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8-30-2015

August 30, 2015: Is There a World Beyond Capitalism?

Bruce Ledewitz

Duquesne University, ledewitz@duq.edu

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Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2015). August 30, 2015: Is There a World Beyond Capitalism?. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/958>

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Date: 2015-08-30T18:27:00.000-04:00

8/30/2015—Between Gar Alperovitz's DVD of his lecture, "the next American Revolution: beyond corporate capitalism & state socialism," and a program I attended last week here in Pittsburgh, I can begin to imagine a world beyond capitalism. Alperovitz is describing a different kind of economic system, but it is really an older one, that of worker cooperatives. And, in the program, some people who are doing this kind of thing here in town were describing their experiences. The difficult part is to imagine how a change takes place. After all, there are worker co-ops now and capitalism is as strong or stronger than ever. Why would not the economic landscape look the same as today in 200 years? Then there is the question whether it is worth replacing capitalism with cooperative ventures. Right now, most of the benefits and gains go to the top 1%. But, in the context in which we are speaking, that of business organization, the entrepreneur also takes all the risk. By that I mean that if the business goes under, the worker loses nothing but the next paycheck. In contrast, the owner should lose everything. There are advantages to such a system. It was also revealing that there was a great deal of hostility in the room concerning the new, sharing, economy. For most of the speakers, the new economy is just the way to turn workers into underpaid, self-employed units. Anyway, I need to contact Gar Alperovitz to find out what law schools are doing, if anything, to speed along the next American Revolution.