

# Letters from our readers

22 October 2009

*On "Workers expose GM payoff to Canadian auto union officials"*

I work at the Oshawa plants and the same thing happened here; every union rep got a skilled trades pension and buy out amount. Disgusting.

Jim

19 October 2009

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These two men should continue with their investigation, as Oshawa local 222 has done the same thing. Non-skilled union committeemen are now being paid the skilled rate for the last year. Think you should expand your story now!

Bruch H

19 October 2009

*On "The two Americas"*

In a striking example of the "two Americas", the *Financial Times* ran a story last week describing how Washington DC was "thriving" amid the recession, with a relatively low (official) unemployment rate and an influx of stimulus money. Among those quoted was the manager of a new boutique hotel, who said that DC was the best place in the world to be opening a high-end business right now.

The article below that on the same page quoted the manager of another business in DC, of a company that hires people—frequently homeless—to stand in line for up to 30 hours for "public" seats at Congressional hearings. Minutes before the hearings start, the hired line-standers relinquish their place to lobbyists who want to be close to the negotiations. The article states, "...applications for the job, which pays \$10-\$20 an hour, have surged as unemployment has risen. 'We've been inundated with folks wanting to stand in line for a living. It's actually a little unsettling.'"

Two Americas indeed!

David M

Iowa, USA

19 October 2009

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I cannot believe that the banks are still paying *billion* dollar bonuses. If I borrowed money, did not make the payments, spent it on luxuries, I would be charged 29-35 percent interest, late fees, over the limit fees, items re-possessed, my home would be in foreclosure (If I still had one) and my bank account seized. If I took money under fraudulent circumstances, I would be in jail. The banks have *our* money! We are cutting coupons, my grandson had to be removed from the only school that has ever been able to get through to him. He is fifteen and is finally learning to read! (Now I am crying) Yet these bas\*\*\*\*\* in the banking industry are receiving bonuses in the *billions*? I want my money back. I think we should march to Washington and demand an accounting, not more rhetoric, but immediate action. *Not one more person should lose their home.* Have you seen the actress that modified her loan, because her 13 million dollar home was too big for her and her son? My daughter and her three children, (she has her degree, is pursuing a master's) lost her job—in healthcare—due to downsizing, has been close to foreclosure several times, yet her mortgage company, Wells Fargo, keeps telling her the re-modification is in process. That was eighteen months ago. It did not take that long for Miss Hollywood. I am disabled (I also have my degree). I say this, because when one states they have had problems, the first thing one hears is "Well, you could have gone to school, with an education, you would have a job." Ha-Ha. That does not eliminate illness and other tragedies. I am trying to help as much as I can, without losing my home that is nearly paid for, but it is not easy. Then I read about these bonuses. Why are we, taxpayers, tolerating this? Let us march to Washington, Wall Street, or wherever and demand an accounting. Give that money to the citizens, and watch how fast this economy climbs out of this slump. Please *help*.

Sickatheart

19 October 2009

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Every public sector of the US government is militarized; a machine engaged in predatory economics controlled by a few, carried out by an army of technocrats, and nearly accepted by all as normal. They are Orwellian technocracies in the business of “moral entrepreneurship,” which reflect the artificial, deadly social psychology of the capitalist mindset. For the powerless with no support, no choices, only the options of trying to be warehoused in privatized school, church or jailhouses, and, even worse, military barracks. How do we “change” an entire psychology of fear and greed, hence violence?

Hubert K

19 October 2009

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Yes, things are pretty bad, but they could be worse, right? Many of those who are out of work today are the very people who had the foresight to tear out the social safety net, so they don't have to fear becoming caught in that terrible “trap of welfare dependency,” sapped of their incentive to “work hard and play by all the rules.” They were the ones who flatly stated that “there is NO acceptable excuse for not working,” and who maintained that poverty was not the result of economic factors, but of laziness and “bad morals.” Decent people never become poor, right?

I know, some might say, “But things are different today.” Actually, we do not have, and never had, a full-employment economy. A certain portion of the population is always left behind. Maybe it's just your turn now. If so, you can at least sit down and tell yourself all those clichés you once recited to the poor, knowing that these are the things people will now say to you.

The one big difference today is that there is no longer a welfare system to enable families to remain together during our economic storms, with modest allotments of food and shelter until they can get back on their feet. Welfare provided a measure of stability, not only to families, but to society as a whole. Without this, it will be much harder, and take much longer to get the economy rolling again—if it ever does. In the end, we can at least say that we got what we asked for.

DHF

Wisconsin, USA

19 October 2009

*On “Mass layoffs provoke protests, strikes”*

Just for the sake of accuracy, I'd like to point out that the students that were refused seats at the concert were students from the Conservatorio de Musica de Puerto Rico, the only public school of higher learning dedicated to music, who are supposed to have tickets guaranteed to them for such functions.

There's a lot more to say about what's happened and what's going on, but I find the article a good one as it tries to sum up events that can only be analysed through the historic lens. The layoffs are only one of our problems since the new government took office last January. They haven't stopped pushing for new laws that hand our public agencies to private enterprises; they've deregulated the process of getting permits for private constructors, which jeopardizes the life and health of our ecosystems and public access to them. They've left the Conservatorio de Musica and the Escuela de Artes Plasticas (school of plastic arts) without 75 and 71 percent of their funding, which forces them to shut themselves down. Same thing with the Puerto Rican Cultural Institute. The funding for the University of Puerto Rico, which has 11 campuses in its jurisdiction, has also been massively reduced. There have been direct attacks on many public agencies or private organizations that show to be dissident. They have attacked communities in order to expropriate them from land they would rather bargain off to private investors. They have verbally attacked the homosexual communities. It seems I have carried myself away with this comment. All I have left to say is—

Salud! I wish you well, comrades.

Alexandra

Puerto Rico

18 October 2009



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