

# Letters from our readers

7 July 2009

## *On "The US and the Honduran coup"*

Thanks very much for this clear-eyed assessment of the situation in Honduras. The coverage of the WSWs on this matter, and a shocking number of other ones, gives remarkable insight on the travesty that is the privately-held corporate media, in the US especially. The operation of an independent, unbiased and free media is fundamental to democratic rights and government transparency, which are inextricably linked. Is it any wonder that with the erosion of these standards in the modern media that our democracy has followed in lock-step? Another sad truth that cannot be ignored is the parallels that exist between Obama's administration and its predecessors with respect to its blatantly imperialist aims. One can only hope that the political signal resonates loud and clear, and the future will find us rid of these two despicable parties.

Mike T

USA

1 July 2009

## *On "Corrupt election campaign unfolds in US-occupied Afghanistan"*

Regarding James Cogan's excellent summary on the Afghan elections: Dostam didn't just "seal hundreds of Taliban prisoners inside shipping containers and left them to die in blistering heat."

He also starved to death several thousands more over the succeeding months. In the late spring of 2002, some survivors were observed by the EU special representative for Afghanistan in conditions that, he said, were like the photos of starved dead prisoners at Buchenwald at the end of World War II.

When I contacted the Red Cross in Geneva about this in February 2002, I was given the runaround.

Carlo C

3 July 2009

## *On "The co-conspirators of Bernard Madoff"*

It's like there's this conscientious effort on the part of the corporate media to deny what is right in front of all of our faces. I was just discussing the Madoff affair with someone who remarked that Madoff's wife is now the most hated person in America, and I remember thinking, "His wife?!" What a convenient scapegoat! Who cares about his wife when it is preposterous to imagine that the cooperating big investors and hedge fund managers, not to mention top Chase Manhattan officials, were not complicit in his scams? The media, however,

would prefer you think of Madoff as just another "lone wolf"—sort of like George Tiller's assassin or the neo-Nazi who killed a guard at the Holocaust Museum. There is no examination of the milieu surrounding such criminals. I feel like I shouldn't have to say thank you for pointing out glaring facts that should be the duty of any responsible journalist. But, since few seem to be doing it, thanks.

Loren P

North Carolina, USA

2 July 2009

## *On "Financial czar threatens to throw Detroit public schools into bankruptcy"*

Once again, the media has betrayed Detroit's proud heritage of labor resistance in the Robert Bobb/DPS case. Bobb has been lionized by the local media as a hard-nosed reformer who is "getting to the bottom of this." It is reminiscent of some mid-90s movie about a tough-love principal going into an urban high school and "cleaning it up." Bobb has been given a difficult task, but as everybody knows there are two components to any budget, revenues and expenses, and in the mind of the local media, apparently only the latter is up for discussion. Many of the kids in DPS face substantial difficulties that their suburban counterparts do not in their non-school life. It is exactly for this reason that the class sizes and staff availability should be greater in these schools. Unfortunately the opposite is occurring. It is astounding that this is occurring in Michigan right now, where two major problems are unemployment and insufficient revenues to support state functions. A major contributor to the state budget woes is the operation of the prison system, which will undoubtedly have more entrants in direct proportion to the neglect of the public school system.

Mike T

Michigan, USA

1 July 2009

## *On "Supreme Court upholds white firefighters' discrimination claims"*

One cannot help but admire the evil brilliance of the Nixon administration. I don't think any other ruling class program has been as successful as affirmative action in: a) pitting one section of the working class against another; b) pitting one section of blacks against another; c) pitting different oppressed groups against each other; d) providing endless grist for the right wing's resentment mill and e) the crowning touch—being

hailed and defended almost unanimously by liberals, the left and all who consider themselves progressive. Pure genius!

As the WSWS has previously pointed out, the underlying premise of affirmative action is that, though there are virtually endless resources for making war, maximizing profits and amassing private wealth, there just aren't enough for providing decent education and jobs for everyone, so we all have to compete for crumbs. In other words, in the interest of "fairness" and "justice," somebody's going to get shafted. That somebody ends up being the entire working class. Nowhere is the bankruptcy of reformism within the capitalist framework so glaringly obvious.

When I first read the WSWS analysis of affirmative action, it cleared up years of confusion. It's but one proof of the power of its perspective.

Lary M

30 June 2009

*On "What is behind the media's venomous attack on striking Toronto city workers"*

Toronto's newspapers have always been against the workers. There is nothing new in that. The worrying thing is if Windsor can keep its municipal workers out for three months and counting, can Toronto do the same?

Organized labour has never been so weak as they are now. Labour's friends, the few they still have left, are not willing to publicly stand beside them.

H. Marshall

30 June 2009

*On "Obama administration preparing order for indefinite detentions"*

Isn't this where the bourgeois entered history all liberty, equality, fraternity and a stand against feudal absolutism? I expected little from Obama, a smooth mask on problems the American elites cannot solve. As for the European elites, they will, in my judgment, engage more and more with their Russian counterparts to gain access to a wide range of resources that can be safely exploited—and to position themselves for a further decline in American economic and state power.

The American Empire is now seen as a constant drain on the productive capacity of its core state. The inability of the agents of the capitalist state to discriminate between value formation and claims to value (as in *Finance Capital*) has had a literally shocking effect on the proponents of capitalism in both the USA and Britain.

Chris

Ireland

29 June 2009

*On "US state budget crises fuel massive spending cuts"*

Your coverage of the capitalist crisis in California has been excellent. You have explained how the wealthy have their state force workers to pay for the crisis with huge social service cuts, job cuts and wage losses.

The Democrats and Republicans work their good cop-bad cop

deceptions to fool the workers and others. The politicians are a tag team to impose the needs of boosting capital, improve sagging profit rates, and to make sure the ruling class gets its whopping dividends!

Small resistance groups are forming in California from below, but these are new, have to deal with the deceit of the union bureaucracies and the Democrats, and the bosses' Media too.

Worthy fights to take up, but not easy at all!

Neil

California, USA

1 July 2009

*On "Dispensable people"*

Your studied review of *The Unit* appeared in tandem with a short review in the *Washington Post*, which is of interest for its contrast in depth and quality with yours.

I'm left wondering if Holmqvist presented any depiction of what life was like in her dystopia for those upstanding citizens who did bear children. Or do novelists not write about human relations (besides their own) anymore?

The book's setting as you described it reminds me a bit of Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, particularly in the author's imagined future so fixated upon and structured around reproduction and fertility. Similar, too, at their bottom, is the seeming fear and revulsion of the authors toward those filthy lower-depths of that uncreative, ignorant, reproducing working class.

I find it difficult to identify with an imagination that would consider it conceivable that an aging middle-class intellectual would be bested out of a pancreas by, as the *Washington Post* quoted, "a student nurse with four kids." The balance of forces is offensively turned upside down for our novelist class.

NG

30 June 2009



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