





Social Democracy Vs. Capitalism

When it comes to America's capitalistic economic system, it is looked upon with great regard by most of the citizens of the nation, but just because capitalism is regarded so highly doesn't necessarily mean it's right. Look to our European brethren: France, Germany, Sweden, and many others seem to be prospering so much more than us, yet their economic differs greatly from ours. The reason this is so is that they choose not to join us in the great capitalistic clique; they choose a higher path: social democracy. America should switch from its current capitalistic system to a more socially democratic system to experience the benefits felt by their European counterparts, such as free health care, education, and greater opportunities for the working class.

After a recent poll, it was show that an unbelievable forty-five million people in the United States are completely without health insurance, simply because they can't afford it. If America had a more socialized health care system, this would not be so, yet many Americans seem unwilling to try this proven system, and remain adamant on staying with their "better" capitalized insurance system. Mano Singham, a theoretical physicist at Case Western Reserve University expresses very clearly how most Americans view socialized health care: ". . .the opponents of a government-run, single payer, universal health care system try to portray it as this mysterious, unknown, complicated, untried, massively bureaucratic, expensive system that one should not experiment with . . . It is the system in the US that is mysterious, complicated, massively

bureaucratic, and expensive.” (3-4). If one refuses to believe him, simply look to one of our European neighbors who use this method of insuring their people. There have been no collapses or any major problems in the government run health care systems in any of these countries; in fact they’re doing just fine. It has been said that if socialized health care gets instituted into our country, the wait times for medical procedures will be raised. It may be true that there may be a bit of a longer wait to get an MRI or to get a CAT scan, but think, the only reason American hospitals have shorter wait times than that of a socialized system is because the people who are uninsured are scared to seek medical help for their problems for fear that they will be forced further down the financial slope than they already are. So in essence, insured Americans are prospering off of the misery of the uninsured. If America makes the move to social democracy, this is only one of the many problems that will be addressed and fixed.

Another problem that many Americans face is the problem of paying for higher education like college, grad school, etc. The average cost of college tuition in the United States today is about 21,000 dollars, which is about half of the average salary of a working class American. This is a major problem preventing many American high schoolers that deserve a higher education from attending a college because they can’t afford it. In a socialized education system, college attendance would be free, and for those who deserve it, not for those with the deepest pockets and the most connections. The greatest epitome of this education system would be seen in France. In France, to be accepted into a university, the aspiring student must pass a rigorous test at the end of their high school career, known as The Baccalauréat, to be accepted. Once the student passes the test, the student need only pass his college classes and leave his financial worries

behind, for his education continues to be government funded throughout his college years, and the school pays a salary of about two thousand euros a month simply for being accepted. This is a major improvement over our current college education system where the student must pay out of pocket for most of his college education, and, in most cases, must work multiple jobs to do so. One might argue that free college tuition will cause colleges to overflow, leading to a decline in the higher education system, but a test such as The Baccalauréat is designed to weed out those who are not quite up to snuff with the standards. Should this system be adopted, there should be a greater amount of students who attend college to make something out of it instead of attending to experiment and eventually drop out.

Finally, social democracy's most necessary change to the American society is the bettering of benefits for the working class. Salary cuts, budget cuts, benefit cuts, and layoffs are all terms and headlines that we as Americans are all too familiar with. The condition at the workplace for the average American has been on a slow decline to unacceptable conditions for far too long. In 1970, the average working class man from the United States earned the same as the average working class man from Germany, but slowly, we began to lose our ground, for by 1996, The average working German was making one hundred sixty percent of what the average American made. In addition to higher wages, the Germans had three times the unionization rate, two-and-a-half times the vacation days, three times the sick days, and seventy-six percent of the hours labored. Another study showed that, interestingly enough, the chief executive officers of major companies in Germany made less than half of what those in America made. The connection is obvious: the big bosses in America care more about boosting their own

level. If the world were to try and make itself function on these principals, it would be a more functional place, but alas we are far from that level, so perhaps we can start here.

Works Cited

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