

Letters from our readers

3 June 2010

On "White House admits BP disaster worst spill in US history"

Mention should be made of the work of Halliburton in failing to seal the well and implicitly their role in the negligence that permitted this to happen... Seems kinda funny that Halliburton is involved in this one as well...

R

26 May 2010

On "More revelations point to criminality of BP, Transocean"

Ever since the BP "Oil Spill" began, I have watched with a critical eye as BP made one technical mistake after another. I accepted their claims that they had 20,000 of the world's best scientists and engineers working on this problem. As a world-class expert on the art and science of Bioremediation, I couldn't understand why so many serious errors were being made. For example, you don't use a boom and skimmer at the same time that you're using a dispersant. The Corexit 9500 dispersant causes the oil on the surface to sink to lower depths. The effectiveness of a boom and skimmer requires that you maintain the oil on the surface. These two remediation technologies have diametrically opposed requirements and goals.

Today, I finally got to read Nalco's Corexit dispersant literature. I realized that the mistake was mine, not BP's. I was assuming that BP wanted to clear-up the spill, that they wanted to be protective of human health and the environment, and that they wanted to practice good remediation technology in a cost-effective manner. I was wrong.

Reading the literature, I realized that BP's goal and strategy has been to do the minimum possible; to hide and minimize the seriousness of problem; and to run a Public Relations campaign, not a remediation program. They have been very deceitful and are still lying to the American Public and to the Government. If there is such a thing as ENVIRONMENTAL TERRORISM, this is it. Americans have died; more will follow. The economy of a portion of a state has been destroyed and will likely never recover (at least in my lifetime). The traditional way of life for thousands of Americans either has been or is being destroyed. The credibility of the American oil industry has been destroyed (or at least seriously undermined) and the national desire to expand our reliance on domestic oil production has been dealt a severe blow.

Dr. Louis B. Fournier

Hammond, Louisiana, USA

29 May 2010

On "Obama's financial reform bill: Wall Street breathes a 'sigh of relief'"

Brilliant article. The fact that the market shares increased after the bill passed shows clearly that the speculators have no fear of it. Thanks.

Vincent

26 May 2010

On "South Korea imposes penalties on North over naval incident"

On your article on the sinking of a South Korean warship on March 26th, there's no mention of opinions put forward by leftist and bourgeois oppositional forces against the findings of South Korean Navy and the government itself. It's quite regrettable and this comment is addressed to the problem.

When the military announced that day that the ship sank, South Korean and the US navies were conducting joint military exercise deploying two Aegis ships, among others, the most sophisticated warships in terms of tracking down the waters on which they were operating. Under these circumstances, a North Korean submarine with outdated and very shabby equipment could not have possibly approached and escaped the place where the warship was alleged to have been hit by a North Korean torpedo. Also West Sea is a very shallow place to conduct sub operations even in the most favorable situation.

According to a member of an investigating team trying to come up with the cause of the ship sinking, the ship probably just ran aground. He was picked by a main opposition Democratic Party to join the investigating team and he is now under indictment by state prosecutors for this argument. He was a navy officer and, at one time, worked on the very sunken ship and has very knowledgeable background on the maritime accidents. According to this man, 95 percent of all the accidents on the seas is either hitting rocks or colliding with oncoming vessels.

You also need to keep in mind that most of the members of the investigating team are either active servicemen or civilians with close relationships with the military, whether they are Koreans or foreigners. As a commentator expressed it: "It's just like calling on the players on the football pitch to judge whether a goal was scored or not."

Ty Kim

26 May 2010

On "Retired driver blames budget cuts for fatal accident on Detroit school bus"

Sorry to see that the safety of children is compromised in an "advanced" country where the corporates sufficiently use risk analysis in matters of their business, but the risk to their little customers is ignored. In India, we as employees noticed how the staff transport contractors overuse the drivers' services. Drivers continuously run the buses, deprived of normal sleep and rest and lose concentration and alertness necessary in busy city traffic so much that one of the passengers volunteers to sit near the driver and alert him when he gets sleepy or loses concentration! Very

pathetic.

Prabhakar

India

29 May 2010

On “Austerity measures throughout Europe”

I just returned from a trip to Hungary, and television news there was dominated by a handful of stories, as it is here. Ethnic tensions are being exploited to distract people from the real problems they face. The Slovakian government’s threat to take away Slovakian citizenship from ethnic Hungarians who apply for dual citizenship with Hungary is an example, this story seemed to be the most important thing that is going on in the world, beside the natural disaster of flooding in the north of the country.

I was also struck by the omnipresence of banks in the country—with armed guards protecting them, nothing subtle about it. Hungarians have a saying about what has happened to their country in the twenty years since the end of the Russian occupation—“Out went the tanks, and in came the banks”.

KV

North Vancouver, Canada

30 May 2010

On “Canada to mount largest-ever security operation for G8/G20 summits”

This expenditure is totally disrespectful of the Canadian taxpayer. The Conservative government throws money around like it grows on trees. There is nothing that will come out of these boondoggles that will help Canadians or the people of the world one iota. Nothing!

A

Vancouver, Canada

31 May 2010

On “British government outlines plans to dismantle welfare”

It’s tragic that our mainstream media has refused to report the consequences of America’s welfare “reform”. Surprisingly (to me), even our progressive media has shown great disinterest; so far, they recognize no one worse off than “working poor.”

Had our media actually informed the public of what is in these policies, and reported the results to date—not only for the poorest, but for the more fortunate class—other nations would reject this agenda.(I learned a great deal about US news media by involvement with this issue for years, almost shocked by just how much is not reported.)

I’ve seen nothing to indicate that the average American cares about our poor; here, one’s human worth really is determined by his economic status, as much as some might deny it. Had the consequences of our welfare “reform” been freely reported, the working class in England certainly wouldn’t consider allowing the same agenda. If Americans understood how welfare “reform” has been used to drive down wages, break strikes and eliminate workers’ benefits, Americans would reject it as well.

What our welfare “reform” did was create a massive, bottom-wage/no rights labor pool. Under “workfare,” businesses are subsidized by government for hiring the poor through the Department of Workforce Development, and these workers can be paid a fraction of the legal minimum wage.

This wage is then marginally subsidized with some food stamps

and Medicaid access. If they have children, they can’t risk losing Medicaid, which effectively keeps them locked into workfare labor, similar to indentured servitude. Businesses will lay off entire sections of their workforce, claiming economic hardship, and then simply replace the workers with super-cheap workfare labor. Besides being the cheapest labor in the US, they are captive workers; under welfare “reform,” losing their jobs leaves them in a position where state social services can legally “take indefinite custody” of their children.

Now, our government has bestowed billions of dollars of “tax relief” on corporations since the Reagan administration. (This means that the corporations’ tax debts are simply moved onto the taxes owed by the middle class.) Much of this money has been used to shut down jobs here and move them to other countries. Thousands of US jobs disappeared at the same time that welfare “reform” added hundreds of thousands of people to the workforce. Fewer jobs, more workers, gives corporations tremendous power.

People are afraid to go on strike now; there is no safety net.

Wages have been suppressed for years, leaving a large chunk of our workforce in poverty. Businesses have dropped workers’ benefits, like insurance coverage. People can no longer choose not to work for employers who won’t pay a fair wage. Our welfare “reform” is steadily reversing every bit of progress made by US labor since the early 1900s.

No democracy can survive the level of economic disparities we have in the US today. As incomes continue to shrink, government (tax) revenues shrink. We are seeing the rapid deterioration and collapse of the US. Our education system is rapidly losing teachers, cuts are made to fire and police departments, roads and bridges are crumbling, and the list goes on. The infant mortality rate among America’s poor now rivals that of some Third World countries, and the life expectancy of our poor has been on a downhill slide. On top of this, budgets are drained by our serial wars and the build-up of the US gulag... er, prison system.

Welfare “reform” has been a powerful factor in the economic collapse of the US and (obviously) the dramatically worsening living conditions for so many Americans. You’d think we’d at least start talking about it.

DH Fabian

Wisconsin, USA

31 May 2010



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact