

From Haiti to Australia: The Horrendous Payback of Global Capitalism

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From the ongoing hell of Haiti's earthquake victims to the horror of families being swept to their deaths in Australia's catastrophic floods, one conclusion is clear despite the mainstream news media's usual myopic coverage: this is the perverse payback of the capitalist system. A system in which the private profit of an elite dominates all other needs of the common people – no matter how vital those needs are.

Decades of exploitation and neglect of social needs are now magnifying manifold the impacts from natural phenomena that are part and parcel of living in a physical world. Such events are inevitable, but the extent of destruction is not – only it is inevitable because of the perverse profit system that mandates death and destruction in the wake of its seismic injustice.

Whether it is profiteering by US transnational corporations from Haiti's sweatshop poverty or profiteering by Australian property developers and banks – all aided and abetted by supine governments that do the bidding for these entities by slashing taxes on the wealthy and giving free rein to their depredations – the appalling bottom line is that the vast majority of citizens are being abandoned more than ever in the face of the consequences. The same gargantuan scam of privatizing profits, socializing costs is evident elsewhere around the world as countless people die from freezing weather in North America and Europe simply because they can't afford to heat their homes or even live in a home.

Adding insult to injury is the pathetic, callous response of these servile governments as the increasing havoc of crony capitalism descends. Despite initial pledges of generous aid to Haiti from the US government, scarcely a cent has actually been sent as more than a million people in that Caribbean country continue to live in makeshift tents and thousands more die from cholera. (By contrast, the solidarity of ordinary Americans digging deep into their already threadbare pockets to send over \$1 billion in aid to Haiti is truly edifying – and a sign of hope for the coming necessary historic change.)

Meanwhile, the Australian government talks about handing out millions-of-dollars-worth of aid to tens of thousands of flood victims, compared with billions-of-dollars-worth of profits that were siphoned off by a coterie of bankers and developers who were allowed to build whole towns on high-risk lands. But through its crocodile tears this same government insists that federal budgets must still be balanced to placate the same financial oligarchy. Citizens are exhorted – via the usual media mouthpieces – to drum up “self-reliance”. One wonders what the mothers who had babies ripped from their arms by the torrents make of that scrap

of advice.

Among the insults from the global oligarchy is the absurd response to the Australian crisis from British prime minister David Cameron who announced that the United Kingdom stood ready to help its former colony. What? Help from a government that is forcing draconian austerity budgets on its populace and sending in police riot squads to bludgeon civil protest. Surely this is public relations at its most absurd. Or how about the report that Britain's Queen Elizabeth is making a personal (but undisclosed) donation to help her subjects in Queensland. How touching that this blue blood antecedent of the global oligarchy should dip into the £10 million or so a year that she sucks from the taxpayers.

So there you have it. The ordinary workers and citizens spend a lifetime being exploited, neglected, degraded and ripped off by the wealth-siphoning system – otherwise known as capitalism – and then when the walls of that same unsustainable system come crashing down, we are informed through a loudhailer by the rich and their puppets on safer ground: you are on your own.

But the truly heartening and inadvertent thing is that we are not alone. We are in vast and growing numbers, and through the mayhem and misery, we – the vast majority of ordinary people around the world – are realizing that the empire of capitalism is finished and its last vestiges of rotten corruption must be swept away and a new society needs to be built; one where social needs are served by economics and politics. It is a harsh and horrendous way to learn, but we are nevertheless learning.

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