

Letters from our readers

27 October 2009

On "White House unveils token bank pay restrictions"

Another well written critique of the economic crisis, bringing out the continuing scams, political posturing, and phony regulations related to the multi-million dollar bonuses for Wall Street by Obama and the Democrats. One example from the article being Andrew Hall having his \$100 million dollar bonus deferred to 2010. Which translates into a bit of juggling the figures until the heat's off—advice from Obama. The Democrats too are concerned for the super rich about the lavish splashing of super wealth that sometimes comes on display and is more noticed in today's climate.

The article explains how Obama and the Democrats have advanced the interests of the financial aristocracy, funneling trillions to the banks and ensuring the fortunes of the top executives and traders, while demanding that the working class accept reductions in social spending to reduce the budget deficit.

There is an element of bravado and folly noted in the financial elite who have prospered beyond their wildest aspirations particularly after looting the treasury. Some of them brazenly like to flash their loot with their "toys" on display such as lavish yachts. As well, this layer too is forever trying to outdo their cronies, called "bugger thy neighbor." In their own words, "to be a serious player, a shaker and mover of the world, you have to be noticed and need to spend \$300 million for a decent yacht." The serious yacht today starts around 100 meters (328 feet), naturally having helicopter and landing pad, movie theaters, swimming pool and servants. Russian Roman Abramovich owns three such yachts. "Yachts are the closest a commoner can get to sovereignty," (read royal authority) explains U.S. billionaire Charles Simonyi.

The latest estimates are that 12 million workers will lose their homes into foreclosure. Such figures are absolutely crushing and tragedy encapsulated. Governments stepped in to assist and reward in trillions, including tax breaks to the very finance moguls who created the crisis. Workers had hours and pay cuts with healthcare and education to be gutted. And who will get the 12 million homes and land workers have lost? Why the financial elite who created the crisis.

John C
Australia
23 October 2009

On "US college tuition skyrockets"

I agree that states have money. I have been looking at state budgets, and they are lying about their agenda. My college lies about the reasons behind cutting social services and chemical dependency programs that help the poor. They blame it on the lack of jobs in that area, even when we showed them statistics of jobs that are out there. I found that most colleges are run by big business, and they charter to business not students. Whoever colleges are in league with is where the money is going to be spent—not on human services and social programs; only on business and criminal justice programs. The colleges are controlled by corporations who give them millions to run their programs and eliminate programs that they the corporations don't want. The book companies that sell their books in college bookstores have a huge markup value. Congress refuses to stop them from robbing from the students.

Paul M
Washington, USA
22 October 2009

On "The British National Party and 'Question Time'"

The fraudulent nature of the UAF demo outside the front of Broadcasting House was amply demonstrated on Channel 4 News last night, as they filmed BNP leader Griffin entering via the back gate. What sort of 'party of organisers' cannot spot that big buildings usually have two entrances, and that public figures usually prefer the less obvious one? Could they demonstrate their fundamental lack of seriousness any more obviously? This was, like Question Time itself, degraded political theatre that serves no effective purpose and reveals their own bankruptcy.

The TV show itself provided some interesting moments, not least for me the silence that followed Griffin's accusation that Labour representative Jack Straw had the

blood of 800,000 Iraqis on his hands. An unanswerable point and one that in another context would have raised cheers from the predominantly young and (from the looks of it) non-white audience, and been followed by further criticism by his political ‘opponents’ on the panel. But once again the predominant views of the population find no expression within the mainstream political parties, and Griffin gets away with offering contradictory positions because reality cannot be faced by his opponents. In this context his declaration of a “truce” with Islam begins to look sensible.

Another demonstration of the inability of our political elite or the commentariat that hang on their every word (while ignoring most of their actions) is that while immigration was “debated” at some length, nobody was able to point to the links between the “immigration debate” and our wider social context. New Labour has allowed virtually unfettered immigration not, as the Right claim, because they are socially liberal; the Labour Party does not have a good record on race relations, and its connection with British ethnic minority communities is largely through corrupt clientist politics at a local government level. Rather, it is a way of maintaining the UK’s much-vaunted flexible labour market, i.e. to provide an ever-renewed pool of exploitable workers willing to work for “wages” far beneath the minimum wage. From the way the “debate” is conducted you would think that immigration had no connection to the functioning of the economy, wages and conditions etc.

Overall, Griffin looked pathetic; he was clearly unable to control the terms of the “debate” and was quickly overwhelmed by the audience’s obvious antipathy to him (some of it expressed at a confoundingly naive level, e.g. “how could you say those things about the Holocaust?”). However, none of his opponents looked any better and certainly wouldn’t have garnered any support without him as a foil. While it was easy for them to point out Griffin’s contradictory positions, his lies and evasions, none of his opponents could offer a genuine political alternative—Straw in denial about the nature of the immigration system or the wider question about why white working class voters have abandoned Labour, and the Tory (another Baroness!) lining up to offer the Conservative Party as a better vehicle for the BNP’s policy options. In fact, as a spectrum of the “liberal elite” that Griffin condemns, the panel could not have been better chosen to demonstrate the weakness of the establishment’s “opposition” to the BNP.

G
23 October 2009

On “The ‘Balloon Boy’ hoax, celebrity culture, and the

American media”

I am responding after reading the earlier comments and then going back to read the article. Has anyone laughed at the joke and sighed in relief, “Thank God, the kid is safe!”?

Prabhakar
24 October 2009

On “Tensions between India and China flare again”

As the saber rattling and diplomatic one-upmanship between the Asian rivals is on, as an Indian I face the information war on the citizens. Due to induced nationalism, anyone objectively examining one’s government’s stand or questioning the background issues such as the basis of the international boundary with China, is branded by the intelligentsia as treacherous. When India publicizes the alleged intrusion by China and the latter denies it, we are supposed to believe in the Indian version to prove our patriotic credentials. Else the intelligentsia condemns such neutrality.

PJ
India
24 October 2009

On “German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk defends racist remarks by central banker”

Stefan, thank you for this excellent article. The fact that insects like these two feel that they can openly make their racist comments speaks to the disintegration of Enlightenment values in European (and by extension, American) society. The degeneration of philosophy in this world of postmodernism and atomization of thought is sobering to contemplate. We have our work cut out for us.

Thanks again.
Carolyn Z
California, USA
26 October 2009



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