

Letters from our readers

20 October 2003

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

If the health care industry were converted into a public utility, then my wife and I could have avoided the situation in which we find ourselves.

My wife resigned her job upon our recent relocation. When her job ended, so too did our health coverage. Under COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986), we could elect to continue the coverage, but only if we pay 100 percent (plus a 2 percent administration fee) of the full cost under her former employer's health plan. For us, this amounts to over \$500 monthly.

My wife has been unemployed for nearly two months and continues to look for work. This places the burden of paying for health care with me. If we had elected COBRA, my current employer would not be able to provide us health coverage under their (less expensive) group plan until a specified open enrollment period next year. Fortunately, we had a grace period in which to decide whether or not to elect COBRA coverage. However, during this time any medical costs had to be paid by us—and only reimbursed once we apply and are approved for coverage under COBRA.

Since we decided not to elect COBRA, my employer can add us to their group plan. However, to begin coverage with them, we must pay retroactively from the date my wife's job ended (this would be true under COBRA as well). >From that date through to the present, we have not had any medical needs. Therefore, we must pay for service we haven't utilized.

As John Christopher Burton points out in his article declaring solidarity with the supermarket and transit strikers, "At stake in both struggles is the funding of workers' health care benefits..." [See "John Christopher Burton, socialist candidate in California recall election, declares solidarity with supermarket and transit strikers"]

Treating health care coverage as an employee benefit effectively denies health care to the unemployed and those unable to work. Indeed, large employers and corrupt union leaders seek to shift the cost of health coverage onto the backs of workers.

I'm grateful to the SEP and Burton's campaign for drawing attention to the social contradictions that have given

rise to the present health care crisis and the attacks on workers' pay and benefits.

CK

California

17 October 2003

On "US army bulldozes Iraqi farms"

Dear Chris,

Your description of what the US military are calling "collective punishment," either for refusing to give information that they may or may not have about so-called "guerilla troops," reminds me of the actions of the German army against the people in rural France during the occupation of that country in World War II. To repay the French for any action of resistance or the killing or sabotage of Germans, sometimes whole villages were razed, or entire male populations shot on the spot. For every one German killed by the resistance, ten French citizens would be killed.

That these tactics have been adopted by the Israelis has long been known. But the fact that the Israelis have been training US troops in these "techniques" is nauseating. And what really makes me sick is the fact that these atrocities are reported daily, with no comment, no outcry, by smirking newsreaders and teletype hacks at the newspapers as though they were the same as the weather report or mere traffic news.

Even when the Israelis started building a wall to enclose the Palestinians, a wall just like that which enclosed the Jews of Warsaw, preparatory to stealing and/or destroying their homes and farms, for all one heard or saw on the mass media news it was just the story of a "spite fence" between some suburbanites instead of one of the biggest invasion/incarcerations against a subject people by a heavily armed state power since Germany invaded Poland!

And now, as if they haven't done enough already to destroy Iraq and its people, as if they hadn't already given Iraqis enough reason to hate and mistrust them, the US forces are adopting the methods of the Israeli Defence Force (who got theirs from the SS and other famous boys' clubs). And Bush goes on television and tells everyone that things are going according to plan. Very well. If what is happening now is what they planned, it's time for someone to take their toys away and lock them up!

CZ

San Francisco

16 October 2003

On "Pat Robertson calls for nuking the State Department"

Look into Pat Robertson's role in the Guatemalan genocide tolerated by Gen. Efraim Rios Montt in 1981-82. Robertson contracted former CIA mercenaries to help him "save" Indian villages from the *comunistas*, by killing everyone and burning them down or by forcefully relocating the remaining native American population to "model villages." This can be substantiated by living Guatemalan witnesses and there is a growing trail of information surfacing on the net.

If you look into the profiles of the Bush supporters in the 2000 election, you will no doubt find that most are isolated rural whites, fundamentalist evangelists, whose opinions are formed by such video *drek* as the Club 700.

The Bush Mafia runs a network of thousands of evangelist ministers, who are loyal to the organization, in the hopes of obtaining funds from his "faith based initiative." Every Sunday, they will insinuate their support for what they call "our president," and consider the opposition to be "fags" and others who have not been saved and are not "anointed." This is the core of Bush's support, but one that can be dissipated if we focus on the likes of Robertson and anti-Islamic religious fascists.

The 2004 election is either the beginning of a new age or the end of American democracy. It is vital for us to join in our efforts to bring these video fascists down.

15 October 2003

On "Opposition builds in Western Australia to state Labor government health cuts"

What I have just read made my blood boil. I remember having to work straight more than eight to nine days without a break while I was working in an acute hospital. I have about 20 patients to care for at each shift with just another Registered Nurse. We were afraid even to get a day off when we are sick ourselves as the management singled out nurses who have medical leave and chart the number of sick leave taken. I feel terribly sad and angry that so many of nursing friends and I have to leave nursing. We were just not given the support to care for our patients.

ML

17 October 2003

On "The New York Times's *liberal* argument for colonial occupation"

An excellent piece, sir. And unfortunately it will for the most part "fall on deaf ears." While Bush and his cartel are clearly criminals and need to be prosecuted, it will not happen. While a new president is clearly needed, there is no one who has any sense of morality, justice and leadership to

run against him in 2004. The next election essentially contains nothing different than the current administration except different names, different faces: The same games and the same lies and the same capitalistic greed-driven goals. America has been in trouble for a long time. Its indifferent citizens and their unwillingness to hold political criminals accountable are primarily to blame for this. Anyway, I did appreciate reading your essay and hope people like you will continue to write the truth.

WS

18 October 2003

Your article on the NYT's Liberal Argument for Colonial Occupation is excellent. I reprinted it at www.axisoflogic.com

While reading it this morning, I was thinking how glad I am, in these dark times, that WSWS "is there." The org and web site is so well organized and so well-respected when there is so much trash floating around on the Internet.

Thanks for your many good articles, Bill.

Les Blough, editor

Axis of Logic

Boston

Thanks for reprinting this [26 years since the assassination of Tom Henehan (1951-1977)]. I think it is very timely.

I had to google to find the '97 version three years ago, but I was as sure then as I am now that the heritage, analysis and perspective of the IC, relayed and developed daily through the WSWS, is the only basis on which humanity can base any hope for a progressive future.

Regards,

RP

19 October 2003



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