

## Letters from our readers

16 February 2010

*On “Toyota recall highlights crisis in global auto industry”*

What’s going on with Japanese car makers has to be seen in relation to the ongoing diplomatic confrontation over extending the lease of US military bases in Japan. The US government seems to be threatening to turn the tap off on Japanese exports into the US.

Jeff

12 February 2010

*On “Australia: TAFE teachers challenge Labor’s education reforms, defying strike ban”*

It is almost sickening to witness the latest swinishness and treachery the trade union officials have sunk to in this dispute. They are preparing their well-tryed method of isolating teachers in order to inflict another defeat. This dispute, too, is not just about technical college teachers having their wages cut by 20 percent and a longer working week. For there is the large job shredding from \$50 million budget cuts. Moreover, there is the insidious war against all forms of education to facilitate the well-worked, semi-criminal practice called privatization.

At the meeting, the union official’s script starts out by geeing up workers, claiming loud opposition, followed by hypocrisy, sham militancy, and then for good measure, a round of chants such as, “the workers united will never be defeated”. Of course any objective assessment would glaringly show that the union officials have isolated teachers at every instant for over a full century. Using the fundamental commandment of capitalism against workers—divide and conquer, divide and rule, and divide and steal. The trade union officials will steer this dispute into the arbitration courts, known by many workers correctly as the bosses’ courts, being a vehicle to sell the dispute out.

Seventy percent of these teachers are casuals, and that speaks loudly about what the trade union officials have already implemented called “award restructuring.” At the meeting, the trade union officials got an almost unanimous vote to implement the Labor Party agenda. But you wonder, how long can they get away with this treachery—before workers explode?

John C

Australia, USA

12 February 2010

*On “Housing crisis deepens in New York City”*

Stellar, who owns Riverton, is my landlord in another complex on the Upper West Side, and despite the loss at Riverton, they are heavily cranking out new construction on the gentrified Upper West Side. Despite tenants’ associations demanding input on the re-shaping of the community, they have been ignored. The hasty construction has already resulted in two accidents, one that required the evacuation of a building in the middle of the night, and the other fortunate that there happened not to be passersby who would have been injured.

This and other landlords claim they can build as they want “as of right”. In other words, people living in and creating a community for decades have no rights against the capitalists’ private property. Of course, all the local elected officials, all Democrats, have promised to help but do nothing in the end because in New York City, the real estate industry finances them all. The Republican Mayor Bloomberg is of course for unrestricted development.

The landlords expect that the children of the middle and upper classes who had moved out of New York in worse times will all be moving in to pay the higher rents. Even aside from the layoffs this strata has faced,

the future of these young people once they stop living with the necessary roommates and start having families will be unaffordable rent levels.

As for the worse situation right now for the low-income citizens being squeezed out, a recent report by the NYC Independent Budget Organization states that four years into the state and city 10-year agreement to create 9,000 supportive housing units for formerly homeless individuals and families, the plan is about 1,200 units behind schedule. This report is available on IBO's web site [PDF].

Harvey L  
11 February 2010

*On "Witch-hunt against the unemployed in Germany"*

This sounds like the welfare "reform" agenda in the States. The government, with the cooperation of mainstream media, waged a years-long campaign against the poor, ensuring that the general public would remain disinterested when public dollars were taken out of welfare to be used for "tax relief" for the rich. Since Reagan, the public was served a steady stream of anti-poor rhetoric. If something is repeated often enough, no matter how crazy, the public will believe it. For example, it was repeated endlessly that our poor actually lived in lazy comfort on welfare, even though benefits were far below the poverty line. The myth of widespread life-long dependency became accepted as fact; in reality, over 80 percent of AFDC recipients—those with the greatest barriers to employment—were able to quit welfare for jobs in under 5 years. Legislators warned that welfare (specifically AFDC) was bankrupting the country; it actually only used some 6 percent of the federal budget. On and on it went.

Since the Reagan administration, billions of taxpayer dollars annually have been used to cover the costs of corporate "tax relief," always on the theory that this would result in a massive creation of good, family-supporting jobs. In reality, there are now far fewer jobs, and wages have fallen far below the rate of inflation. Poverty has dramatically increased. Yet the average American remains convinced that using public dollars

for aid/jobs is bad for the country while corporate welfare is good—i.e., they still cling to Reagan's "trickle down economics" theory.

Nothing is going to change, though, unless ordinary people start taking to the streets and fighting back.

Dianka F  
Wisconsin, USA  
13 February 2010

*On "Honduras: The making of a death squad 'democracy'"*

All that we need now is a post-modern debate as to whether or not death squads are compatible with democracy. Some, like Dennis Blair who authorized assassinations of American citizens who constitute a "threat" to US security, think not. Others, probably liberals from *The Nation*, are uncomfortable with that assumption, or at least with making it too readily.

Michael G  
California, USA  
12 February 2010

*On "America, the land of inequality"*

This is possibly the best, most honest, truthful, structured, direct to the point of actuality article that I have read in decades. This report truly describes the real collapse of the US, its economy, and collapse of society as previously known. This report totally coincides with my thinking for the past eight years. Thank You

Paolo W  
13 February 2010



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