

Letters from our readers

11 June 2009

On “US Fed Chairman demands plan to cut social programs”

This is all very frightening for those of us who are 60 years old or older and were once thinking of retirement. It is bad enough that I lost my job three months ago and am now dependent upon state unemployment insurance that very well may run out (I live in California, a state whose budget is disintegrating). Now I listen to people like Bernanke blithely declaring that, according to the masters of the ruling class, the government can no longer “afford” what he refers to as “entitlements.” Well, yes, I feel entitled to life, Mr. Bernanke. And what you are telling me is that you can't afford my life, so I must therefore drop dead, along with several million of my fellow workers around the world!

This keeps me awake at night while the bankers and other parasites no doubt sleep very well. After all, they have no conscience.

Carolyn
California, USA
4 June 2009

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I think the massive corporate welfare and the bloated military budget should be the first cuts and they should be *drastic*. One cut should be Bernanke's job.

Laurie
4 June 2009

On “Questions abound in aftermath of Air France crash”

Dear Stefan,

Thank you for this dose of reality. I would like to amplify your comments by pointing out that the fly-by-wire nature of the Airbus 330 is not an optional feature—it is mandatory. Together with the 320 and the Boeing 777, these are the first civilian airliners whose only connection between the cockpit and the control

surfaces is electronic. There are no cables or hydraulic connections providing backup—if the connections are severed or the control computers die, or if electrical power is fully knocked out, then there is no way to control the aircraft.

The rationale is weight and economy—the same cost pressures that you outline. Safety has been sacrificed to operating costs. The manufacturers describe with rapturous terms the quad-redundant data connections between the cockpit and the control computers and control surfaces, but by their nature fly-by-wire systems tend to degrade not gracefully, but catastrophically in the event of electrical failures or transients that disable the electronics.

Redundant hydraulics or cable systems with electrical or hydraulic assist, on the other hand, degrade gracefully to failures and permit some control to be maintained or regained by the pilots.

The race to the bottom in operating costs was the sole impetus for manufacturers to lobby for years for certifying requirements to be relaxed to enable these designs, which cut very substantial weight from airplanes and also permit more efficient but more unstable aerodynamic designs (because a computer can play an active role in stabilizing the aircraft).

Cheers and regards,

Don B
New York, USA
4 June 2009

On “Obama in Cairo: a new face for imperialism”

Thank you. Sign my name in agreement. A new face, cardboard, smiling, and propped up by finance capitalism, a front man who hired the best Wall Street consigliere's it could spare before they slither back to applause and reward.

Michael S
California, USA
5 June 2009

Kudos to Patrick Martin and the WSWs for a

splendid article: I already suspected that Obama was a fraud and I am now more convinced than ever that he is—at least from our perspective, if not from the perspective of his sponsors and manipulators!

When mentioning 9/11 however, I am puzzled by your ambiguous position on the matter: You are too knowledgeable not to be aware that it was a heinous inside job (with assistance from the CIA's Saudi and Egyptian patsies) by the very powers sitting in Washington DC who have selected/groomed Obama for his role of emperor with sheep clothing!

Anthony JGY

Italy

5 June 2009

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This is a brilliant and very clear article on the true nature of US imperialism and its new face, which represents the same predatory interests of the most ruthless ruling elite on the planet. They should be afraid of world revolution!

Chris R

New Zealand

5 June 2009

On “Stella D’Oro strikers rally as New York unions continue to isolate strike”

Thank you for this article on the Stella D’Oro strike. Not surprisingly, though the union I belong to is an adjunct of the AFL-CIO, this is the first I’d heard of it. As is typical, the union has made no effort to solidarize workers across the country, let alone internationally. For all the enormous resources they have, they do not use them for actually organizing labor.

It is clear from the people you spoke with—both employees of the factory and supporters—that the entire working class is, as usual, taking the hit. It also shows that, contrary to many on the “left,” we workers know what’s going on. We’re not just a bunch of blindly accepting puppets. In every field, from housecleaner to electrician, we are being squeezed to fiscal death. There is growing realization of this.

Christie S

Oregon, USA

6 June 2009

On “Australia: NSW Labor government presses ahead with electricity privatization”

This privatisation fire sale must stop. The parliament and the people of NSW have already rejected the

Iemma/Costa privatisation agenda. We can’t let Joe Tripodi and Nathan Rees get away with bringing it back from the dead.

Lionel K

6 June 2009

On “Irish child abuse: The Ryan Report cover-up”

Thanks for this article. It is the first time I’ve seen the Report described (accurately) as a “cover-up”.

I served a sentence in Artane (1961-63, aged 13 to 15), when the prison was probably at its worst for violence and prisoner abuse of all kinds. I escaped from the prison and from Ireland in 1963. The Irish authorities issued a warrant for my arrest and tried their level best to recapture me. I evaded them, and I have lived in forced exile from Ireland ever since, unable to return because of a well-founded fear of persecution.

It is true that the Ryan Report goes easy on the Christian Brothers, et al—by failing to name them, for example. But the whole purpose of the Laffoy-Ryan Commission was to transfer blame from the State onto that very convenient scapegoat, the clerical jailors.

The main human rights crime against the child prisoners was committed by the State. My own research shows that about 90 per cent of the inmates were illegally imprisoned (as indeed I was). That fact is not mentioned in the Ryan Report, nor is it mentioned by any Irish journalist. There is a taboo on that subject in the Irish media.

Everyone in Ireland has known for the past ten years that the Laffoy-Ryan Commission was a fraudulent inquiry, but nobody dared to say so. And there has been little criticism of the Ryan Report in the Irish media.

Yours sincerely,

Jim B

England

6 June 2009



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