

# Twenty-Two Reasons Why American Working People Hate the State

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## Introduction

Why does the rightwing attack on “Big Government” increasingly resonate with working people?

Liberals claim wage and salaried workers are acting against their “self-interest”, citing government welfare programs like social security and unemployment payments. Progressives argue that workers hostile to the state are ‘racists”, “fundamentalists” and/or irrational, blinded by misplaced fears of threats to individual freedoms.

I will argue there are many sound, rational, material reasons for working people to be in revolt against the state.

## Twenty-Two Reasons Why Working People Hate the State

1.) Most wage and salaried workers pay disproportionately higher taxes than the corporate rich and therefore, millions of Americans work in the “underground economy” to make ends meet; thus subjecting themselves to arrest, and prosecution by the state for trying to make a living by avoiding onerous taxes.

2.) The state provides generous multi-year tax exemptions for corporations thus raising the tax rate for wage and salaried workers or eliminating vital services. The state’s inequitable tax revenue policies provoke resentment,.

3.) High taxes combined with fewer and more expensive public services, include growing costs of public higher education and higher health charges, feed popular antagonism and frustration that they and their children are being denied opportunities to get ahead and stay healthy.

4.) Many working people resent the fact that their tax money is being spent by the state on endless distant wars and to finance bailouts of Wall Street instead of investing it in reindustrializing America to create well paying jobs or to aid unemployed or underemployed workers unable to meet mortgage payments and facing eviction or homelessness. Most workers reject the inequitable budget expenditures that privilege the rich and deny the working people.

5.) Working people are appalled by the states hypocrisy and double standards in prosecuting “welfare cheats” for taking hundreds but overlooking corporate and banking swindlers, and Pentagon military cost overruns of hundreds of billions. Few working people

believe there is equality before the law, implicitly rejecting its claims of legitimacy.

6.) Many working class families resent the fact that the state recruits their sons and daughters for wars, leading to death and crippling injuries instead of public service jobs, while the children of the rich and affluent pursue civilian careers.

7.) The state subsidizes and upgrades public infrastructure – roads, parks and utilities in upper end neighborhoods while ignoring the demands for improvements of low income communities. Moreover the state locates contaminants – incinerators, high polluting industries etc. – in close proximity to workers housing and schools.

8.) The state holds the minimum wage below increases in the cost of living but encourages and promotes excess profits.

9.) Law enforcement is strict in high end neighborhoods and lax in low income communities resulting in higher rates of homicides and robberies.

10.) State imposes constraints on labor organizations struggling to secure wages and benefits and ignores corporate intimidation and arbitrary firings of workers. The state encourages corporate mergers and acquisitions leading to monopolies but discourages collective action from below.

11.) State economic institutions recruit policymakers from banks and financial houses who make decisions favoring their former employers, while wage and salaried workers are excluded and have no representation in economic policy positions.

12.) The state increasingly infringes on individual freedoms of social activists via the Patriot Act, arbitrary arrests, and grants impunity to police violence and punishes whistle blowers, rejecting citizen reviews with punitive powers.

13.) The state is highly responsive to and increases funding for the military-industrial complex, the relocation of MNC overseas and the high income Israel lobby while cutting funding for public investment in productive activity, applied technology and high tech job training for US workers and salaried employees and their children.

14.) State policies have increased inequalities between the top 10% and the bottom 50% for decades, turning the US into the industrial country with the greatest inequalities.

15.) State policies have led to declining living standards as wage and salary earners work longer hours with less job security, for a greater number of years before receiving pensions and social security and under greater environmental hazards.

16.) Elected state officials break most campaign promises to working people while fulfilling promises for the upper class/corporate banking elite.

17.) State officials pay greater attention and are more responsive to a few big financial contributors than to millions of voters.

18.) State officials are more responsive to payoffs from corporate lobbies protecting corporate profits than to the health, educational and income needs of the electorate.

19.) State-corporate links lead to deregulation, which results in contamination of the environment leading to the bankruptcy of small businesses and loss of many jobs, as well as the loss of recreational areas, spoiling rest and recreation for working people.

20.) The state increases the retirement age rather than increase the social security payments by the rich, with the result that workers in unhealthy work environments will enjoy fewer years of retirement in good health.

21.) The state judicial system is more likely to render favorable decisions to wealthy plaintiffs with high paid, politically connected lawyers against workers defended by inexperienced public defenders.

22.) State tax collectors are more likely to pursue wage and salary tax payers than upper class corporate executives employing accountants with expert knowledge in tax loopholes and tax free shelters.

## **Conclusion**

The state in its multiple activities, whether in law enforcement, military recruitment, tax and expenditure policies, environmental, pension and retirement legislation and administration, systematically favors the upper class and corporate elite against wage, salaried and small business people.

The state is permissive with the rich and repressive of the working and salaried employees, defending the privileges of the corporations and the impunity of the police state while infringing on the individual freedoms of the working people.

State policies increasingly extract more from the workers in terms of tax revenues and provide less in social payments, while lessening tax payments from Wall Street and inflating state transfers.

Popular perceptions of a hostile and exploitative state correspond to their everyday practical experiences; their anti-state behavior is selective and rational; most wage and salaried workers support social security and unemployment benefits and oppose higher taxes because they know or intuit that they are unfair.

Liberal academics and experts who claim workers are “irrational” are themselves practitioners of highly selective criticisms – pointing to (shrinking) state social benefits while ignoring the unjust, inequitable tax system and the biased behavior of the judicial, law enforcement, legislative and regulatory system.

State personnel, policy makers and enforcement officials are attentive to and responsive and deferential to the rich and hostile and indifferent or arrogant toward workers.

In summary the real issue is not that people are anti-state, but that the state is anti the majority of the people. In the face of the economic crises and prolonged imperial wars, the state becomes more brazenly aggressive in slashing living standards in order to channel record levels of public funds toward Wall Street speculators and the military industrial complex.

While liberal-progressives’ remain embedded in ‘neo-keynsian’ statist ideology, outmoded in the face of a state thoroughly embedded in corporate networks, the New Right’s “anti-

statest” rhetoric resonates with the feelings, experiences and reasoning of important sectors of wage and salaried workers and small businesspeople.

The attempt by liberals and progressives to discredit this popular revolt against the state, by pointing to the corporate financing and rightwing manipulation behind the anti-statist movement is doomed to failure, because it fails to deal with the profound injustices experienced by working people today in their daily dealings with a state, largely administered by liberal corporate-militarists. The absence of an anti-statist left has opened the door for the rise of a mass based ‘New Right’.

A ‘new left’ will emerge from civil society when it recognizes the pernicious exploitative role of the state, and is capable of dealing with the powerful ties between liberalism-militarism-corporate “welfarism”. The revival and expansion of the debilitated public welfare programs for working people can only take place by dismantling the current state apparatus, and that depends on a complete break with both corporate parties and an agenda that ‘revolutionizes’ the way in which politics works in America.

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