

Letters to the WSWS

15 August 2002

The following is a selection of recent letters to the World Socialist Web Site.

On "US Airways files for bankruptcy"

This bankruptcy is further proof that capitalists make their fortunes on the backs of the workers. In the early 90s when the airlines were going through the downside of their usual cycle of profits and mostly losses, airline employees gave wage and benefit concessions to their employers. In the mid- and late 90s when profits were soaring, airlines were, as usual, reluctant to give back the wage and concessions that employees had earlier given to their companies.

Now the cycle has once again turned downward and employees once again are being asked to give back while airline executives make huge salaries, are given outrageous bonus perks and have extraordinary "golden parachutes" just in case their employment gets terminated for whatever reason. Once again the workers get the shaft. The idea that if a person works hard and does his job correctly, that that person/worker will be rewarded eventually is the biggest bunch of capitalist propaganda ever perpetuated on the human race! The airline industry as a whole and US Airways in particular are examples of the fact that this "work ethic" is a hoax.

Your article tells it like it is! Keep up the good work!

Sincerely,

JM

Florida

An ex-airline employee

On "Millions of poor US families face utility shutoffs"

Dear Mr. Lawrence,

I just wanted to commend you for that article. It's about time that this was written about in a serious and non-cynical manner. Utility cutoffs are serious and really do have the potential to be life threatening. I know this for a fact because I went through this so many times this past winter. Due to an illness, I was out of work for three months without any income except for small amounts given to me by relatives. Carolina Power and Light (CP&L) threatened many times to cut off my electricity. By the way, where I live if you don't have electricity you not only can't heat your home but you can't cook your food. I called them many times explaining my medical and financial situation only to be scoffed at by

self-righteous and arrogant customer service reps (management included). They very coldly refused to grant me the extensions I needed to pay the amounts I owed. It didn't even matter to them that I had a four-year-old son to raise at that time. It also didn't matter that I had medical records to prove that I had an illness, which kept me out of work. It didn't even matter that I had filed Chapter 7 bankruptcy! The North Carolina Utilities Commission intervened on my behalf to get me the extensions that I needed to pay my bill. And although I found out later that this commission could not force CP&L to give me an extension, for some reason being contacted by this agency made a difference. What really confused me was the agent must have told CP&L the same thing that I did. What was the difference?

Anyway, if you could do more articles such as this I think you could really make a difference. And even naming these companies specifically would help even more. If you do this now in the next few months before it gets cold I have a feeling that some of these companies may suddenly become "concerned" and come up with reasonable alternatives to shutting off electricity from people's homes.

Mr. Lawrence, this is serious business. My situation (thanks to employed relatives and good luck) was not as bad as the ones you listed in your article. God bless those people. The WSWS with proper coverage and exposure to these people can save a few if not many lives.

Thank you,

KF

14 August 2002

On "The Fort Bragg murders: a grim warning on the use of the military"

Studies by a professor at Northwestern University have shown that our military is now predominately comprised of right-wingers; their politics are very conservative; they are mostly Christian fundamentalists. Fundamentalists believe that the "father" is the boss; the wife is subordinate; and that corporal punishment is OK'd by the Bible. This leads to wife-beating, child abuse, and sometimes murder. It may explain a five-times greater rate of spousal killings. It is undoubtedly a result of the elimination of the draft. Unfair as it was, the draft did result in getting a better cross-section of

the population.

I was in the service from 1964 to 1969 (two Vietnam tours). If you put a gun to my head I could not tell you the religion or politics of any of my many commanding officers. I cannot recall any of those topics ever being discussed. And that's the way it should be! But no longer is. Recall the military's disrespect of Clinton; and the seditious remarks of that lunatic Jesse Helms.

Sincerely,
RH,
Former officer
10 August 2002

So more chickens are coming home to roost. American pilots, like the one who bombed four Canadians in Afghanistan, have to take "speed" before flying missions if they don't want their careers damaged. Likely other military personnel such as the "Special Forces" are in the same boat. Many truckers and motorcycle gang members are in hospitals, prisons and graveyards from doing speed, but at least they didn't have the US arsenal to go berserk with. People need to know what kind of people are being "paroled" back into my country from Afghanistan.

Good job letting the people know.
SR

Oakland, California
12 August 2002
Dear Editor,

Your article on the Fort Bragg murders was excellent. I would like to add a few thoughts though. I believe the increasing militarization of our society and the keeping of such a huge standing army in peacetime have frightening repercussions. A standing military force is not a beacon of freedom. In reality standing armies have been the bane of nations since the ancient Greek and Roman republics. The perversion of a citizen army, and the concept of the citizen soldier, common in not only ancient times but at the time of the American Revolution, provide valuable lessons.

In the American Revolution citizen militias provided soldiers who contributed to the winning of a bloody and brutal war against the mercenary troops of King George III. Yes, the Continental Army was made up of a standing force, but without citizen soldiers the war would not have been won. Now in modern times, how can soldiers of a massive standing army, which pays them poverty wages while top brass live in luxury, feel any common tie with the society? They are subject to brutal discipline, taught unquestioning obedience to superiors, placed in a feudal-like caste system where the officers live like nobles, and are frequently used as cannon fodder for imperialistic warfare.

Combine all these and you have the recipe for disaster. Also add the "kill" mentality ingrained in special forces

troops and the murders should be no surprise. This standing army is dangerous to the soldiers, and the populace of the United States. History is replete with republics being transformed by ruling class elements into dictatorships through the use of a standing military force. Add an imperialistic foreign policy and you can rest assured liberty is in its last days. Thanks again for a great article.

GG
California
10 August 2002

It surely follows that special forces personnel that have been exposed to, and quite possibly involved, in the inhumane treatment of Afghan POWs, (e.g., *Massacre at Mazar*) may indeed be deeply psychologically affected on their return to the US. That said, probably all war veterans are disturbed by their exposure to the results of modern warfare and we should all be concerned as to what the consequences are for society in general. Keep up the good work.

LS
10 August 2002

On "Britain: Socialist Alliance vows political loyalty to the trade union bureaucracy"

Dear Comrade Hyland,

I loved your article. Although this is a serious matter I sometimes find the politics of the Socialist Alliance comical. I used to wonder why these "leftists" are so loyal to the labor union bureaucrats. Then it hit me, they are just like the Stalinists. Like Stalinism they are a petty bourgeois movement, with a revolutionary heritage. They still claim that now discarded heritage while using left-sounding phraseology to promote their agenda. Some of their leaders are union bureaucrats themselves, or aspire to be. Thus their politics are quite logical and self-interested. By falsely juxtaposing the Labour Party with so-called union policy, they seek to divert the working class from an independent, internationalist, and revolutionary path. There is no difference between Labour Party policy and union policy, and these people must know this. I'm glad you and the WSWS continue to expose these folks for who they truly are: frauds.

Keep up the good work. It will pay off some day.

In Solidarity,
IO
12 August 2002



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact