

# Letters from our readers

3 February 2009

*On "Clinton, Republicans agree to deregulation of US financial system"*

Man did you have it right in 1999! It's unfortunate your audience wasn't larger and more influential!

David R

30 January 2009

*On "A letter on cutbacks at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra"*

Mr. White,

Thank you for publishing this story. A while ago, I attended a performance of *Madame Butterfly* at the Detroit Opera House. I was primarily there to accompany my parents, who are avid opera enthusiasts. Before the performance, which I enjoyed immensely, the director of the Detroit Opera Company gave some remarks expressing his gratitude for the sponsorship that they had received from the auto companies in the past, and at the same time noted that it was unlikely that this would continue, and subtly, that it was unlikely the opera itself could continue. There was a haunting poignancy to it all, much like you've described at the DSO. It was much like seeing a first and last performance at the same time. Your statement regarding the prostration of American life, cultural and otherwise, at the altar of private profit, could not be more correct.

I would also like to thank you for your coverage of events here in Southeast Michigan ("Detroit area electricians protest job cuts"). The situation is as bad as I've ever seen, and hopelessness and indifference are becoming routine in our population. I feel that this does not make national news in the mainstream media because it exhibits the basic fallacy of the market-oriented economy: there is nothing that prevents hard working, conscientious people from facing adversity at the whim of the privileged.

Thanks as always for your great work,

Mike T

Michigan, USA

30 January 2009

*On "Defiance: Those who did not 'wait for God'"*

Fine review—a film I would recommend everyone see. As you mention, there are some distractions and the pace does sometimes lag, but it's so well done overall and has an epic subject—one, that as you also mention, should/could be instructive to our own times. The acting is phenomenal, the visuals stunning.

Rob M

31 January 2009

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The story of these partisans was covered by the BBC some years ago in a series about outdoor survival. These partisans lived off the forest, cooked without producing smoke and some survive to this day, heroes all.

Phil

UK

1 February 2009

*On "Gloom, perplexity, divisions dominate World Economic Forum in Davos"*

For once, the world is in agreement that its economic systems have produced unprecedented challenges that its financial systems and nations created for themselves. These are historical times, and this moment is a pivotal one. The world, now interlocked, will rise or sink together. Either the spirit of cooperation will solve this problem through an evolutionary leap or humankind will resort to its bestial self yet again and wage world wars against one another. Time will tell. But, for sure, the "old world" will be replaced—with or without war.

M Bucci

1 February 2009

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I was especially taken by the penultimate paragraph of your article, in which you stated:

"Within the existing economic and political system,

the only future is one of increasing poverty and repression and the growth of national antagonisms leading inevitably, as in the last great depression, to the horrors of global war."

It made me realize that the capitalist system and our so-called civilization have learned nothing from past events. Didn't Marx say something about dreadful occurrences appearing the first time as tragedy and the second time as farce? And didn't George Santayana warn that those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat it?

Proof of both these statements is in front of our eyes.

Carolyn

California, USA

31 January 2009

*On "Novelist John Updike dead at 76: Was he a 'great novelist'?"*

I'm not sure that Updike's small-town background and coming of age in the Cold War period should be offered as excuses for his political positions. In many ways the 60s were the end of the 50s, a harvesting of seeds sown by the intellectuals in the post-World War II period. Updike's educational advantages put him in a position to see that he had choices. He was very well rewarded by the capitalist publishing industry for the choices that he made. There was a purge of liberal arts programs in many American universities in the 1980s. By the time those departments were reinstated, the progressives were gone, replaced by technocrats. Today's university students have far less information about the left as an alternative to capitalism than Updike did. Throughout his career, he received a great deal of support from the literary establishment, while writers whose work countered the mind-numbing propaganda of imperialism plodded on in relative isolation. Yes, he wrote well and with sensitivity. But it is easier to spot a nemesis who wears the bad rather than the good guy's hat.

Maureen

1 February 2009



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