

Letters from our readers

27 November 2008

The following is a selection of recent letters sent to the World Socialist Web Site.

On “US auto union offering major contract concessions”

In your article discussing the auto union offering major contract concessions, it might be helpful, although I do not know how to access the information, to reveal the salaries and bonus packages available to those at the top of the organizational structure and the board of directors. Maybe they could make a few sacrifices. Right. Keep up the good work.

Mike H
Texas, USA
22 November 2008

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I applaud your call for strike action against the auto companies. You point out that those who voted to give \$700 billion to the banks are the same ones who are calling for the slashing of health benefits and wages. There is no transparency on how the bank bailout is being used—even after they have already received over \$290 billion. If billions of dollars are given to the Big Three, there will likewise be no transparency. The vast sums of money produced by the workers will simply be squandered. But the wages and health benefits will be cut and the historic gains obtained by decades of struggle will be eviscerated. In the case of retirees, the results could be catastrophic indeed.

JR
22 November 2008

On “Auto bailout provides pretext for assault on US workers”

I find it interesting that much is being made of the necessity of conditions being put on the automakers before even considering a bailout, when there was not only a lack of conditions, but an outcry at the very *idea* of imposing any on the CEOs and bankers who would be benefiting from the \$700 billion bailout.

Interesting that the entities that actually *produce* things are subject to such. And, of course, while it is unthinkable for the CEOs responsible for the massive economic implosion to be in any way deprived of their bonuses, the already-agreed-upon wages and job security (such as it was) of the workers at the auto plants is immediately threatened.

Class warfare? Don't mention it!

Christie MS
Oregon, USA
22 November 2008

On “Obama's ‘left’ cheerleaders and the right-wing transition”

As this article demonstrates, Obama has definitely hit the ground running ... in a predictable direction, for those who have been paying attention. Therein lies another contrast with Roosevelt that the *Nation* et al. fail to mention. FDR was quite content to sit on his hands for months after his election in 1932. For personal, political and public relations reasons, it was all the better to let the economy under the Hoover administration sink deeper and deeper, so that the new regime—and its hero—could ride in to the rescue. Obama, on the other hand, has shown his eagerness for a “seamless transition”—i.e. no change—from the Bush era to his.

One quibble. There was also a ‘seamless transition’ from Clinton to Bush, in the following sense: Clinton made Bush's agenda—assaults on the working class,

attacks on democratic rights, imperial aggression—easier. Bush didn't have to destroy "welfare as we know it" because Clinton had already done that. Bush didn't have to fabricate the "weapons of mass destruction" and chemical warfare accusations against Saddam Hussein in order to invade Iraq; Clinton already used them to justify the murderous sanctions. And Clinton's destruction of the former Yugoslavia facilitated and helped to legitimize the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. Other instances (telecom, anti-"terrorism" legislation, NAFTA, tax cuts, and on and on) abound. So it goes back more than eight years, as the WSWS has often pointed out.

Bad Cop screwed up again. Now it's Good Cop's turn.

Lary M

22 November 2008

On "US: University presidents' pay rises to record levels"

I have a full time staff position at a public university in the American South and have taught literature survey courses for the university at night—woefully underpaid and work is too hard—so I have two more class periods this term and I'm not going to do it anymore.

The president of this university does not even have a terminal degree (I do, he has MBA) and used to be the accountant for the school. He does well enough that he was recently able to donate \$3 million to the school. The disparity is ridiculous, and part-timers are truly wage slaves. Were I not a full-time staff employee I would have no benefits at all, so I'm lucky.

Many college presidents think of themselves as CEOs and operate on this premise, expecting wild compensation (like CEOs) regardless of their performance—and the most stellar performance should not even rate a fraction of what they make, not even in an alternative universe.

I'm tired of shoring up their academic plutocracy with my slave labor, and I need not even mention how pinched students are, and the ludicrous debts they leave school with, to enter the meat grinder of the capitalist "free market" economy.

Rob M

24 November 2008

On "Death of Detroit firefighter: victim of a city's social decay"

Mr. Porter,

Thanks very much for this account of this heartbreaking tragedy. I read the WSWS on occasion, and have done so more frequently after the story about the fire in Highland Park. I have lived in Michigan my whole life, in Ann Arbor and East Lansing before it, and I never would have imagined in my less cynical days that such gut-wrenching tragedy could happen in America. I have no idea what will happen to the region, but it appears that whatever it is, it's nothing good. Washington has made it clear that they could care less about us and sees the region as a proxy for the UAW, whose membership garners an amazing amount of hatred from the political/financial class. Through the disembowelment of the US auto industry every worker's interests are about to be sacrificed on the altar of Wall Street.

Mike T

Michigan, USA

25 November 2008

On "A tale of two bailouts"

Excellent article. Thank you for the sharp analysis of these surprisingly striking earmarks of barbaric class dictatorship.

Jeff W

Pennsylvania, USA

25 November 2008



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