

Letters from our readers

5 February 2013

On the New York school bus workers' strike

I would like to express my most heartfelt admiration for, and solidarity with, the NYC school bus workers. You are standing up, not just for yourselves, but for the entire working class!

Joseph W

North Carolina, USA

1 February 2013

On "Alabama school bus driver shot and killed while defending schoolchildren"

Thank you for drawing out the danger and serious responsibility borne by these school bus drivers. The Alabama shooting is only the most tragic expression of the daily difficulties of the job.

Reading the local papers about the Alabama hostage situation, I came across this disturbing list of school bus trespassing incidents in the state.

What is clear is that bus drivers must manage children and parents from some terrible economic and social backgrounds—bringing with them untreated mental illness, drug addiction, violence, ignorance, emotional and physical vulnerability, exhaustion, hunger—as well as overcrowding, long rural routes, the potential for mechanical problems. The list goes on.

These drivers protect our children and are a critical support system for our public schools. They deserve our protection and support in turn. The SEP sets an admirable example in this cause.

EG

Michigan, USA

2 February 2013

On "US health care 'individual mandate' will leave 30 million uninsured"

Kate Randall's excellent piece on the individual mandate appeared on the same day as an opinion piece in the *Wall Street Journal* decrying the "broken promises" of Obamacare. Both wsws.org and wsj.com agree that Obama's famous health care reform legislation has done nothing to reduce the cost of

insurance. Of course, the agreement ends there as the WSJ piece rattles into deficit-reduction madness and questions the very idea that everyone should have health insurance. But it's noteworthy that both socialists and the ruling rich recognize that Obamacare is a failure, albeit for different reasons.

The ACA was a horrible idea from its inception, depending as it does on the rapacious private health insurance sector whose insatiable thirst for profits, more than any other factor, drives costs and produces our dismal public health results. The bewildering complexity—3,000 pages of law and endless regulations, with more to come—in itself is enough to make you wonder what they were thinking.

The individual mandate idea was cooked up at the Heritage Foundation. That Obama-lovers hail the ACA as a grand achievement attests to the rightward shift of the Democrats. Obamacare is a law that only the most deluded of liberals and the most pseudo of pseudo-lefts could love.

David M

New Jersey, USA

2 February 2013

On "Notes on the social crisis in America"

At age 70+ I can honestly say that the most painful episodes in my life have involved my teeth. Yet dental insurance must be purchased separately. For some reason, oral health is not considered as vital as the other end, rectums.

It may surprise people, but the VA does not provide dental benefits. Any dental work done at the VA is provided free by local volunteer dentists and their assistants. No volunteers, no help.

Rick

Arizona, USA

2 February 2013

On "Dustin Hoffman's Quartet: Aging and the artist"

This fine review has reminded me of a great documentary from 1984: Daniel Schmid's *Tosca's Kiss*

—a delightful real-life portrait of the retired singers and other musicians living in the Casa Verdi in Milan. The denizens of this retirement home are truly alive to the very end—really a contrast with many of the prison-like extended care facilities I worked in over the past decade.

Kamilla V
British Columbia, Canada
2 February 2013

On “Israel’s bombing of Syria escalates threat of wider war”

If Syria’s air defence system has been knocked out by rebels, allowing Israeli jets to bomb the outskirts of Damascus with impunity, what is Syria doing sending SA-17 anti-aircraft missiles out of the country to defend Lebanon?

Clearly that is not what was happening.

Nor does it make sense that damaging a research centre could be worth the risk of a retaliatory strike on Israel, especially when Netanyahu is engaged in delicate negotiations with prospective coalition parties in the new government. Research centres aren't the same thing as factories making war materiel.

One would imagine that an important research centre would be heavily defended from attack by rebels, even if an attack by air could not be countered. So how come only 2 were killed and 5 wounded?

Much more likely is that this was an Israeli probe to test if Syrian air defence really could be penetrated, and those Israeli flights over Lebanon were back-up in case some remaining radars were still operating and needed taking out.

The stage now seems set for a three-pronged attack from Israel, Turkey and Jordan.

Palloy
2 February 2013

On “A reply to Michael Moore’s defense of Zero Dark Thirty”

Thank you for a very fine clarification and analysis of Michael Moore’s sad trajectory.

LMC
1 February 2013



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