

National News

Calls for Pecora-Style Probe of Bankers' Crimes

The Obama Administration's promotion of the financial elites' demands for pre-tend-regulation of banking and finance has prompted renewed calls for an FDR-era Pecora-type investigation of the financiers' crimes that led to the destruction of the nation's economy.

Columns by Frank Rich in the Sunday *New York Times* June 21, and by William Greider in *The Nation* June 19, dismiss Obama's proposals, and insist on a new Pecora Commission now.

In "Obama's Make-or-Break Summer," Rich wrote, "Last week's big roll-out of his financial reform package was a big punt, an accommodation to the status quo. Suffice it to say that the Obama team has not resuscitated the Glass-Steagall Act, the New Deal reform that Summers helped dismantle in the Clinton years and that would have prevented the creation of banking behemoths that held the economy hostage.... Perhaps if there had been a thorough post-crash investigative commission emulating the Senate investigation led by Ferdinand Pecora after the crash of 1929, we would now have reforms as thorough as FDR's. It was because of the Pecora revelations that Glass-Steagall was put in place."

Greider, in "Obama's False Financial Reform," wrote: "The regulatory system was not overwhelmed by historic forces [as Obama contends]. It was systematically gutted and dismantled by the government in Washington at the behest of the banking interests. If Obama wants details, he can consult his economic advisors—Summers-Geithner, who participated directly as accomplices in unwinding the prudential rules and regulations...."

"Congress would do well to drag its feet and insist instead on deeper investigations. (Rep. John Dingell and others have proposed establishing a Pecora-like commission to investigate the crisis.)"

Obama's Own Doctor Against 'ObamaCare'

David Scheiner, a 71-year-old internist, has a practice in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood, where he sees a mix of the well-heeled and the less fortunate. A Princeton graduate, who had been Barack Obama's doctor from 1987 until he became President, Scheiner did not talk to the Senator about health care, after Obama "took the lawyers' position" on the issue of malpractice, in a discussion.

Although he still considers himself an Obama supporter, Scheiner says, "I'm not really sure [the President] understands what we face in primary care.... He doesn't see all the pain, it's so tragic out here. Obama's wonderful, but on this one I'm not sure if he's getting the right input." Scheiner, a strong proponent of the single-payer Medicare-for-All system, criticizes HMOs, saying, "It's nonsense that the private insurance companies need to be protected. Why, because they've done such a good job?"

While these are mild criticisms of what *Forbes* magazine calls "ObamaCare," the fact that they are being made public indicates that Obama's plan *can* be stopped.

Genocidal Energy Bill Rammed Through House

Down-to-the-wire thuggery and bribery were required by President "Nero" Obama to win passage June 26, by a bare margin of 219 to 212, of Prince Philip's "Bomb the U.S. Economy!" bill, otherwise known as HR 2454, the mass-murderous American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, with its CO₂ cap-and-trade provisions.

Undecided Congressmen were collared by Obama's Chief of Staff Rahm "Hedge Fund" Emanuel to be harangued by the President, who also arranged a last-minute Rose Garden speech, denouncing "misinformation that's out there" about the bill.

Infrastructure Breakdown Caused D.C. Train Crash

Two Washington D.C. Metro trains collided during the Monday evening commute June 22, killing at least 9 passengers, including a train operator, and wounding over 70 others. The accident occurred when a moving train struck the rear of another train that had stopped on the tracks, waiting for a third train to clear the station in front of it.

Experienced sources quoted in all newspapers immediately pointed to the computerized signalling system, which is supposed to prevent just this type of accident, combined with operator error, as the likely causes. The Metro has been "plagued" with signal problems for years, said the *Washington Post*, and "tore out all 20,000 trackside relays in 1999, after discovering that a small portion, designed to last 70 years, were failing after 25 [years]." In 2005, two alert operators manually hit the brakes and prevented a collision; the year before that, two trains crashed when an unoccupied train rolled backwards and collided with a train in a station.

Also noted in coverage, was that the moving train was a "Series 1000" train, the oldest in the Metro fleet, purchased between 1974 and 1978, with a life expectancy of 40 years. Reportedly, the National Transportation Safety Board had recommended their replacement. This series of rolling stock was also known to have brake problems.

Above all, the Metro system is massively underfunded; even the *Wall Street Journal* noted that "the 33-year-old Metro system is perpetually starved for cash." Straddling three jurisdictions (Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia), it "has no reliable stream of funding," beyond fares and parking fees, and depends primarily on Congress to make up the difference. Operators estimated that the system would need \$12 billion in capitalization for the next 10 years, but Congress has approved only \$1.5 billion.