Letters to the WSWS

12 June 2000

Dear *WSWS* Editors,

As with other articles, Nick Beams' "Globalisation: The Socialist Perspective Part II" continues your site's tradition of high fidelity reporting and insightful analysis on current social issues and I am sure I am speaking for an increasing readership, much appreciated. The article points to a very obvious explanation to many of today's end-phase capitalistic quagmires and has kept most of us who would bother to be honest about what has been happening economically in particular and historically in general, sane.

The main thrust of the article crystallises the fact that the current productivity gain from silicon chip and computing technologies is not, as time is telling, a genuine gain but a one-off structural adjustment, fully exploited and exaggerated by bogey domestic statistics release and financial "doublespeak". This adjustment of substituting clerical labor with computer software has already had its accounting effect booked in the form of large profit under corporate downsizing (while sales still lag in response). And the other side of the Keynesian coin is where would companies find replacement for the lost consumption from the workers who had been laid off?

Other factors help alleviate such problem like increased debt ratio especially from private sectors, trickle down effect for related industries like telecommunications, corporate mergers to "adjust" bookkeeping to a shrinking real sector, and the hard to quantify but obvious international financial effect of illicit money flows from such opportune events like the opening up of previously planned economies and its entailing corruption and capital flight. All these and the media induced mentality that one could make a living as a day trader in financial assets (especially IPO stocks with no earnings, etc....), have contributed to the current "long" US economic miracle. But it has nothing to do with productivity as such and very much with financial gimmickry (i.e., daylight robbery) nurtured by the bourgeois government and press. The awesome thing is that Marx has already put all these in print 150 years ago and the bourgeois has mastered these pointers to the last trick. And yet it's happening again and again.... If there is any consolation to all these, Marx also predicts Socialism!

Thanks for the clearheadedness.

LC

6 June 2000

Hello,

I'm a 22-year-old French student and I enjoy consulting your site very much: I totally agree with all I've read so far and I admire the clearness and the cleverness with which all your articles are written.

I would just like to react to the letter on Stalinism, Trotskyism and the Communist Party of Canada, dating from March 1999. In this letter, one can read (I'm translating): "But would Trotsky have done better? It may be but we will never know."; talking about Stalin's ruling of the Soviet Union.

I think that's not where the problem lies: the question of power is indeed hardly a personal issue at all, and the question is more about the social nature of the Soviet state than about "Was Trotsky a nicer person than Stalin".

Trotsky himself, when asked why he hadn't seized power after the civil war, when he was still at the head of the Red Army, answered that out of all the Soviet institutions, the high command of the army (which was filled with czarist officers), was the most bureaucratised one; thus using this institution to seize power would have meant putting himself at the head of this new uprising cast he was already fighting against. Which would have probably made him into some kind of Stalin ...

It seems to me very obvious that Trotsky was right and that the problem isn't "Would he have been better than Stalin", but "Who is each one defending": the counterrevolution through the Soviet bureaucracy for Stalin, the world revolution and the international proletariat for Trotsky.

I would like to finish with a sentence by Trotsky (unfortunately I'm only quoting by memory). He said in the thirties: "If Stalin had been told 10 years ago all the crimes he was to accomplish, he most probably would

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have denied with energy; and he would have meant it..."

AP

11 June 2000

Sirs,

I appreciated your Third Way article. I do believe that democracy is a dictatorship of a few who make the people think they are really the deciders, this with complicity of mass media .The role of media is important to show a false image of the world. This organisation of the world of money owners drove this “elite” to work in common through think thank organisations and secret clubs as Bilderberg, Trilateral Commission, CFR and the Aspen Institute.

They need to go on with pumping money from our pocket and from the Third World. Once their credibility is at stake, they can well decide to change and show the real side of the true world. Unhappily for us, not a lot of people are awakened by a collective conscience, but I am quite sure this is slowly emerging. But from consciousness to acting there is still a large river. I would be pleased if you could publish an article on these regulating organisations to open the mind of your readers.

Thanks.

DM

10 June 2000

To: editor@wsws.org

I recently read an article by Bill Vann "New York prison administers medicine for profit" 24 October 1998 and it looks like this is still happening to inmates at Rikers Island. My brother-in-law was picked up (with a sick-liver, HIV+, etc.) on March 29, 2000 at 6:00 am on a warrant that was more than 10 years old from New Jersey. (He had been picked up several times before and released because New Jersey never picked him up.)

We are not totally sure of all the facts but from the limited information we have here is what happened: He was sent to the North Infirmary Command Center because he was sick. Then transferred to OBCC. Apparently, he wasn't getting enough food because just a few weeks ago a friend went to visit and said he complained of hunger but looked okay considering. I also had sent him a check and he returned it with a letter telling me he could only accept a money order (I wrote the check on May 5 and sent the money order back a week or so later).

Within the next two weeks or so he must have gotten very sick, and on May 31, 2000 was transferred to Elmhurst Memorial Hospital. On Thursday, June 1, I called the Infirmary at Rikers Island to check on him (for some reason had a feeling something was wrong) and they told me he was sent to Elmhurst Hospital in Queens and they couldn't tell me any other information. I had problems locating a phone number for the hospital (they didn't have it) a kind operator helped me. I called patient information and was told he was in Intensive Care. I then called his mother and told her and his brother and sisters. I called the hospital and the receptionist put me through to Intensive Care and I was told he was on a ventilator but we should call back around 4:00 p.m. when the doctor was there.

His two sisters (one is a nurse) and I called back and spoke with a doctor who informed us he had an infection through his body, pneumonia, liver problems and his kidneys had shut down, plus he was unconscious and he didn't give him much chance of pulling through.

We rushed over there (coming from New Jersey) to see him. After going through the formalities you go through to see a prisoner that is in the hospital we went to ICU. We new he was pretty sick because the machine was breathing for him. We all spoke to him and went home after spending time with him, planning to come back in the morning.

Needless to say, Thomas Winston, died 7:15 a.m. the Friday morning, June 2. We as a family are pursuing this, but I was wondering if there is any other information available to us or if you can offer us some suggestions. Any help would be appreciated.

Thank you.

PBW

9 June 2000

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