaukee journalists, namely Mike Gosha and his wife Lynn Sprangers, along with Charlie Sykes. They are joined by historians Margo Anderson and John Gurda along with lefty journalist

from Madison, John Nichols. To add a touch of reality Frank’s daughter and former Mayor of Williamsburg, Virginia Jeanne Zeidler and Dan Hoan’s grandson Dan Steininger were included in the documentary.

Let’s hope that it is objective and fair to socialism, not dismissive when making conclusions. Please watch the documentary, when it airs in your viewing area. Please write to your local PBS station with your observations (the Vanguard would appreciate your views as well. DS

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