OMNI US CAPITALISM NEWSLETTER #1, August 24, 2011, Compiled by Dick Bennett for a Culture of Peace and Justice (#1 Jan. 30, 2011)

Here is the link to all OMNI newsletters:

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REMEMBER August 5th, 1981 Breaking Unions
“30 Years Ago Today: The Day the Middle Class Died “ http://www.michaelmoore.com/words/mike-friends-blog/30-years-ago-today

From time to time, someone under 30 will ask me, "When did this all begin, America's downward slide?" They say they've heard of a time when working people could raise a family and send the kids to college on just one parent's income (and that college in states like California and New York was almost free). That anyone who wanted a decent paying job could get one. That people only worked five days a week, eight hours a day, got the whole weekend off and had a paid vacation every summer. That many jobs were union jobs, from baggers at the grocery store to the guy painting your house, and this meant that no matter how "lowly" your job was you had guarantees of a pension, occasional raises, health insurance and someone to stick up for you if you were unfairly treated.
Young people have heard of this mythical time -- but it was no myth, it was real. And when they ask, "When did this all end?", I say, "It ended on this day: August 5th, 1981."

Beginning on this date, 30 years ago, Big Business and the Right Wing decided to "go for it" -- to see if they could actually destroy the middle class so that they could become richer themselves.

And they've succeeded.

On August 5, 1981, President Ronald Reagan fired every member of the air traffic controllers union (PATCO) who'd defied his order to return to work and declared their union illegal.

Reagan had been backed by Wall Street in his run for the White House and they, along with right-wing Christians, wanted to restructure America and turn back the tide that President Franklin D. Roosevelt started.

“From Jesus’ socialism to capitalistic Christianity”
By Gregory Paul
A truly strange thing has happened to American Christianity. A set of profound contradictions have developed within modern conservative Christianity, big and telling inconsistencies that have long slipped under the radar of public knowledge, and are only now beginning to be explicitly noted by critics of the religious and economic right.


Nickel and Dimed (2011 Version)
On Turning Poverty into an American Crime
By Barbara Ehrenreich

I completed the manuscript for Nickel and Dimed in a time of seemingly boundless prosperity. Technology innovators and venture capitalists were acquiring sudden fortunes, buying up McMansions like the ones I had cleaned in Maine and much larger. Even secretaries in some hi-tech firms were striking it rich with their stock options. There was loose talk about a permanent conquest of the business cycle, and a sassy new spirit infecting American capitalism. In San Francisco, a billboard for an e-trading firm proclaimed, "Make love not war," and then -- down at the bottom -- "Screw it, just make money."

When Nickel and Dimed was published in May 2001, cracks were appearing in the dot-com bubble and the stock market had begun to falter, but the book still evidently came as a surprise, even a revelation, to many. Again and again, in that first year or two after publication, people
came up to me and opened with the words, “I never thought...” or “I hadn’t realized...”

8/9/2011

http://americanempireproject.com/

GLOBAL CAPITALISM AND 21ST Century Fascism: The global economic crisis and the attack on immigrant rights are bound together in a web of 21st century fascism.

I found this article by William I. Robinson posted on the Al Jazeera (English) website. I copied the text into an MS Word document which I have attached. -Carl
http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/opinion/2011/04/201142612714539672.html


Includes:
Section 1: Hollywood and Global Dominance
Chapter 1: Toby Miller and Richard Maxwell
‘For a better deal, Harass Your Governor!’: Neoliberalism and Hollywood
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A Legacy of Neoliberalism: Patterns in Media Conglomeration
Chapter 3: Deborah Tudor
21st Century Neoliberal Man
Section 2: Latin America . . . .
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Section 4: Africa and Europe, , ,

BOOKS
Rev. The Progressive (April 1011) by Amitabh Pal. “Chang is crystal clear about the calamitous effects of neoliberal economics on our planet.”

Giroux, Henry. Zombie Politics and Culture in the Age of Casino Capitalism. Peter Lange, 2011. Advert.: Uses the Zombie as metaphor to examine politics and education in the US that have produced a growing right-wing culture of sadism, cruelty, disposability, wars, and death.

Perelman, Michael. The Invisible Handcuffs of Capitalism. Monthly Review P, 2011. Advert.: “…the economic institutions and practices that force people to accept the discipline of the market.” “The market gives power to the destructive practices of business and finance while stifling the creative potential of labor to address urgent social needs.”

Capitalism: A Love Story
If Michael Moore's latest documentary lacks the clean punch of his best-known work, it can only be
because the crime scene is so vast, writes Xan Brooks at the Venice film festival. Xan Brooks, guardian.co.uk, Sunday 6 September 2009

Michael Moore at Goldman Sachs in Capitalism: A Love Story. Photograph: Everett Collection/Rex

Features

The bankrobbers caught on CCTV at the start of Capitalism: A Love Story are a forlorn and feeble bunch. We see a bedraggled old man in a Hawaiian shirt, and what looks to be a 12-year-old boy wearing a balaclava. For all their flailing efforts, they've got nothing on the real crooks: the banking CEOs who recently absconded with $700bn of public money, no strings attached. That's what's known as a clean getaway.

1. Capitalism: A Love Story
2. Production year: 2009
3. Country: USA
4. Cert (UK): 12A
5. Runtime: 127 mins
6. Directors: Michael Moore
7. Cast: Michael Moore
8. More on this film

Michael Moore's latest documentary drew tumultuous applause at the Venice film festival today, suggesting that the veteran tub-thumper has lost none of his power to whip up a response. If the film finally lacks the clean, hard punch provided by the record-breaking Fahrenheit 9/11, that can only be because the crime scene is so vast and the culprits so numerous.

Undeterred, Moore jabs his finger at everyone from Reagan to Bush Jr, Hank Paulson to Alan Greenspan. He drags the viewer through a thicket of insurance scams, sub-prime bubbles and derivative trading so wilfully obfuscatory that even the experts can't explain how it works.

The big villain, of course, is capitalism itself, which the film paints as a wily old philanderer intent on lining the pockets of the few at the expense of the many. America, enthuses a leaked Citibank report, is now a modern-day "plutonomy" where the top 1% of the population control 95% of the wealth. Does Barack Obama's election spell an end to all this? The director has his doubts, pointing out that Goldman Sachs – depicted here as the principal agent of wickedness – was the largest private contributor to the Obama campaign.

Capitalism: A Love Story is by turns crude and sentimental, impassioned and invigorating. It posits a simple moral universe inhabited by good little guys and evil big ones, yet the basic thrust of its argument proves hard to resist.

Crucially, Moore (or at least his researchers) has done a fine job in ferreting out the human stories behind the headlines. None of these is so horrifyingly absurd as the tale of the privatised youth detention centre in Pennsylvania, run with the help of a crooked local judge who railroaded kids through his court for a cut of the profits. Some 6,500 children were later found to have been wrongly convicted for such minor infractions as smoking pot and "throwing a piece of steak at my mom's boyfriend". The subsequent bill for their incarceration went directly to the taxpayer.

Moore's conclusion? That capitalism is both un-Christian and un-American, an evil that deserves not regulation but elimination. No doubt he had concluded all this anyway, well in advance of making the film, but no matter. There is something energising – even moving – about the sight of him setting out to prove it all over again. Like some shambling Columbo, he amasses the evidence, takes witness statements from the victims and then starts doorstepping the guilty parties.

"I need some advice!" Moore shouts to some hastening Wall Street trader who has just left his office.
"Don't make any more movies!" the man shoots back. Moore chuckles at that, but the last laugh is his. This, more than any other, is the movie they will wish he had never embarked on.

MYTH OF INHERENT SELFISHNESS
Dick:  Let’s reject the free marketers’ dogma of inherent human selfishness, just as we know that a propensity to violence in our species does not make it inevitable (see Fry, *The Human Potential for Peace*). Likewise, we should reject the absolute claim that the free market is more efficient because it is driven by self-regarding individuals. Self-interest is one of the most important human motivations, but we also possess many powerful other-regarding motives; such as, duty, sympathy, and love. In some people, at some times, these altruistic values trump self-seeking. And we urgently need more of those values in a world of predatory capitalism, endless wars, growing population, and increasing weather extremes.

END OF CAPITALISM NEWSLETTER #2