

Letters to the WSWS

23 June 2003

Below we post a selection of recent letters to the World Socialist Web Site.

On "A political strategy to fight the attack on workers' pensions in France"

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a trade union activist in Ireland and fully support the stance of the French unions and workforce in relation to the pensions issue. I don't think that the French government's stance on pensions will only apply to France in the future and I am greatly concerned that it will spread throughout the EU.

A few comrades and I from Ireland would like to offer our support to the French trade unions by going over to France and joining them in their protest.

Yours fraternally,

DC

ESBOA Ireland

10 June 2003

On "Budget deadline looms for California" by Nick Davis

Dear Nick,

Thanks for this article. One of my closest friends works for the State of California and she is greatly worried about being put on a minimum-wage salary! Needless to say, she won't even be able to pay her rent on that amount of money and we, her friends, have set up an assistance program for her if she needs it. Meanwhile, two very lovely acquaintances of mine are school teachers in Half Moon Bay, California and must be wondering what their employment status is going to be in the next year. Proposition 13 was a deadly toxin, like curare, that essentially immobilized the flow of money into government spending on social programs (what's left of them anyway).

Many people don't realize that "social programs" include things like the safety of the water they drink and the food they eat, fire and police departments, street cleaners, public transport, airports, etc. These selfish yuppies only think of social services and "handouts" to people they consider to be "undeserving." Their standard for who is deserving or who is not is usually crudely class-based and narrow even within that class. But there are many services that they like to pretend don't apply to them. Meanwhile, the rest of the people of the State of California are clawing at each other in order to get greater purchase on the disintegrating life raft of the state budget. That rising tide isn't water—it's sewage.

CZ

San Francisco

10 June 2003

Editor,

Thanks for a very good story, "Budget deadline looms for California." Even though this story covered the most crucial issues, I would like to have seen something written about the horrendous cuts proposed to MediCal, by Governor Davis.

These cuts, if passed, will devastate this state's population of welfare recipients and persons with disabilities, like myself. Among these proposed cuts are: elimination of so-called MediCal "optional benefits," which include dental care and all the many medical supplies. These supplies include rubber gloves, urinary and incontinence supplies

(catheters, leg-bags, adult diapers), bandages and dressings. Without these items, many disabled people face severe illness and even possible death. We cannot survive without these things and we are too poor to afford to buy them ourselves.

Our "esteemed" governor even wants to suspend purchasing vital Durable Medical Equipment (DME) we need to have a life. DME includes wheelchairs and ventilators.

He also proposes suspending our SSI cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

BB

ADAPT

10 June 2003

Dear Editor,

"Martha Stewart: the indictment of an American icon," by Joseph Kay is a very well-researched analysis of the motives behind this public lynching. The SEC and the White House know that if they can convince half of the people that Hussein was behind 9/11 that they can easily convince them that Martha Stewart's stock sale is responsible for all ills. Martha's endlessly hyped and over-televised trial will serve as a calming placebo for a few weeks during which the mom and pop investors around the country will heartily jump back into the stock markets because they will falsely believe that someone is out there looking after the interests of the little man. A fool and his money soon go separate ways.

PK

10 June 2003

On "Bush administration ratchets up pressure on Ottawa"

Condoleezza Rice basically says that "friends" support each other no matter what their agenda, especially when their "security" is at risk. No. 1, "friends" don't lie to other "friends," as the Bush administration did to justify their war of aggression and greed. No. 2, how was US security at risk, and how has it been improved, by attacking a defenseless people (Iraqis). No. 3, the "many friends" Ms. Rice speaks of were purchased (at the cost of billions of US dollars) to "support" the war. Most of these so-called "friends" provided nothing, except lip service, so they could get US money. No. 4. Unfortunately, Canada *did* provide assistance to the US, although Canada's fearless leaders did not verbalize it. Canadian taxpayers provided equipment and people to help the US military in the US oligarchy's "empire-building" in Iraq ... as Canadians did in Afghanistan, which is now a quagmire, and where Canadian soldiers were injured and some were slaughtered ... errrr accidentally killed ... by their US "friends." Pres. Bush did not even apologize for this until he was forced to do so, and even then he showed the depth of gratitude and "friendship" he is capable of (NOT!) by grudgingly doing so. With "friends" like these...

MB

11 June 2003

On "Sean Penn's Times statement: patriotism and the struggle against US militarism"

Wow, great article. I find myself going more and more with the writers on this site, and the article by David Walsh today was a brilliant example of why. Keep up the good work.

PB

13 June 2003

Dear Editor,

I'm satisfied with George Bernard Shaw's definition of patriotism: "Patriotism is the conviction that your country is the best country in the world because you were born in it."

I believe Shaw got to the egoistic root of modern nationalism in his typically acerbic way. Our patriotic fervor has much more to do with the inane "we're number one" chants of the sports-team fanatics than it has with any true sense of family bond or community belonging. It's much more like a shell, a kind of psychic armor—a fear-based reaction—than an expression of human culture and connection.

Betraying the shallowness of this "patriotic" attitude is the current push in Congress to make flag-burning a federal offense. The American flag, the goose-pimple-producing symbol of American freedoms and values, stands, if it stands for anything positive anymore, for the freedoms enshrined in the US Constitution's Bill of Rights—the very first and foremost article of which prohibits Congress from "abridging the freedom of speech." You wouldn't think a public official sworn to "uphold and defend the Constitution" could fail to notice the irony that in prohibiting the use/abuse of a symbol of freedom, he is abridging the freedom itself.

If the freedom is taken away, then of what use is the symbol of the freedom? Wouldn't a symbol without meaning deserve to be burned?

But no, in the same fervidly hollow state of patriotism that saw the USA Patriot Act pass—unread, undebated—through Congress, "our representatives" now further their assault on the people's democratic rights by protecting the symbol from the reality.

Sleep tight, Georges Orwell and Shaw. Ye did your part.

BM

Denver, Colorado

13 June 2003

On "US suffers Latin American rebuke at OAS meeting"

Great article on the OAS & that goddamn Colin Powell, who makes me sick. It's too bad the so called mainstream media, doesn't even come close to mentioning what is happening in the rest of the world, especially Latin America.

H

New York

14 June 2003

On "Australia: Higher education reform package advances 'user-pays' agenda"

The so-called Higher Education reforms of the Howard government in Australia are taking us back to the days of pre-1972, when university education was the province of the elite classes. This is not reform, it is dismantling of an excellent public university structure which once functioned well and was well funded.

I was one of the lucky ones who studied at a time when tuition fees did not exist. However my Masters Degree cost me very little money due to a scholarship being made available by the university.

My children are not going to be so lucky like their father.

Regards,

TS

15 June 2003

On "Australian prime minister an enthusiastic promoter of the WMD fraud"

Dear WWSWS,

I read your intelligent, honest, and essential reporting every day as soon as I see your email arrive in my inbox. Your web site disgusts me—but only for one reason—that it tells me what those damn criminals in US power are doing in Iraq.

But I always have another feeling bubbling under—unease. I see the Australian government clutching onto Bush's coattails, slowly changing things here, too—and either no one seems to notice or care. People seem to

be more interested in Eric Bana's latest movie or how badly people drive in Brisbane than this huge problem bearing down on us all.

I simply can't grasp the reason why Bush, Blair and Howard seem to be getting away with all this. The only dim light at the end of the tunnel is that there are now parliamentary enquiries in Britain and here into who lied to us about the WMDs and why.

I pass links to your web site on to many people in the vain hope that people will wake up and smell the stink of greed and evil that pervades the environs of the world's elite.

Keep up the good work.

WR

Brisbane Australia

18 June 2003

On "Media witchhunt Australian boxer for opposing US war"

BRAVO to Australian boxer Anthony Mundine, for his opposition to the US-led war in Afghanistan and hopefully his continuing opposition of the unjustified invasion of Iraq. I'm sure you'll be hearing from others in the USA, now that we're being made aware of this article. Glad to know there are others around the world who join us in opposing the Bush regime's foreign policy and domestic agenda. We are unsuccessful in our efforts to stop them. Bush and his cronies have defiled the US Constitution, raped and tortured Democracy, assassinated freedom, and murdered the Bill of Rights.

BRAVO to all who speak out, opposing this illegitimate, fascist regime occupying the Oval Office in Washington DC.

LS

18 June 2003

It seems that those who predicted another Vietnam were not too far off the mark. I feel sad that young basically good men, mostly kids, went to Iraq under the impression that they were "making the world a safer place" and yet from what I have read are turning into what always happens when soldiers have seen death and destruction on a grand scale. They turn basically into killers. Watching your buddies die, being hated and shot at. Knowing you're going to be there even longer than you expected is a great demoralizing thing to bear.

I believe that we will eventually have to pull out as we lose more and more soldiers. This will be a great humiliation. And then the questions will start flying. I wonder who they have set up to take the fall on this one? We know who is responsible, but that doesn't mean they will be punished. It's easy to say that you can win a war with the weapons we have. But the trick that no one seemed to have thought of is what happens when you have millions of desperate people who are willing to die to oust the "liberators"? This is just another sad chapter in the history of Man. And I think the book is getting near the end. The final chapters will deal with North Korea and China. Read on till the very end. If you live that long.

TJ

13 June 2003

On "Another US war crime: the use of depleted uranium munitions in Iraq"

Dear Sir/Madam:

Thank you and everyone at the *World Socialist Web Site* for your informative appraisals of the situation in the Persian Gulf and your work towards peace and international solidarity. I especially appreciate your recent article on the use of depleted uranium munitions in Iraq.

Keep up the great work.

Best regards,

TG

16 June 2003



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact