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Too Far to the Left? Hardly.

Anarcho-Syndicalist Review

January 16, 2020

The support in the polls for two liberals, Democratic Senators Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders, has the capitalists worried. A constant bombardment is heard in the media that “the Democrats are going too far to the left” and how it would be a shame if this might help President Trump get re-elected. Never mind that it is not the Democrats that are shifting to the left, but the voters who are being polled. The subtext in this message is that regardless of what people want, the rulers will not allow it.

It is the capitalists who have revived the fascist movement and seek to terrorize the people with the specter of totalitarianism, even if they try to label it as “socialism.” As is always the case with tyrants, they project their own ambitions on their enemies and blame them for following the same path they have taken. What else but totalitarianism could you call unending war, reckless pursuit of private wealth in spite of global environmental peril, superstition replacing science, and government by decree of a head of state, a real life “Big Brother”? We are forbidden to question this best of all possible societies, and voters must double think who might vote for either Warren or Sanders.

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Contrary to the fear being spread by the capitalists, neither Warren nor Sanders threaten the capitalist system. Warren says openly she is no socialist and believes in markets. Sanders claims he is a “democratic socialist,” but when asked what that means he invokes the examples of the New Deal in the 1930s United States and Scandinavian [social democratic] countries. Capitalism remains alive and well in Scandinavia, as it did under Franklin Roosevelt. Many credit FDR as saving capitalism with his New Deal. Neither Warren nor Sanders advocate nationalization of banks, or industry, even a key industry like oil in Venezuela’s “Bolivarian Socialism” under Chavez. The only industries they threaten are the health insurance industry, with their “Medicare For All” single-payer system, and the college loan industries. But those things have been done in most other capitalist countries without threatening the existence of the capitalist class. Capital is fungible. If profits aren’t to be had in one industry, the capitalists invest elsewhere.

Even the “Green New Deal” is not the game changer both its advocates and opponents claim. Government credit will be made available for renewable energy and carbon mitigation, much as funding was provided for canals, railroads, interstate highways, etc. Some capitalists will make new fortunes, and a few may lose them, but capitalism itself is not threatened by the Green New Deal. Workers will still be workers. The poor will stay poor. Neoliberalism will make sure that many of the products needed to rebuild the “Green Economy” will be made by low wage workers living in union-free regions. As the liberal economist Thomas Piketty has shown, a growing economy does not change the fundamentals of capitalism. As capitalists accumulate capital, inequality increases. Only the loss of capital by the capitalist class reduces inequality. (This is why Piketty advocates a global wealth tax, surely something the capitalists will never allow.)

The fundamental principle of socialism is the expropriation of the capitalist class and the social ownership of the means of production. There is no one in the Democratic Party advocating this, and the politicians would be useless in bringing it about. The only way it will happen is if the workers do it themselves.