

Letters to the WSWS

15 August 2001

The following is a selection of recent letters to the WSWS.

Great articles on the idiocy of the US House and “president” in regards to stem cell research. That’s “OK” though ... the rest of the world will be cloning away and curing all sorts of diseases ... and, more than likely, many biotech firms will decide to fund such research out of their own pockets so that they won’t be left behind because of the Stupid People.

It really is embarrassing to be a citizen of the United States these days (or at least since the days after WWII). I think I’m going to move to France or New Zealand ... certainly if I end up having Parkinson’s.

Cheers,
GH

14 August 2001

While Patrick Martin’s 8/14/01 [“Bush’s stem cell decision: an attack on medical science and democratic rights”] article made many good points, I was surprised that such a good Socialist didn’t expose the cunning latent in the presidential decision: if I am not mistaken, the regulation so far applies only to “government funded”, i.e., public institutional, stem cell research while it leaves “privately funded” stem cell research unregulated.

This either means that Bush has fewer moral scruples where private entrepreneurial stem cell research is concerned or—more likely—has decided to “enable” the biotech industry to get any “stem cell cures” across the finish line faster and into patent rights before the results of government funded research can reach the public domain.

The overly shrill lamentation about the forthcoming lack of sufficient stem cell research is something of a red herring: there will be plenty of such research—just not under public auspices and in the citizen consumers’ best interests.

If those consumers think the drug industrial monopolists already charge too much for pills and

panaceas, just wait until the privately patented and monopolized “stem cell cures” hit the market...

Q

14 August 2001

The opposition of the so-called “pro-life” forces to stem cell research which could potentially save the lives of people suffering from currently incurable diseases exposes the hypocrisy of the religious right. This hypocrisy is further illustrated by “pro-life” televangelist Pat Robertson’s support of China’s policy of forcible abortion. Although a staunch opponent of voluntary abortion in the United States, Robertson has defended the mandatory abortions performed in China as a part of that country’s population control measures. The fact that Robertson has \$10 million invested in a Chinese Internet portal may not be unrelated.

D

12 August 2001

The numbers are mind-boggling [“US job cuts approach 1 million in 2001”]. The human tragedy and pain behind the numbers is almost too painful to contemplate. The social contract between workers and employers is gone forever. For all of us the future is very foreboding.

Welcome to the wonderful world of corporate rule and capital freed to seek the highest return, regardless of the human tragedy.

TG

14 August 2001

Thank you for your factually correct article which quite rightly shows the amount of money being made by Glasgow City Council who could never get occupants for the pathetic standard of housing on offer in Sighthill. In return these people should be offered a safe and secure environment—both through policing and community offices.

The *Daily (Racist) Record* reported without any justification other than hearsay that the murdered man was indeed a fruit and vegetable salesman and not a

political refugee with its blatantly racist headline “Turk stabbing victim conned his way in as asylum seeker” (*Daily Record* 8/8/2001). Even Jesus Christ had a daytime job! I will be lodging a complaint with the Press Complaints Commission over this false report (which fits exactly into your report of “hysterical press campaign portraying asylum seekers as “bogus” and “economic migrants”). It is time the press are brought to heel and made to realise sensationalism backed without facts has to be paid for (in this case with an innocent man’s life). The British National Party has had paid workers out on the streets of Sighthill for weeks handing out leaflets and inciting racial hatred. We have one of the best Secret Services in the world so I cannot for a minute believe the government did not know exactly the potential problem—but then refugees come cheap! We allow them to be herded onto supposed safe havens on the hills of the Turkish border to be attacked by Iraqi gunships so what hope do they have in Scotland!

Regards,

AS

12 August 2001

Thank you for your excellent web site. Overall, the quality of your analyses of current events, trends and conditions is as good or superior to any I have read elsewhere. I am writing to you today to ask that you do a piece on the fifth anniversary of Public Law 104-193’s (the “Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act”, aka the “Welfare Reform Act” of 1996) passage. It is significant that this fifth anniversary be observed because the Act provides that an individual’s lifetime entitlement to “welfare” ends after a cumulative total of 60 months of his or her receiving such benefits. This means that quite soon many thousands of people who have been receiving public assistance continuously for the past five years will lose their benefits and will be ineligible for any further benefits for the rest of their lives.

Likewise, many others who began receiving benefits more recently, or who might have gone on and off public assistance over the past five years, will use up their lifetime entitlement in the years ahead. I do not know when these people will lose their benefits elsewhere, but in South Dakota, where I live, the “effective date” (meaning the date one’s receiving benefits began to be counted) of the Temporary

Assistance for Needy Family’s (TANF) eligibility provisions of the law was December 1996. So, come December 2001, a lot of people in South Dakota will have had their benefits eligibility expire. What a lot of people who lose their benefits will do to survive, I do not know.

This situation is especially dire as many of those who have been receiving TANF and other benefits are in some way mentally or physically incapable of full-time employment—but they are not so severely “disabled” (as the Social Security Administration defines the concept) as to qualify for Social Security Insurance or disability benefits. And, given the worsening economic situation in this country, these people’s prospects are even poorer.

I have been trying to keep up with developments in the welfare reform story, but aside from clichéd individual “success stories” about welfare moms who are grateful that they got the “kick in the butt” they needed to do something with their lives, the mainstream press is not covering this story. Thus it is that I appeal to you. Thank you.

LG

Sioux Falls, SD

14 August 2001

See Also:

Bush’s stem cell decision: an attack on medical science and democratic rights

[14 August 2001]

US job cuts approach 1 million in 2001

[14 August 2001]

Asylum seeker killed in Glasgow, Scotland

[9 August 2001]



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