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In Solidarity With the Students and Workers of France

Kevin Carson

March 24, 2006

An open letter from Brad Spangler, in solidarity with demonstrators against the CPE in France:

Students and Workers of France,

Professor Roderick Long once wrote:

“When Marx called the French government ‘a joint-stock company for the exploitation of France’s national wealth’ on behalf of the bourgeois elite and at the expense of production and commerce (‘Class Struggles in France’), he was only echoing what libertarians had been saying for decades.”

France and all other nation-states remain so today. You and we live in a world where freedom and economic opportunity exist only at the sufferance of a political class that allows us only some small

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amount of them for sake of their own convenience and take the rest from us by force and coercion for sake of their own parasitism.

Under such circumstances, state-sponsored market liberalization is a cruel joke. The legislation you protest and rebel against seeks only to increase the latitude given your overseers, while maintaining the overall restrictions on your own liberty that, if abolished, would empower you to seek your own prosperity. We believe you and we would be very good at that, mixing both cooperation and peaceful competition, if we were not slaves.

For those reasons, the signers of this letter offer their solidarity to you and present themselves as a sample of a small tendency known as the Movement of the Libertarian Left (MLL), advocates of revolutionary market anarchism or “agorism”.

It is not the place of others to tell you how to wage your own revolution against tyranny. We have some suggestions, though — a version of dual power strategy called “counter-economics”. We humbly recommend MLL founder Samuel Edward Konkin III’s small book on agorism, counter-economics, and revolution “The New Libertarian Manifesto” in hopes you may find it useful or inspirational. It is available free online at: agorism.info

Signed, The Movement of the Libertarian Left
Agora! Anarchy! Action!

Brad Spangler Diane Warth Thomas L. Knapp
Adem Kupi Wally Conger J. Freeman Smith
[Kevin Carson]

I direct your attention especially to the passage calling “state-sponsored market liberalization” a “cruel joke,” intended only “to increase the latitude given your overseers...” The context of that remark, the legislation against which the French are rioting, is the CPE, a new law which allows employers to fire workers under 26 during a two-year trial period, without giving cause. As Brad says, it’s something no free market anarchist would object to in principle.

The French are fighting mad about it, though, and with good reason. The overall economic environment in France is so thoroughly statist that they quite reasonably expect no tangible benefit from this one small so-called market reform — and quite probably a fair amount of pain.

That phrase “to increase the latitude given your overseers” says it all. Start with a massively corporatist framework. Then tinker around the edges of the system to give more discretion to the usual suspects: landlords, employers, etc. And finally, call it “free market reform.” You know, the kind they like at ASI. Benjamin Tucker had something to say about that kind of “free market reformer,” over a century ago:

[Herbert Spencer] is making a wholesale onslaught on Socialism as the incarnation of the doctrine of State omnipotence carried to its highest power. And I am not sure he is quite honest in this. I begin to be a little suspicious of him. It seems as if he had forgotten the teachings of his earlier writings, and had become a champion of the capitalistic class... amid his multitudinous illustrations... of the evils of legislation, he in every instance cites some law passed ostensibly at least to protect labor, alleviating suffering, or

promote the people's welfare. But never once does he call attention to the far more deadly and deep-seated evils growing out of the innumerable laws creating privilege and sustaining monopoly (*Liberty*, May 17, 1884).