Letters on Obama and the American ruling class

10 February 2009

*On "*Obama announces token executive pay limits*"*

It would seem that what "we" really don't disparage is unbridled greed and hubris.

Peter E
5 February 2009

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Executive pay limits for bankers expands into the whole issue of private enrichment for people who are supposedly stewards of a public trust. The fact it's a hot topic shows that deeper suspicion on this critical and wider-ranging issue is out there amongst the people. It would be interesting to see an article relating banker pay limits to Marx's principle that elected leaders should be paid no more than an average worker.

Matt W
5 February 2009

*On "*The American ruling class*"*

This article clears things up for me. Thank you. I couldn't put it exactly into words myself, but these are the reasons I see Obama's popularity falling like a SCUD and why some of my less informed friends are against this bailout. I would love to side with Obama, but his choices to fill his cabinet confirmed for me that he's not with us, he's against us.

PK
6 February 2009

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Mr. Eley confirms what we regular users of WSWS expected of Obama and his crew when it became obvious that he had prepared himself to be bought by the USA's power elite all of his adult life. Selling out to the establishment is the only market for a skilled and successful politician in the USA. Its money flows freely and constantly. One must also remember that the establishment will and does destroy any elected official who doesn't do the establishment's will.

Larry L
6 February 2009

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Your comparison of America's plutocracy with the French aristocracy of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette—in their scandals, mindless accumulation of wealth, monopoly of power and tasteless display of that power and wealth at a time of crisis and misery for the masses—is very helpful indeed. This is especially true when the teaching of history has all but disappeared from our schools, and young people have no idea how the American and French Revolution came about directly from a century of wars fought over the American continent, its wealth, strategic advantages and trade routes. It was these wars which devoured the wealth of France and Britain and brought into being the criminal capitalist, coming first from a section of the aristocracy then from the middle class which wanted in and was willing to "pay to play" in the language of current political appointments.

The French and British aristocracy working through the monopolies and the new middle class through joint stock companies hugely benefited from the misery of war and the plunder of colonies, just as the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Middle East have given unimaginable wealth to today's capitalist gangsters who run hedge-funds, banks or war related industries. Meanwhile, we are saddled with trillions of dollars of debt and an economic system on life-support, in part because of the expense of wars fought for no discernible moral purpose other than greed.

The American government is saddled with immense debt which could easily be managed if all those who have plundered at will at accumulated billions of private wealth share only a little, even if to preserve themselves from those who are, as we are all becoming, "enraged," a term of the French Revolution. You are

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quite right. The American plutocracy in displaying the astonishing indifference, cruelty and naked display of wealth and power is a mirror of its ancestors when this cruel economic system whose death rattle we are hearing was first brought to life. It is not hard to see where all this is leading.

AL
Toronto, Canada
6 February 2009

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I think that people often fail to grasp just how much overkill there is in the salaries of the elite bankers. In the working class, there is a line where you make enough—enough to afford decent housing, have reliable transportation, nutritious food to eat and are able to afford decent health care. Sometimes the gap between what we make and what we need may be $5,000 a year, sometimes $10,000.

My point is that those bankers are already ridiculously above the line where they have every single necessity taken care of and have every ridiculous luxury they could long for taken care of. Just the difference between what they need to live and the $500,000 salary cap would be enough to bring 90 working families up to where they ought to be. The leap that the bankers want to $18 million would be enough to bring 3,500 working families to a decent standard of living.

There are working people who do make it to that line and beyond (typically referred to as "the middle class"), and I think that they are the ones who are most apt to forget about their working neighbors who have not. They believe that the bankers should be allowed to make as much as possible. Until we can convince this vast swath of the middle class that coming up short of that line can mean the ruination of a family, we'll continue to come up short of the outrage needed to oust the politicians like Obama who support this financial abomination.

Troy J
Arkansas, USA
6 February 2009

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At 63, I never thought there would be a time in my life when I would agree with this essay. Now I do ... with the caveat that any action must be scrupulously nonviolent in the manner of Gandhi and Dr. King.

The "many" are on a crash course towards slavery, mediated by the engineered collapse of the current nationalist economic system to lubricate the rise of globalism, transnational corporatist neo-fascism and the separation of all peoples into "haves" and "have nots." The phony war on terror is just an instrument of this process.

Sometimes I'm glad I'm old. I just fear for my children and man(un)kind. I think I'll listen to Billy Braggs, sing "The Internationale," and try to cheer up.

Hank G
6 February 2009

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