

Letters to the WSWS

30 June 2001

Below we post a selection of recent letters to the WSWS

Dear Editor,

Patrick Martin's article on the smug, self-satisfied Internet magazine, *Salon*, is indeed welcome. I, for one, will not regret the demise of the empty-headed, cynical style of journalism represented by *Salon*. At least then the despicable Camille Paglia will have to seek another forum for her particular brand of social filth.

Yours,

EG

29 June 2001

Nick Beam's thorough and lucid exposition on socialism, its bases, and historical misapprehensions, often expressed far more temperately than I think I could manage for myself, prompts me both to endorse and modestly add to what he has written. Claims that capitalism, and in particular its American embodiment, best fulfill the aspirations of humanity can only stand when they ignore much of what American "freedom" entails and entailed, even at the time of the founding father.

The criterion for "happiness" and "fulfillment", lightly trotted out by the beneficiaries of the present system, generally boils down to nothing more or less than the ability to make money. If your happiness happens to be—let us say—the writing of poetry, the composing of difficult music, or even the making of socially aware and intelligent motion-pictures, the money-minded communities of the United States aren't going to be the place to find your happiness and fulfillment. The championing of money as the criterion, for example, of popular art and culture has led to a general and conspicuous debasement of art forms throughout the west.

To state that this is the most successful of social and political systems on the grounds that it accords most closely to the realities of "human nature" is a gross insult to all the men and women, known and unknown, who for many thousands of years have made our species exceptional because they recognized the value and the worth of the Other (as do socialists) and were not blinded and made impotent, as is the case for many who suffer (often unknowingly) at the hands of socialism's enemies.

IF

28 June 2001

Hello,

Since I discovered your web site a year ago, I have grown more dependent on it as a source of information and analysis, which is often omitted or misinterpreted, in the mainstream

media. Even though I sometimes disagree with your view on world events, I appreciate the depth and seriousness of your writings.

In view of the recent development of events in the Balkans, I would like to see a more comprehensive coverage of this region. It seems that much can be learned about the true intentions of the United States and its European allies by analyzing their dubious engagement to broker a "peace deal" in Macedonia these days. In particular, NATO's open logistical support for the rebels' quick withdrawal from the front lines on Sunday raises many interesting questions.

The quickness of the reaction is a solid hint, if not a proof, that NATO was well aware of the activities and plans of the rebels while its own military commander was chastising them for use of force in the popular media. NATO's support for paramilitary organizations in the Balkans is old news, but the motives for its actions are becoming more obvious through the surprising involvement of its corporate sponsors in this operation. The buses and trucks, which transported the rebels and their arsenal of modern American weaponry were courtesy of Brown and Root corporation, the Texas based exclusive contractor for US armed forces in the region.

The role of corporations like Brown and Root, whose profit from the American involvement in the Balkans may well run in the billions of dollars, has been all but ignored in reports from the Balkans. Well to do companies, which are usually known for boasting about gargantuan profits, are somewhat shy about reporting the true figures in this case. In a region known for its strong connection to drug producing centers in Central Asia, it may indeed be smarter to keep your earnings in a Swiss bank by way of the local laundry shop than to bother with lengthy computations, which may dazzle the Internal Revenue Service.

Despite a number of tangential references to the shady dealings of American corporations in the Balkans and their connections to organized crime, I have not yet seen a serious and comprehensive analysis of this interesting subject. I attempted to study the situation on my own, but I soon found that the crucial pieces of evidence (price tags of financial contracts, names of American and European suppliers for Kosovo, manufacturers of weapons used by the rebels) are difficult to find. The Brown and Roots of this world have every incentive to keep the evidence buried deep inside their corporate safes, but the subjects of their empire are slowly collecting the pieces left behind: bullets, land mines, exploded

grenades.

The time has come to collect and present the evidence against the Henry Kissingers of the Balkans. I hope to see serious publications like yours leading the effort.

AB

27 June 2001

Dear Editor,

Among the many admirable qualities of WSWs is the consistent clarity of expression and grammatically correct constructions that appear in WSWs pages.

By way of example, I refer to today's article [Andrei Sakharov and the fate of liberal democratic thought in post-Soviet Russia] by Vladimir Volkov's whom, I assume (perhaps incorrectly), is not a native English speaker. Quite unlike my experience with many popular publications, I found that I had read Volkov's entire piece without mentally rewriting awkward or incomplete sentences, correcting misspellings or questioning the intent of the author's meaning.

Congratulations to you for producing a fine, thought provoking and reliable source of information on a wide range of subjects. WSWs is indispensable for understanding crucial current events and gaining historical perspective.

Sincerely,

RD

San Diego, California

25 June 2001

Dear Mr. Vann:

Your article ("Castroism and the politics of petty-bourgeois nationalism," January 7, 1998, <http://www.WSWs.org/exhibits/castro/index.htm>) was probably the clearest in presenting the monumental confusion that exists in this world over socialism and its path to social justice. Never have I encountered a comprehensive analysis of Castro's place in the world as well as Guevara's as well. Their behavior makes sense only in context of history. I have a lot to learn. WSWs is teaching me every day.

Thanks,

SC

PS: I used several of the articles on the WSWs for my analysis of the Israeli and Arabic conflict through literary analysis. The sharp presentation of the contradictions of Zionism vs. socialism, and Judaism used as an identity against the Arab other were particularly helpful. The graffiti of the swastika equals the Star of David really hurt me personally, but it made sense at last thanks to articles with a socialist perspective.

19 June 2001

Dear WSWs,

I have just read this article on the corruption of DC 37. I am employed by the Parks Department as a graphic artist, hired only within this past year, and I am thereby a member of DC 37. I automatically have the \$40 a month dues deducted from my salary, whether or not I elect to be a union member. In the brief time of my employment at Parks I quickly began to learn

some of the details of this corruption through conversation with fellow workers, particularly those who have worked for 10 or more years at Parks, and have experienced the erosion of their real wages over that time through contracts, which bring only 1 or 2 percent increases a year. The highest increase was the most recent of 4 percent back-dated to 1999 because workers had worked for more than a year without a contract, and so represented as an increase of 8 percent. One worker reported that over the 15 years she has worked for Parks that her salary has increased from only \$30,000 to \$35,000 a year.

Tales such as these have angered me, especially as I witness the absolutely dispiriting effect of these experiences consistently over time. My co-workers have given up hope that the union does anything to protect their rights and interests. It is just another bureaucracy taking advantage and strengthening the power of the employer.

And finally, I have become acquainted with the woman who picks up the office trash everyday. A WEP (Work Experience Program) worker, she told me how, in exchange for 35 hours per week of cleaning, she receives her bimonthly welfare check of \$68.40. When the program ends in December, she says she does not know what she will do. She cannot be employed by the Parks Department, despite the willingness to do so of her supervisor, because that would involve taking a civil service exam, which her fairly low literacy level and inexperience with areas of maintenance such as boilers and other building systems, do not enable her to pass. "We are basically slaves," she said.

I intend to circulate this article to my fellow DC 37 members at the Parks Department, however, I would like to do so with some indication of what we can do. We already feel powerless enough. Is there something you can suggest?

Sincerely,

AL

28 June 2001



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact