

Letters from our readers

28 January 2010

On "US military operations block relief efforts in Haiti"

The small country of Haiti neighbors the US, an economic powerhouse of 300 million people. The US could air drop, and otherwise flood Haiti with food, water and medical supplies. Instead it sends soldiers to watch the masses writhe in agony.

Despicable! There should be a new term for this: "anti-humanitarian aid."

Dan P

21 January 2010

On "As US prepares long-term occupation, Haiti's quake victims still without aid"

Excellent analysis of the US response to the Haitian earthquake. It appears that the American ruling class has learned its lessons from Hurricane Katrina. We can be sure that when another disaster hits the US, the response will be to send in the military, not to provide aid, but to suppress the anger of the victims when they have not been given assistance.

Andy H

Texas, USA

23 January 2010

On "The lessons of the Massachusetts election"

This was a thundering defeat for President Obama and the Democrats. Democrat Coakley registered almost 900,000 less votes than Obama did when he won Massachusetts in 2008. Scott Brown registered slightly more votes than McCain in 2008.

It was very clear to many voters that after a year of no progressive leadership from Obama it was not worth the time to vote. There was no Change to Believe In.

Obama stands as nothing more than an actor on a stage given his lines by Wall Street.

Louis C

22 January 2010

On "US Supreme Court abolishes restrictions on big business political spending"

You write, "...Thomas justified his dissent on this issue on

the basis of reported instances where 'donors to certain causes were blacklisted, threatened, or otherwise targeted for retaliation.'" This statement totally lays bare the duplicity of the claim of "originalism" made by Thomas, Scalia et al. To my limited knowledge, there is no language in the US Constitution that is intended to protect anybody from reprisals due to espousing unpopular political opinions. If anybody was 'threatened', they should have turned that matter over to the police. Otherwise, have the courage to accept the consequences of your beliefs.

Mike T

Michigan, USA

22 January 2010

This is an excellent article. I knew this court ruling was bad, but this article has brought other ramifications to light that I hadn't thought of. For example, "It is not hard to imagine how the doctrine of corporate constitutional rights could be extended to attack the minimum wage, child labor laws, workplace safety laws, environmental regulations, or any other legal restrictions on corporate activities." Scary! Thank you for all you do.

Gypsy

22 January 2010

Tom, thank you for your fine article, which is the best combination of factual reporting and analysis in any media.

Thanks also for being the first to shock me out of the focus limited to US elections. I was surprised that I did not immediately recognize the 'other' implications, since I focus almost exclusively on the nature of the evolving Global corporate/financial/militarist empire.

You wrote, "The conception of the corporation announced by the Supreme Court yesterday has implications far outside elections." But of course. The deadly ruling will give global corporate empire the power of US law (and our new breed of massive US-based global law firms) to pressure the rest of the world into accepting global corporate hegemony.

Alan M

Maine, USA

22 January 2010

An excellent analysis of the Court ruling and the way money completely dominates our political system. This ruling should be a great boon to the US election industry. I also wonder if this could ultimately shift the dynamics in the role money plays in politics. Presently, corporate America spends hundreds of millions of dollars employing thousands of lobbyists to influence Congress. With this recent ruling, I wonder if a good deal of that money will now shift to the front-end as corporate interests seek to directly elect their candidates. Once elected there will be less need to lobby them as they will already be bought and paid for. And it will be of no use for competing interests to lobby someone whom they know is in the pocket of a rival. The battle between corporate interests may now shift more to the actual election and away from the Halls (and backrooms) of Congress.

MZ

Maryland, USA

23 January 2010

What is even scarier is who supported this ruling. Of course, one would expect the US Chamber of Commerce to support it, but the ACLU? The AFL-CIO? The WSWS has been making its case clearly and methodically for years that workers must break with the union bureaucracy. Perhaps people will finally begin to think about this more seriously now.

The world-wide consequences are also inescapable. If the American corporate system has now moved this much closer to integration with the political system, then what can be said about the shambles of the social democracies of Canada and Europe?

If there is any other option besides an international working class movement, the only movement that can truly embrace all people, I would really like to know what it is.

Eric D

Colorado, USA

23 January 2010

On "Michigan community colleges struggling to meet demand"

The absence of adequate funding for public schools, community colleges and universities is no accident. Resistance to the takeover of public education by the private-sector is strong enough that US officials have decided to starve public education, which in turn allows big businesses to fly in and save the day as ostensibly benign entities, strengthening the argument for the privatization of public education. This assault on public education has been consciously and deliberately planned.

At the homepage of the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), which bears the emblem of the Department of Education, I searched in the Educational Policy Analysis Archives (EPAA). There I found disconcerting evidence of a deeply entrenched involvement of private interests in public education, supported by policy theorists. Many of the reports deal with "University-Industry Relationships", such as those entitled "Corporations on Campus", "Dancing Partners: Schools and Businesses", etc.

One such report, entitled "Academic Capitalism and Academic Culture: A Case Study", by Pilar Mendoza and Joseph B. Berger, states that the rise of University-Industry relationships can be traced back to the 1980s, with the establishment of the National Science Foundation "to enhance industry-academia interactions through the Industry/University Cooperative Research Centers (IUCRCs) around industrially relevant research, education of scientists in new technologies, and transfer of university-developed research and technology to industry." It also states "this pattern is a developing trend for universities throughout the world as the increasingly global environment has pushed shifts in governmental funding and policies, increased reliance on private and corporate funds, and administrative decision-making".

Although the report essentially tries to justify these relationships, as long as private interests are allowed to be invested in and influence that which is ostensibly public interests, there remains a paradox that cannot be resolved. As corporate interests become more and more embedded in public education, their influence over what is taught becomes more and more solidified. What we are witnessing is the corporatizing of public education, in order to transform colleges into sectors of "economic development" for the wealthy, in order to assimilate students into the ideologies of the financial elite and their capitalistic organism, and also to prevent education from becoming a source of consciousness or radicalism for people who would otherwise revolt against the harsh injustice and inequality of the current system.

Nick M

Tennessee, USA

18 January 2010



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