



## Comment on the Commentary of the Day

by

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**Disclaimer: The following "Letters to the Editor" were sent to the respective publications on the dates indicated. Some were printed but many were not. The original articles that are being commented on may or may not be available on the internet and may require registration or subscription to access if they are. Some of the original articles are syndicated and therefore may have appeared in other publications also.**

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30 September 2007

The Editor, New York  
Times Book Review  
229 West 43rd St.  
New York, NY 10036

To the Editor:

Reviewing Naomi Klein's anti-market book Shock Doctrine, Joseph Stiglitz excuses her oversimplifications by saying that Milton Friedman and others who advocated free markets "were also guilty of oversimplification, basing their belief in the perfection of market economies on models that assumed perfect information, perfect

competition, perfect risk markets" ("Bleakonomics," September 30). This accusation is nonsense.

The most celebrated contribution of F.A. Hayek, a free-market proponent nearly as influential as Friedman, was to show that markets are important precisely because the information that each of us has is always incomplete and often wrong. And Friedman himself built his case for markets not on their imaginary perfection - a fantasy that he never alleged to exist in reality - but on their relative superiority to production

and exchange directed by government.

For a Nobel laureate economist such as Mr. Stiglitz to join in the slaying of straw men is unbecoming.

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30 September 2007

The Editor, New York Times  
229 West 43rd St.  
New York, NY 10036

To the Editor:

Like many others, Louis Uchitelle writes of imports having "flooded the market" ("Once Again We're Driving What's Not Made Here," September 30). Such language is as loaded as it is lazy. Floods literally devastate and kill. Persons in the paths of real floods are willing to pay to be spared the excess water.

In sharp contrast, consumers willingly pay to receive imports and would benefit even more if imports arrived in larger quantities. Having ever greater volumes of Toyotas and Krups coffee makers offered for sale downtown is quite the opposite of having ever greater volumes of water rushing destructively into people's homes and workplaces.

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29 September 2007

Editor, The New York Review of Books

To the Editor:

In Andrew Hacker's generally smart review of books on income distribution (October 11), he commits a frustrating error when writing that "recent years have seen a larger share of the nation's income accruing to the top 1 percent. And more affluence for them means less for others; the bottom fifth's share has been declining for a generation."

A greater SHARE of total income for one group does not at all mean less affluence for members of other groups whose shares are falling. If the size of the pie is growing, those with shrinking shares of it might still enjoy greater affluence. Six percent of 100, for example, is larger than seven percent of 80.

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28 September 2007

The Editor, New York Times  
229 West 43rd St.  
New York, NY 10036

To the Editor:

Who cares what modern health-care-delivery methods are called (Philip M. Boffey, "The Socialists Are Coming! The Socialists Are Coming!," Sept. 28)? The elemental problem is that more and more persons feel entitled to vast quantities of high-quality health care paid for by someone else. And politicians, ever-lusting for office, are only too happy to further conjure the ridiculous illusion that A will get top-flight service from B when C is forced by G to pay the bills.

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27 September 2007

Editor, Washington Post  
1150 15th St., NW  
Washington, DC 20071

Dear Editor:

Harold Meyerson asserts that "The American middle class has toppled into a world of temporary employment, jobs without benefits, retirement without security. Harder times have come to left and right alike" ("Rise of the Have-Nots," Sept. 27). He supports this

claim with survey results showing that a smaller percentage of Americans today identify themselves as "haves" - and a larger percentage identify themselves as "have-nots"- than was true in 1988.

Conducting surveys and interpreting their results is notoriously tricky business. How, for example, would Mr. Meyerson square the results he takes as definitive with those of a recent Gallup poll that finds that the percentage of Americans who report being "completely satisfied" with their jobs rose from 28 percent in 1989 to 43 percent in 2006, while the percentage of Americans who report being "completely dissatisfied" with their jobs fell from three percent to two percent?

[http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.14886/pub\\_detail.asp](http://www.aei.org/publications/pubID.14886/pub_detail.asp)

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26 September 2007

News Editor, WTOP Radio  
Washington, DC

To the Editor:

For a second straight day your reporters - when covering candidates for next year's election - referred to "the presidential sweepstakes." I'm struck by this term's familiarity and appropriateness.

As with sweepstakes for cash, the odds are difficult. At the beginning of each election cycle, everyone but an incumbent President faces long odds of winning. But the pay-off from winning this sweepstakes is life-changingly huge. The winner immediately gains such goodies as buckets of prestige, a splendid house, a 747 jet, bodyguards for life, torrents of influence and power, and rock-star-like fame.

So just as each person who enters the Publishers' Clearinghouse Sweepstakes does so because he or she hopes to win incredible personal benefits, so, too, with Presidential candidates:

they enter overwhelmingly for themselves, not to serve the rest of us.

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25 September 2007

Editor, The Boston Globe

To the Editor:

Like Thea Shapiro, I oppose the war in Iraq (Letters, Sept. 25). But I strongly disagree with her suggestion that conscription is an appropriate means of relieving existing soldiers of their duties. If the war is, as she claims, one "that we now know was started on false pretenses and that has no prospect for ever ending," forcing young people to fight such a war would be especially reprehensible.

Why is Ms. Shapiro willing to trust the same people who started this war with the additional power to confiscate years of life from young Americans?