ERIK OLIN WRIGHT AND THE ANTI-CAPITALIST EMANCIPATORY PROJECT

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ABSTRACT

The devastating effects of neoliberal economics over the past forty years have laid the foundation for resistance to capitalism. Under this system, an increased accumulation of wealth and assets by elites has taken place while a growing majority of Americans continue a marginalized existence. Concern for the well-being of Americans according to Eric Olin Wright. He that capitalism mitigated through public policy is impossible if not delusional. Evidence of policy capture is dominated by elites and results in what Wright describes a “nihilistic capitalism.” Wright then argues that the rational alternative is to jettison capitalism in favor of a socialist alternative, “anti-capitalism.” He bases this on metaphors described as “taming” and “eroding” capitalism. These two are in opposition to “smashing” and escaping” capitalism. I argue, however, that the taming and eroding dimensions of the anti-capitalist model must incorporate basic “economic rights” since taming and eroding fail to guarantee access food, housing, healthcare, transportation, education, and energy, the basics for a decent life. The optimal policy strategy is to insulate individuals and communities from the negative externalities of capitalism.

Keywords: anti-capitalism, multinationals, corporations, economic democracy.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1980 Ronald Reagan was elected president. As promised, Reagan immediately began to reduce public spending on human services and other public programs, and increased military expenditures through deficit spending, while implementing massive tax cuts for the rich. These polices sent "signals" to Wall Street to drop interest rates which in turn curbed inflation dramatically. All the while, the economic distance between rich and poor increased. In addition to reducing and even terminating economic regulations, thirty years later market vulnerability manifested itself in the 2009 Great Recession. This has not only been devastating for the poor, but on the middle class as well (Rosen, 2024).

During this time the rich (corporations, individuals, and assets) also benefitted from government bailouts, e.g., Troubled Asset Relief Program, 2009 (TARP). The middle class and poor, in terms of tax expenditures, were forced to paty for the tragedy the rich had visited upon Americans. This disaster stemmed from the collapse of the housing market due to lending schemes traced to the 1999 rescinding of the Glass-Steagell Act, 1936. This was designed to protect the rich from the toxic loans it created. Those victims of the loans were left in debt or in economic ruin.

Suffice it to say, the question of capitalism's viability remains foremost in the minds of the American workforce, while little is done with providing a fix to prevent another economic breakdown. For example, the Dodd-Frank Act of 2010, as preventative economic legislation, apparently has done little, only to see another housing "bubble" in 2024.

CAPITALIST NIHILISM

For decades Eric Olin Wright has warned about the imminent demise of capitalism. His alternative strategy is an anti-capitalist economic model designed to meet the basic needs of people within a socialist framework (Wright, 2019; Wright, 2006). Capitalism in the twenty-first century, he argues, is based on an inherently contradictory system. One such example is its erratic tendency toward economic crisis, otherwise known as the "business cycle." For the most part, the crisis of capitalism has left Americans vulnerable economically, specifically with the Great Recession. This crisis has impacted the lives of people in terms of wage stagnation, daily economic struggles, employment layoffs, and terminations. This in turn creates a marginal downturn in the economy which in turn influences a decrease in consumer spending, and results in the never-ending cycle of "overproduction and underconsumption," all leading to economic decline and potentially market collapse (Marx, 1847; 1865).

The upturn in the business cycle obviously counters the downturn. Whether the market is alleged to "correct itself" or government intervenes, there is no guarantee of a permanent upward trend. Breaking this cycle from Wright's perspective, is impossible in a capitalist economy precisely because capitalists, such as corporations, multinationals, CEO's, shareholders, Boards of Directors, etc., are about profits and cutting costs in terms of labor is prioritized. All of this begs the question of whether public policy can offset the contradictions inherent within the capitalist system itself. It appears historically improbable. Moreover, the crisis of capitalism according to Wright, will invariably undermine its own existence and the economic well-being of others, due to capitalisms internal contradictions (Wright and Rogers, 2015).

The conflict between capital and labor and with the downward pressure on wages, workers lack marginal income to purchase and consume the products labor creates. This in turn sets the stage for an economy in collapse (Marx, 1847; 1865), and one in which the capitalist class become "their own gravediggers" (Marx and Engels, 1848). Wright argues that the very structure of capitalism is nihilistic in this regard. Capitalist policies continue to undermine any form of stability regarding the persistent antagonisms found within the system itself. A strategy for mitigation is thus set forth in Wright's anti-capitalist model.

SMASHING CAPITALISM

The historical evidence of the negative outcomes in terms of capitalist development can be identified historically from European colonialism to the Great Recession, 2009. The argument by some, historically, is to therefore terminate capitalism itself since it is beyond remedy. Wright describes this metaphorically as "***smashing capitalism***" (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). Incremental reforms in terms of public policy hardly guarantee a stable economic life since elites dominate the policy making process. The public interest in this regard is not prioritized economically (Martin 2020; Thayler, 2016; Sunstein, 1997; Reich, 1991).

Another approach to smashing capitalism is through a revolutionary faction, acting as a vanguard of mass mobilization seizing and controlling state power through violence. Once the state is overrun and controlled by vanguard revolutionaries, the primary task of this front is to then reconstruct the state, transforming it into a socialist government (Therburn, 1978). In protecting the revolution from counterrevolutionary action, the powers of the state are then harnessed to repress opposition. Such struggles rarely end in control of a state regime if seized and often result in the absence of a democratic egalitarian model. Revolutions, as Wright argues, rarely foster a democratic alternative to capitalism. Instead, they are the byproducts of repressive and dictatorial regimes that perpetuate economic conditions of poverty.

While there are examples of socialist and communist regimes that have improved the material conditions of its people (Cuba, Chile, Nicaragua, Venezuela), the evidence of an egalitarian "new world" envisioned in revolutionary ideology is not altogether clear (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). It is one thing to be liberated from injustice and quite another to construct a new and just democratic order. The twentieth century has witnessed "failed" attempts of this approach to the "emancipation project." Smashing capitalism is a dubious approach addressing socio-economic emancipation. (Martin 2020; Wright, 2015; 2006; 1992).

TAMING CAPITALISM

A challenge to smashing capitalism model is "***taming capitalism***." Capitalism tends to generate inequality undermining economic and social stability. Capitalism tends to prioritize profit at the expense of labor. While providing capital investment, capitalism also creates socioeconomic uncertainty and unregulated, can lead to the ruination of people's lives (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). Wright argues that the welfare state and the implementation of humane public policies can effectively be part a more reasonable approach to "taming" capitalism.

Some of the anticipated struggles in attempting to tame capitalism will involve forming consensus around public policies. Wright argues that there are no guarantees of successful outcomes since the agenda setting stage of public policy is highly political. Reaction to regulations designed to neutralize the negative externalities of capitalism are often met with fierce resistance and propaganda from capitalist elites (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). Such arguments are self-serving rationalizations that tend to focus on how the history of the United States has demonstrated how capitalism can provide profitable and affordable goods and services for all. Wright, while skeptical of this argument, argues that public policy must be guided by regulation to override the harmful effects of markets.

The taming capitalism model argued by Wright can be implemented through public policy. While the taming strategy does not definitively fix the problems of capitalism, it simply counteracts their effects. It addresses the negative symptoms of capitalism but does not address the underlying causes (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). The taming model is evident in the social-democratic policies, specifically in those locations in Western Europe, Northern Europe, Canada, North America, Australia, etc., which provided humane economic system. Counteracting the negative impacts can be accomplished through social services - healthcare, employment, and income. State intervention through a robust progressive tax system, public education, vocational skills, research and development - have proven successful in promoting social justice outcomes.

However, changes took place after the Golden Era. Wright argues that the state took responsibility for correcting three principled market failures: individual vulnerability to risks, under-provision of public goods, and the negative externalities of private profit-maximizing economic activity. The result was a well-functioning form of capitalism with muted inequalities and conflicts. Neoliberals may not have preferred this, but it worked well enough. Capitalism had, at least partially, been tamed (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). Yet, staring with the Reagan Revolution in 1980 there have been radical departures from the "welfare state" to roll back the "entitlements" connected to social insurance, reduction in taxes and public goods, deregulation of capitalist production and markets, and the privatization of state services.

Another complexity is the claim that globalization imposes powerful constraints on the capacity of states to raise taxes, regulate capitalism, and redistribute income. It is a politically effective claim because people believe the propaganda and fail to assess for whom international polices benefit the most (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). In other words, the claim that the United States must compete economically on a global scale and that it must adopt the international trade policies such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is left without a rigorous analysis. In large part the corporate media is to blame. Educational institutions as well. Wright's taming capitalism remains a viable expression of anti-capitalism.

ESCAPING CAPITALISM

One of the oldest responses to the onslaught of capitalism is "***escaping capitalism***" from the system. For Wright, escaping capitalism may not have crystallized into systematic anti-capitalist ideologies, but nevertheless it has a coherent logic: capitalism is too powerful a system to destroy. The power elite control the United States, and they will always co-opt opposition and defend their privileges (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). The impulse to escape is reflected in many familiar responses to the harmful effects of capitalism. For example, the movement of farmers to the Western frontier in nineteenth-century United States was, for many, an aspiration for stable, self-sufficient subsistence farming rather than production for the market. Escaping capitalism is implicit in the "hippie" motto of the 1960s, "turn on, tune in, drop out." The efforts by certain religious communities, such as the Amish, to create strong barriers between themselves and the remainder of society, involved removing themselves as much as possible from the pressures of the market.

The characterization of the family as a "haven in a heartless world" describe the family as a noncompetitive social space of reciprocity and caring, in which one can find refuge from the heartless, competitive world of capitalism. Escaping capitalism typically involves avoiding political engagement and collectively organized efforts at world transformation (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). Today, the escape from capitalism is mostly an individualistic lifestyle strategy. At times it is an individualistic strategy dependent on capitalist wealth, as in the stereotype of the successful Wall Street banker who decides to "give up the rat race" and move to a remote place to be immersed in a life of simplicity while being sustained on a retirement pension, or trust fund, or some other source of financial support.

It is easy to dismiss the escaping capitalism strategy, since it reflects privileges achieved within capitalism itself. It is difficult to treat the wilderness hiker who flies into a remote region with expensive hiking gear to "get away from it all," a meaningful expression of opposition to capitalism. Still, there are examples of escaping capitalism that do bear on the broader, more problematic dimensions built within capitalism. Intentional communities may be motivated by the desire to escape the pressures of competitive capitalism, but sometimes they can also serve as helpful models for more collective, egalitarian, and democratic ways of living (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). Certainly cooperatives, which may be motivated mainly by a desire to escape the authoritarian structures in workplaces and the exploitation by capitalist firms, can also become elements of a broader challenge to capitalism.

The "Go It Alone" demeanor and the "community economy" may be motivated by stagnant individual incomes during a period of economic austerity, but they can also point in the direction, organizing economic activities that are less dependent on market exchanges (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). The lifestyle of voluntary simplicity by living in "simplicity" can contribute to a much broader rejection of consumerism and the preoccupation with economic growth and habituated materialism. Fleeing from the complexities and even injustices associated with capitalism will, in the long run, fail to address the deeper structural issues that could in fact return to implement worse outcomes from prior experiences. Escaping capitalism fails to adequately address the underlying causes of capitalism's inadequacies and the negative outcomes that inevitably affect people whatever their perspectives on capitalism.

ERODING CAPITALISM

The fourth anti-capitalist model is the least familiar, "***eroding capitalism***." This orientation for Wright identifies capitalism as a socioeconomic system organized around three basic components: private ownership; profits; and employment of labor. Capitalism asserts that markets are the most efficient and effective means for the distribution of scarce resources, yet it nevertheless creates serious problems with the distribution and equity of these resources (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010;

2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). As a result, public policy has attempted to address these issues through what Wright describes as eroding capitalism. This translates into policies such as, greater consumer choices, promotion of nonprofits; worker cooperatives, peer-to-peer networks, etc.

A number of these organizations can be thought of as hybrids, composed of capitalist and non-capitalist entities; some are non-capitalist while some are anti-capitalist. Thus, the eroding force on capitalism is to construct more inclusive, democratic, egalitarian models wherever possible, and to struggle to expand and defend those spaces. The idea of eroding capitalism conceives of potential alternatives, in the long run, of acting on capitalism to the point where it is no longer dominant. The eroding process evolves over time, dating back to feudal structures beginning in Europe to the technology economy of today (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). This process may have been punctuated by political upheavals and even revolutions, but rather than constituting a rupture in economic structures, these economic events served more to ratify and rationalize changes within the socioeconomic structure.

It is far-fetched because it seems wildly implausible that the accumulation of emancipatory economic spaces within an economy dominated by capitalism could ever really displace capitalism, given the immense power and wealth of large capitalist corporations and the dependency of most people's livelihoods on the well-functioning of the capitalist market (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978). Surely if non-capitalist emancipatory forms of economic activities and relations ever grew to the point of threatening the dominance of capitalism, they would simply be crushed.

According to Wright, the optimal social justice anti-capitalist strategy should be based on ***taming and eroding capitalism***, linking the bottom-up, society-centered strategic vision of anarchism with a top-down, state-centered strategic logic of social democracy (Wright, 2019; Wright, 2015; Wright, 2006; Wright, 1978). The goal is to tame capitalism in ways that make it more erodible so that eroding and taming capitalism, without its total elimination, is a position that makes sense in the context of understanding this position as a "pipedream" or "utopia."

TAMING AND ERODING

So, how should one as an anti-capitalist seek to implement a democratic economy?

First, abandon the fantasy of smashing capitalism. Capitalism is not able to be smashed, at least if the goal is to construct an emancipatory future aimed at social justice. It is an international institution whose destruction, presumably by some revolutionary force, would devastate the world financial system. Second, escaping capitalism and moving off the grid and minimizing involvement with the market, is neither a realistic nor an appealing option for individuals and families. As a tactic for social change, it has little in fostering economic emancipation (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978).

Thus, if people are deeply concerned about living in a civilized world, in one way or another, social justice demands that capitalism, as it manifests itself today on a global scale, must address its inner demons, structures and institutions. ***Anti-capitalism thus directs its attention to taming and eroding capitalism***. These emancipatory efforts can be directed at democratic economic models that serve the needs of labor. This arguably is the best approach to remediating the precarious nature of the market and which also presumes that individuals and communities need to participate both in political movements for ***taming capitalism*** through public policies and in socioeconomic projects for ***eroding capitalism*** through the expansion of ongoing emancipatory forms of economic activity (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978; Martin 2020). This implies that people must renew an energetic progressive social democracy that not only neutralizes the harms of capitalism but also facilitates initiatives to build real utopias with the potential to erode the dominance of capitalism.

The final point I would argue is that an anti-capitalist emancipatory project must prioritize basic human rights so that this project would be successful. As Bernie Sanders states, "Real authentic freedom must include economic security" (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978; Martin 2020). Arguably, this can best be achieved with the reintroduction of FDR's Second Bill of Rights, or under a similar nomenclature such as an Economic Bill of Rights or Democratic Economy. This would then address many of Wright's concerns regarding no guarantees of successful outcomes since the agenda setting stage of public policy is highly political. Hence the assurance of a democratic economy and an anti-capitalist strategy.

REAL UTOPIAS

In this context Wright argues that the taming and eroding components of anti-capitalism are not a theoretical exercise; they able to be obtained in the "real world". This is what Wright describes as a "real utopia". The utopia element as Wright puts it, is directed at the emancipatory ideals of liberty, equality, and solidarity in actual space and time (Gostil and Olin, 2019; Hahnel and Wright, 2016; Wright 2010). They are to be pragmatic implementations of public policy. Yet implementations are obstructed by capitalist firms. Internal resources are distributed in a grossly unequal manner to continually undermine efforts at solidarity. It is absent any democratic awareness of policy direction. However, a “real utopia” is exemplified in worker-owned cooperatives where the assets of firms are jointly owned by the employees themselves, who govern on a one-person-one-vote basis. This democratic governance can be organized in the form of general assemblies of all members; in larger cooperatives the workers elect boards of directors to oversee the firm (New Economy Coalition, http://neweconomy.net; Institute for New Economic Thinking, http://inet.ox.ac.uk; Romney, 2011).

A significant number of worker cooperatives that are currently operating successfully in the United States. They are worker-owned businesses. Worker cooperatives may also embody more capitalistic features: they may, for example, hire temporary workers or be inhospitable to potential members of ethnic or racial groups. Cooperatives have the potential to contribute to eroding the dominance of capitalism when they expand the economic space in the anti-capitalist emancipatory project (Cumbers, 2020; Martin 2020; Alperovitz, 2017; Alperovitz, 2016; Alperovitz, 2008; Rosen, 2016; Lappe, 2016; Schweickart, 2016; Whitfield, 2015). Worker cooperatives could form networks; with appropriate forms of public support, those networks could extend and deepen to constitute a cooperative market sector; that sector could rival the dominance of capitalism.

Real Utopias can also be found in proposals for social change and state policies, not just in existing institutions. This is the critical role of real utopias in long-term political strategies for social justice and human emancipation. One example is a Universal Basic Income (UBI) advocated by Andrew Yang (Yang, 2023; 2021; 2018; 2014). A UBI simply gives everyone, without conditions, a flow of income sufficient to cover basic needs. It provides for a modest, but culturally respectable, no-frills standard of living. In doing so it also solves the problem of hunger among the poor and does so in ways that puts in place a building block of an emancipatory alternative. UBI directly tames one of the negative impacts of capitalism, poverty. But it also expands the potential for a long-term erosion of the dominance of capitalism by channeling resources towards non-capitalist forms of economic activity (Wright, 2019; 2016a; 2016b; 2015a; 2015b; 2015c; 2015d; 2010; 2006; 2005; 1998; 1994; 1992, et al; 1978).

The UBI policies had been preceded by Daniel Patrick Moynahan's Guaranteed National Income (GNI; Moynihan, 1973) in Richard Nixon's Family Assistance Plan (1973). While this failed to be adopted by Congress, it nevertheless remained as a future policy remedy to economic inequality (Hartley and Garfield, 2020). And this was also preceded in Martin Luther King's Poor People's Campaign 1968 (Tiven, 2017), and a platform urged by the Black Panther Party in 1966 (Patterson, 2022).

Consider the effects of a basic income on worker cooperatives. One of the reasons worker cooperatives are often fragile is that they generate sufficient income not merely to cover the material costs of production but also to provide a basic income for their members. If a basic income were guaranteed independently of the market success of the cooperative, worker cooperatives would become much more robust. Cooperatives would be less risky for loans from banks. Somewhat ironically, a UBI would help solve a credit market problem for cooperatives.

I suspect Wright would argue more along the lines of a living wage, where Yang argues for a cap at $1000.00 per month. Clearly this would need to be assessed in relation to the relative wealth of the demographic region in the United States.

The real utopia is in essence a worker owned or democratically controlled workplace.

ANTI-CAPITALIST ECONOMIC RIGHTS

In 1932 Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) was elected president of the United States with the daunting task of ending the Great Depression. Many of his landmark New Deal legislation was implemented as a "safety net," for people and simultaneously designed to rescue capitalism from devastation. While the New Deal was successful in preventing the disintegration of society, it did not end the Great Depression until the final days of World War II. At that time FDR capitulated, to unions and labor leaders by agreeing to fundamental economic rights of citizens. On January 11th, 1944, State of the Union address to Congress, FDR referred to an Economic Bill of Rights (or Second Bill of Rights) and prefaced this reference with the following warning, "We have come to the clear realization of the fact that true individual freedom cannot exist without economic security and independence. Necessitous men are not free men" (www.newdealprogressives.org).

The key elements of the Economic Bill of Rights can be divided into two fundamental elements: ***opportunity and security***. FDR argued that individual freedom is inadequate without economic security and that economic deprivation itself threatened social cohesion. With respect to ***economic opportunity***, FDR argued for the economic rights to a useful and remunerative job, a good education, and that every businessman be left alone to conduct his/her business free from unfair competition and domination by monopolies (Martin 2020). ***Economic security*** for FDR must include protection from the economic fears associated with: (1) old age, sickness and infirmity, accident, and underemployment, unemployment; (2) lifelong medical care, life insurance, and the opportunity to achieve and enjoy good health; (3) housing for individuals and families; and (4) a living wage to provide for food, clothing, and recreation (Martin 2020; Rifkin, 2019; Klein, 2019; also see Climate Justice in reference section). This would include human rights in terms of environmental rights and access to natural resources. Green New Deal (GND) policies would, arguably, be an inherent dimension of an Economic Bill of Rights. The GND would commit to climate justice and economic equality (Jordan, 2019; For more information see Climate Justice under references).

The Economic Bill of Rights, as described by Cass Sunstein, has been partially implemented in the United States while other industrialized countries have already implemented such rights (Sunstein, 2004). Economic rights were not specifically included in the original Constitution and subsequent amendments, scholars such as Sunstein demonstrate the Founding Fathers (Madison and Jefferson) nevertheless considered the strategic significance of these rights as essential to democracy itself as Madison states:

> By withholding unnecessary opportunities from a few, to increase the inequality of property, by an immoderate, and especially an unmerited accumulation of riches; by the silent operation of laws, which, without violating the laws of property, reduce extreme wealth to a state of mediocrity, and raise indigence toward a state of comfort (Madison, 1792).

And Jefferson states:

> The consequences of this enormous inequality producing so much misery to the bulk of mankind, legislatures cannot invest too many devices for subdividing property … Another means of silently lessening the inequality of property is to exempt all from taxation below a certain point, and to tax the higher portions of property in geometrical progression as they rise. Whenever there is in any

> country, uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far extended as to violate natural right. The earth is given as a common stock for man to labor and live on (Jefferson, 1785).

The idea of economic rights did not attract much attention in the United States until FDR was elected president. The current experience of the Great Depression made the need for economic rights quite clear in the minds of a large proportion of the citizenry. Sunstein indicates that new "rights" need not take the form of amendments to the Constitution. The Courts can recognize these economic rights through local jurisdiction, but this at best would be a half measure at best.

For example, some of the most concrete results of FDR's efforts were the Social Security Act of 1935, the creation of several agencies that produced greatly needed jobs, labor protection laws that created the right for workers to organize into unions and a federal minimum wage, antitrust policies, the GI Bill of Rights, record tax rates on wealthy corporations and individuals. But perhaps more importantly by the end of FDR's presidency, large segments of the American population accepted his Economic Bill of Rights as legitimate rights. Yet today, many of these programs have been terminated and Social Security is under attack, continually (Martin 2020; Human Development Report, 2019).

In this context, FDR's Economic Bill of Rights, must be memorialized as an amendment to the Constitution in securing democratic economic rights. Wright's anti-capitalist agenda, both taming and eroding capitalism, provides an emancipatory path forward. Coupled with a Green New Deal, an Economic Bill of Rights must be an immediate political agenda in the promotion of peace and justice (Martin 2020; Arnoff, 2019; Jordan, 2019; Sunstein, 1990).

The Post World War II “Golden Age” of capitalism was, arguably, an historical anomaly, or a brief period in which favorable structural conditions and robust popular power broached the possibility for relative egalitarian model. Before that time capitalism was a rapacious system, and under neoliberalism it has become rapacious once again, returning to the normal “state of affairs” for capitalist systems. As this problem appears to become more acute, political movements attempting to reform, if not overthrow capitalism completely, are under consideration. And the drive to end monopoly capitalism, and its disastrous effects on the planet and its inhabitants, and the avoidance of a sixth massive extinction demand an anti-capitalist movement, real utopian economic rights.

ACRONYMS

FDR	Franklin Delano Roosevelt
GND	Green New Deal
GNI	Guaranteed National Income
HDR	Human Development Report
TARP	Troubled Asset Relief Program
TPP	Transpacific Partnership
UBI	Universal Basic Income

WORKER COOPERATIVE REFERENCES

Institute for Policy Studies, Washington, DC
Institute for New Economic Thinking, New York, NY
Democracy Collaborative, Washington, DC
Center on Poverty and Inequality, Stanford University
Political Economy Research Institute, Washington, DC
Center for Economics and Policy Research, Washington, DC

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