

Letters from our readers

17 September 2009

On "Profiting on death"

An article I read indicated that Goldman Sachs was in the early stage of developing an index fund so that investors could bet on these transactions without investing in them directly. The media no longer shuns referring to these transactions as betting. In our financial markets, betting is legal. When a country stops making and selling real products and makes and sells "made up stuff" it is doomed.

Bob R
Florida, USA
10 September 2009

I suppose these heartless vultures can't lose on a situation like this. If you want to speed up your return you just have to share some of your gain with someone who murders the insured person.

Jay
11 September 2009

On "Gillard's 'Teach for Australia': a corporate-backed assault on teaching"

Here you've really hit on how Teach for America screws students and takes advantage of idealistic young college grads, holding the promise of that postgraduate degree before them the way a dirt farmer dangles a carrot in front of a mule. The reality is that many will leave the program before their two years are up empty-handed, bitter and burned out and not even understanding why they failed. Worse, some will go on to make a "career" for themselves by continuing to bang their heads against the wall in the same manner.

The path to becoming a certified teacher is much more arduous than one might think, requiring countless hours of pedagogical theory and methods courses as well as all-important classroom experience. At first I told myself that the demand for teachers would provide some job security to make up for the low salary, but as North Carolina, like many states, takes a wrecking ball to public education, I have had to wave goodbye to even that cold comfort.

TFA is a wholly inadequate stop-gap measure to prop up a collapsing system with cannon fodder, and a sublime example of how the system punishes people for trying to

help others. If there is one facet of US society, and now it seems Australian society too, that screams out for a socialist alternative, it is education.

Loren P
North Carolina, USA
14 September 2009

On "Economic crisis devastates museums across the US"

This article demonstrates the folly of turning over the functioning of art institutions to the "market." I was just in London and the majority of the great museums there are free. The National Gallery, the National Portrait Gallery, the Tate Modern and the British Library were all free. And these institutions possess the most remarkable art and literary collections one can imagine, all freely available to the public. This is because these institutions are supported by the government. They do also ask for voluntary donations of a few pounds by people who can afford to make them, but they are not mandatory. Why in the world cannot the United States government support the arts in this way?

The answer is the same as the answer to the question "Why don't Americans have free health care?" and "What is happening to the public school system?" Corporatocracy has taken over everything in the United States. If an institution cannot be run at a profit, then it is jettisoned. The capitalist system has much to answer for but, unfortunately, not enough people are asking the questions.

Thanks to the WSWs for this article.

Carolyn
California, USA
12 September 2009

On "Israel: 200,000 families need help to survive"

What happened to all the money that the U.S. taxpayer gives involuntarily to Israel? There are those who say that Israel is a Marxist/Socialist state. Who are they trying to kid?

David G
12 September 2009

On "US Supreme Court set to ease rules on corporate campaign cash"

Sadly, elections in the US have become less about democracy and more about the election/campaign industry. The perpetual campaign, like the perpetual war, has become

a key component of the 24-hour newscycle. It's all about a multi-billion dollar industry involving not only the political parties and candidates, but the lobbyists, media, consultants, advertising agencies and untold thousands whose jobs now depend upon this industry, an industry that the US is trying to export to other countries, and who thus have a vested interest in limiting any controls on the amount of money spent on political campaigns. And with what looks like the probability that Supreme Court will strike down the modest campaign finance rules that currently exist, the floodgates of money will pour into this industry. And various business concerns will drop any pretense of trying to influence politicians and instead will simply run and fund their own candidates, much like was somewhat common in the 19th Century when industry executives would often be elected to public office.

MZ
Maryland, USA
12 September 2009

On "The pretext for a historic shift in world politics"

I completely agree with your analysis of the 9/11 atrocities. One can interpret this infamous event in history as the 21st Century's Pearl Harbor. On this dark day in September 2001, America was handed the "Golden Ticket" to stride the international stage with full aggression: just as in December 1941. The Middle East oil has always been a key target for the USA. Eisenhower famously made clear the strategic and economic importance of the Middle East for America. One thing I can honestly say that the Americans did not anticipate with the post 9/11 era was the way in which the other of aggressive countries of the world would flex their muscles in such ostentation and without care of the infallible view of the US, e.g. Russia, China, Israel etc.

Derek R
Scotland
13 September 2009

On "France's 'national subscription' prepares massive handout to big business"

A most useful statement on the state of things in France. Your readers will be interested to know that the CFDT has long been the country's scab union and the darling of the PS. And a comment in the press prior to Strauss-Kahn's nomination by Sarkozy to the post of head of the IMF stated that S-K and Rocard had a secret agenda: impose Tony Blair's policies in France.

These policies are being implemented by Sarkozy, but there is still much opposition from the electorate, which persists in defending public services and remains hostile to the bailing out of banks with public funds. And it is only fair to point out that the union *Force Ouvrière* has for months

been calling for a national strike rather than mere demos to combat the loss of jobs and the sort of re-distribution of wealth to the wealthy that your article discusses. But FO and SUD have little chance of success, now that the CGT has joined forces with the CFDT to carve up (in every sense of the term) the work force.

Sincerely,
Reynold H
Paris, France
14 September 2009

On "Right-wing march in Washington against Obama health care plan"

Granted, the Republicans have adopted some fascistic rhetoric. But party slandering is not new in American politics. It has always been around since the emergence of the Federalists and the Democratic-Republican Party. What I am not sure of is why the present political regime is exceptional comparing to what existed in the past?

Douglas
14 September 2009

On "Demands to curtail war reporting after raid to free New York Times journalist"

I've wandered many countries and have found that (with a translator) my job is always to report what's happening. Getting embedded, without some half-assed Communications Officer constantly looking over your shoulder is a break not frequently offered.

The rescue was absolutely uncalled for—a terrible mistake. But perhaps it can be a useful lesson. In the future, let the war correspondents do their job. Consider them War Reporters. Provide slack and support. Enough of this gung-ho, shoot-from-the-hip Wild West crap.

JG
Kansas, USA
14 September 2009



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