

# Letters from our readers

22 August 2003

*Below we post a selection of recent letters to the WSW.*

*Re: California recall exposes political myths, 18 August, 2003*

Your fine article reveals the two myths that the two corporate parties represent the views and needs of the working people and that there is widespread support for this right wing cabal that controls politics in America. This California election also exposes how repressed the common voters have been by the poverty of real representation of their interests, their rebellion against this, and the myth that America is a popular democracy.

In America, there has never been true majority rule. Only a mass socialist party and government based on the working class majority, with social egalitarian policies, could be called a genuine democracy. How much democracy can exist when 90 percent of the wealth produced by labor is expropriated and controlled by 10 percent of the population? In any regular election only wealthy politicians with rich backers can afford the exorbitant costs of a campaign that excludes progressive and socialist parties. How many parties can acquire the 700,000 signatures needed for California ballot access? Freedom of choice in voting is also a myth since the masses really only get to choose between two stooges of big business who have already been hand-picked by the corporate parties and media conglomerates.

The John Christopher Burton campaign supported by the SEP is critical in helping the working people of California break through this anti-democratic straight jacket toward real political independence.

RS

20 August 2003

*Re: The Iraq quagmire, 21 August 2003*

This is the most intelligent and insightful article I have read on the bombing of the UN headquarters in Iraq. You have shown just how hypocritical the Bush regime is and that the attack was more an attack on the occupation than on the UN. Thank you.

Resist American Empire. Boycott American and British businesses.

EJ

21 August 2003

Dear Editors:

Your article about the quagmire into which the Bush administration has led the American people through his preemptive war against Sadaam Hussein is timely and shows that this invasion has justified a war of liberation that is being waged, unfortunately, by fundamentalist extremists.

You are right to draw parallels between the repression by the US and its occupation forces in Iraq and the repression of the Nazis in Czechoslovakia, the French in Algiers and the US in Vietnam. But why look so far afield for parallels when the closest parallel is the Israeli occupation of Palestine? In fact, it was the US support of this Zionist occupation that was no small factor in the US decision to invade and occupy Iraq. And now the American people and US troops have found themselves in a situation similar to that of the Israeli people and its troops playing the role of repressive occupying forces living in daily fear of terrorist attacks. Why are people so reluctant to see this parallel?

Sincerely,

RR

21 August 2003

The attack on the "United Nations" headquarters in Iraq reeks with the stench of CIA involvement. What a better way... maybe the only way to get other countries involved in Bush's plan to dishonestly occupy Iraq with a puppet regime. This administration's only interest will be serving the bourgeois in their fascist quest to control all of the "global" resources!

JI

21 August 2003

*Re: Why are they dying? More questions over US military fatalities in Iraq, 20 August 2003*

An interesting observation about the current loss of lives of our soldiers stationed in Iraq, losses occurring almost daily, is concerned with publicity. During the invasion when a soldier was killed and the body was sent home it

was always done with great fanfare. The returning plane was met with public officials, service men, flags, flowers, and the press. There followed an auspicious funeral, with music, more flowers and a burial ceremony. Look at what is happening today. There is a casual mention that another soldier was killed. He is not named and nobody seems to attend his arrival home. Nothing is said about his funeral or burial. We just don't want to know that this is happening. We also note that this apparent secrecy began the day that Bush on shipboard in a borrowed uniform announced that the war is over.

GB

21 August 2003

*Re: US military kills another journalist in Iraq, 21 August 2003*

Editor,

As I was reading "US military kills another journalist in Iraq", by Mick Ingram and Mike Head I could not help but think back to the way the Soviets captured, but could not hold Afghanistan in the 1980s. No matter how much manpower or military might they pumped into that situation the opposition only grew stronger.

No matter how much military might we have, being an imperial nation and being a democracy just will not go hand in hand. If this country remains a democracy then there is only a finite number of bodies that we will be willing to waste on this misadventure. However, the Bush administration knows that democracy is going to be a great hindrance to their mission and they are feverishly working behind the scenes here at home (Texas redistricting, voter role cleansing, electronic voting machine tampering, consolidation of media, blacklisting, recalls, impeachments, etc.) to make sure that it is undermined or destroyed, if necessary.

PK

Lincoln, NE

21 August 2003

*Re: US: Impact of Northeast blackout continues to emerge, 20 August 2003*

Thank you for your article detailing the extent of the economic impact of Blackout '03, largely glossed over in the mainstream press.

An additional cost yet to be reckoned is that City of New York employees who were unable to get to work on Friday are being directed by their personnel timekeepers to use their annual leave or comp time in order to be paid for that day.

There is no reason why office employees should have to use their own vacation time to compensate for a day they

were essentially unable to work. Without the subways running, getting to work was extremely difficult, if not impossible, for many. And these were people who had spent the better part of the previous afternoon in arduous journeys, walking the length and breadth of the City, over bridges, along train tracks and through subway tunnels, jamming ferries, or sitting in endless traffic jams. Secondly, power was not restored to many offices till late Friday afternoon. Even if City workers had been willing to make the effort to get there, without lights, computers, air conditioners, elevators there would be effectively no work that could be done.

Our billionaire Mayor Bloomberg jauntily advised all us "non-essential service workers" to take a three day holiday weekend, not the worst thing he opined in the middle of a hot August. But not on his tab it seems!

Many of us have lodged complaints with DC37 union representatives. We are being told that annual leave should be used for the meantime, until the City decides what it will do. The same tactic was used by the City after 9/11 when workers south of Canal Street whose offices were physically cordoned off were told they would have to make up the time lost with annual leave. Eventually leave time was restored, though much of the compensation came through aid agencies like FEMA and the Red Cross. The cost in City salaries paid for a day not worked by tens, if not hundreds of thousands of workers would add considerably to the costs that our politicians are telling us are no big deal.

City employees and other workers across the affected Northeast should refuse to bear the economic burden of a massive power failure by accepting reduced paychecks and leave time. The blackout was not just something that happened, like a natural disaster. It was due to criminal negligence on the part of energy corporations whose main priority has been dismantling and ignoring any regulation which stands in the way of profit.

AL

New York City

21 August 2003



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