

Letters from our readers

24 March 2009

On "Thousands line up at Detroit job fair"

The predicament that workers face in the US is illustrated so well in the responses that the SEP team brought out in the article. While Detroit and Michigan may have higher rates of unemployment than the rest of the country, it is just a question of degree. The same conditions and fear and apprehension—to say nothing of anger—are pervasive across the US. And as one of the workers perceptively noted, citing soaring unemployment in Japan, it is global in scope. The big lie that the "free-market economy" of capitalism is superior to a world socialist, planned economy economy is being exposed daily as a sham, perpetuated by the pandering pundits of the media and academia. That myth—of the wonders of the "free market" and the concomitant "evils" of socialism—is ripe for exposure, and the SEP and ICFI are taking on the challenge head-on. As the WSWs has pointed out, paraphrasing Marx and Engels, the spectre of socialism is haunting the ruling class! One hopes that workers like those interviewed and many others can be brought to the Ann Arbor and the other regional conferences.

DF

New York, USA

13 March 2009

On "More than 5 million Americans collecting jobless benefits"

Don't forget that the unemployment figures don't include those workers not receiving their benefit checks anymore. Those whose benefits have run out cannot be tracked and are therefore not included in the official numbers. If you add in the workers who do work full-time jobs and still can't make it, it's a much more serious situation.

As a single parent with no debts other than my house and car, I may soon lose my house because my salary isn't sufficient to afford the relatively low mortgage payments I have; and despite the new "home retention" programs out there, Bank of America has not been interested in helping this worker.

Jeff C

Texas, USA

13 March 2009

On "Iraqi journalist jailed for throwing shoes at Bush"

The Iraqi journalist who was jailed for throwing a shoe at President Bush should be given a medal and be made the new president of Iraq, not thrown in the jail. Furthermore, he was acting out in good faith, believing that President Bush is a war criminal and throwing a shoe at him was representing all the children and victims that the President killed. I feel that he should be given a pardon and be made a hero for his actions. Bush should be in jail.

Paul M

Washington, USA

14 March 2009

On "Britain: Right-wing campaign waged against freed Guantanamo detainee"

The persistent questions about ex-prisoners' activities in Afghanistan imply an excuse for torturing them. As a matter of law, however, both domestic and international, prisoners (and all other persons) are protected against torture, even if they were torturers themselves before arrest or capture!

Bruce TW

Ohio, USA

19 March 2009

On "What lies behind the latest school shooting in Germany?"

Thank you for your sensitive and insightful analysis of the dreadful events of last week. It is truly a shame that we cannot view these horrible developments in a larger context; until we do, the greater atomization of the population can only give rise to more violence of this sort, I fear. While the Virginia Tech incident was certainly the most grisly of the recent round of shootings, I am unsure if it is the worst in American history. In 1927, a man by the name of Andrew Kehoe detonated a large quantity of dynamite in a school in Bath, Michigan, leaving 45 dead (mostly children) and 58 injured. It is thought that this

was due to his farm being foreclosed, and the property taxes that in part led to this disaster. I know this because it is near where I grew up, and even many years later, this small town is distinguishable for how common drug/alcohol abuse, unemployment and general hopelessness seem pervasive.

Mike T

Michigan, USA

17 March 2009

The storing up of violent reaction to the catastrophe that is modern society was visible in the comments responding to an article on the Smirking Chimp web site. In an article about the financial crisis, the author of the article advocated that people should all get a gun, in anticipation of social violence. The comments on the article that followed all concerned various types of weapons and how effectively they could be used against, for instance, "home invaders" that the writer believed would soon be attacking people and robbing them. I was appalled at the violence expressed in the comments and the ease with which the writers imagined committing violence against others. This mentality may be bubbling beneath the surface in more people than we think.

The sadness of this response is that these people see no way other than some kind of "survivalist" existence in their futures. They see no political remedy at all. Their answer is to stock the cellar with weapons and wait for an attack. It is very depressing.

All the more reason to educate people about socialism. There can be a better future. A socialist future.

Carolyn

California, USA

17 March 2009

On "New York Times columnist who demanded concessions from auto workers, 'makes case' for AIG bonuses"

While the payment of the AIG bonuses is obviously abhorrent at many different levels, the public anger only plays into the overall misdirection strategy of the Obama administration. With the state-controlled media in the lead, as usual, the seething public anger over the transfer of wealth from the working class to the ruling elite was given an easy target to direct their wrath, young intellectuals getting million-dollar bonuses. Demonizing these employees is really only one level less absurd than the public turning on the autoworkers. Obviously, the injustice of both situations pales in comparison to the real theft, in AIG's isolated case, the other \$159 billion not

spent on bonuses, and the \$8 trillion in total guarantees, capital infusions, and asset purchases overall, which at the end of the day effectively bails out investors in failed industries—investors who willingly assumed risk with the objective of earning a return, investors who when the sharp side of the risk sword runs toward them demand those losses be socialized. The current outrage is no doubt a welcome relief to the ruling class, far better to go after the AIG employees than the real criminals. It's not hard to see through the big lie here—misdirect the overwhelming social tension and anger towards any group convenient. This was also the strategy behind the criminal ranting by CNBC in the commodity pits against people getting foreclosed on.

Dale K

Hawaii, USA

18 March 2009

On "Obama defends Wall Street as anger grows over bonuses, bailouts"

Thank you for a wonderful article. You have helped to expose an abominable fraud. I am so disappointed in the Obama administration, and it is so dishonest of them to say "we did not know." Do they take the American people for complete and total simpletons and fools? Hmmm.

I would like to point out to you however, that what has happened with AIG and the other bailouts goes against the basic tenets of both socialism and capitalism. You explained the socialist position very well. But it should be pointed out that capitalists also opposed what has happened here. Giving government money to incompetent and failed businesses to continue their incompetence and failure is wrong!

Blake B

19 March 2009



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