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Is there anybody there? Well, yes there is. It is heartening to find through SLR's internet activity that several thousand are visiting and reading articles from our site monthly. But it is also heartening to discover that the political and philosophical responses we support with regards to the crisis in capitalism, which we are all confronted with, are shared by others throughout the world. Could it be that the immunosuppressant that is new Labour, new Conservatism and the original variant neo-liberalism is no longer so virulently effective?

Who's into the sport of kicking capitalism whilst it is down? I would like to direct you to www.coldtype.net/Assets.09/pdfs/1009.Reader40.pdf . For instance William Blum tells how NATO pressurised Germany and Japan to drop their resistance to fighting in the war on Afghanistan. "NATO (aka the United States) can take satisfaction in the fact that the Germans have put their silly pacifism aside and acted like real men, trained military killers." Danny Schechter writes that the press is still ignoring the story of fraud and the economic decline still to come. The New York Times features a generally very good piece, "Buyout Firms profited as a Company's Debt Soared" by Julie Creswell that falls short in one important respect: it fails to call a prevalent and destructive practice of private equity firms by its proper name.... George Akerlof and Paul Romer called that activity looting in a famous 1993 paper and depicted it as criminal: 'Bankruptcy for profit will occur if poor accounting, lax regulation, or low penalties for abuse give owners an incentive to pay themselves more than their firms are worth and then default on their debt obligations....' These articles are accompanied by much more surgical political comment across the globe. On home turf we have the site www.european-services-strategy.org.uk which gives us background and policy critiques of the privatisation of public utilities and essential services. Here you will find a table indicating a 12.5 per cent failure rate in PPP contracts. It also draws attention to Dexter Whitfield's new book *Global Auction of Public Assets: Public sector alternatives to the infrastructure market and Public Private Partnerships*. Now here's a proposition to redistribute wealth. The rulers of the world (the bankers) have decreed that for them income should be decoupled from the quantity of labour applied. Take for example banker's bonuses and MP's expenses. This was proposed in the 1970's by the social ecologist André Gorz. He said then "A progressive reduction in working time to 1,000 hours or less per year gives completely new dimensions to disposable time. Non-working time is no longer necessarily time for the rest, recuperation, amusement and consumption; it no longer serves to compensate for the strain, constraints and frustrations of working time. Free time is no longer merely the always insufficient 'time left over' we have to make the most of while we can and which is never long enough for embarking on a project of any kind. These activities, taken as a whole, should not be viewed as an alternative economic sector which forms part of a 'dual economy'. These activities are characterised by an absence of economic rationality and have no place in the economic sphere. The act of performing them is not the means to achieve an end, to achieve satisfaction. It produces that satisfaction itself; it is an end in itself. The time we devote, for example, to music, love, education, exchanging of ideas, to creative activities, to looking after the sick, is time for living, and cannot be bought or sold at any price. Extending this time for living and reducing the amount of time devoted to necessary tasks or work for economic ends has been one of humanity's constant aims." (To be found in full at www.antenna.nl/~waterman/gorz.html) On August 15, 1971, Richard Nixon announced that the US dollar would no longer convert to gold, effectively ending the Bretton Woods system. Tobin suggested a new system for international currency stability, and proposed that such a system include an international charge on foreign-exchange transactions. A Tobin tax is the suggested tax on all trade of currency across borders. Named after the economist James Tobin, the tax is intended to put a penalty on short-term speculation in currencies. The original tax rate he proposed was one per cent which was subsequently lowered to between 0.1 and 0.25 per cent. The idea lay dormant for more than 20 years and was revived by the advent of the South East Asia economic crisis in the late 1990s. In 1997 Ignacio Ramonet, editor of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, renewed the debate around the Tobin tax with an editorial titled "Disarming the markets". Ramonet proposed to create an association for the introduction of this tax, which was named ATTAC (Association for the Taxation of financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens). The tax then became an issue of the global justice movement or alter-globalisation movement and a matter of discussion not only in academic institutions but even in streets and in parliaments in the UK, France, and around the world. Adair Turner, chair of the United Kingdom Financial Services Authority, in August 2009 in an interview for *Prospect* magazine supported the idea of new global taxes on financial transactions, warning that a "swollen" financial sector paying excessive salaries has grown too big for society. Lord Turner's suggestion that a Tobin tax should be considered for financial transactions is on a par with bankers showing the way forward by decoupling the quantity of individual labour input from level of earnings. Now here's a twist that only someone with Gordon Brown's previous could add. Remember Gordon's moral compass was capable of directing him to hijack the "Make Poverty History" rally in Edinburgh, during the G8, as public support for Gordon Brown the no more boom or bust chancellor. But not to be outdone the same person, now Prime Minister, turns up at the G20 in St Andrews to steal the idea from those who designed it as a tax to eliminate third world poverty and present it as one to be used to hand back cash to the banks should they require future bailouts - surely charlatanism of the breathtaking variety. For more see www.stampoutpoverty.org/?lid=9889 . Henry McCubbin