# Other letters from our readers

**17 December 2003**

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

*On* "WSWS arts editor appears on Wisconsin Public Radio"

I listened to your appearance on Wisconsin Public Radio and I was impressed. We have to ask ourselves not just why the media frenzies, but why now? As you said, let's not idealize the history of American journalism, but there was a time, as some listeners pointed out, when news wasn't infotainment. So what's so different these days? Is it just a coincidence that this type of journalism began around the same time the current wave of wealth polarization began? Some callers voiced the opinion that the media scandals are GE and Murdoch's response to some wide popular thirst for such garbage. However everyone knows that people were a lot more interested in the news 30 years ago than they are nowadays. The trend has been that people are actually being turned off by this stuff. None of my friends or coworkers talk about Michael Jackson. We do talk about the first and the fifteenth, when our paychecks come, and child support payments and rent and car payments and someone's cousin in Iraq. All of which is absent from the news. Wouldn't news like that sell?

Enough said.

IO

12 December 2003

*On* "Marginal rise in US employment in November"

Please explain to me, as if I were a three-year-old, where the economy is improving? I have been looking for a job since last May. I live in the state of Florida and I can tell you that there are no jobs here. On top of that because of my unemployment income, I only get $26.00 per month in food stamps to feed myself and my son. Didn't US politicians use to at least appear to be interested in the health, safety and welfare of the citizens here in the United States?

JV

11 December 2003

*On* "Longtime supporter of International Committee in US dies"

David Nickerson did a great deal of important work in 1971 in building the Workers League section of the Taxi Rank and File Caucus in New York City. He even had many meetings of the Workers League section at his apartment in Chelsea in Lower Manhattan. I remember specifically handing out leaflets with him, for the huge rally in front of taxi drivers' Local 3036 headquarters, a rally that was organized to protest the union leadership's sellout on the then upcoming contract (the lowering of the percentage to drivers). At one point the Stalinists and Progressive Labor members wanted to cancel the rally because the Workers League's call for a "no" vote on the contract garnered such a huge positive response from the rank-and-file drivers. Those factions panicked because they thought the protest was contained and, of course, it went way beyond anything they had planned.

David and many other drivers went up and down Park Avenue South near the taxi drivers' favorite restaurant and also right in front of union headquarters, persuading other drivers to attend the rally that afternoon.

Dave played a large role in an intervention at a union meeting on 33rd St, one that ended in chaos and a riot, as the Local 3036 leadership tried to sell this contract to the drivers. The *Bulletin* of that week has a large big picture on the front page (the photo was given to the Workers League by another driver who took pictures throughout the meeting) and an article as well, on the union meeting itself. It shows the leadership on stage, under assault from flying chairs hurled by angry drivers.

Dave was tall, thin, wore glasses and was very smart and at ease with other drivers, and won a lot of them over to the Workers League's position.

EP

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Former comrade of David Nickerson
10 December 2003

*On* "The New York Times*' Friedman libels the Iraqi resistance"*

Great article. I have observed some of the same things that you wrote about Tom Friedman.

I agreed with everything you said about him. I think, though, you left out one important aspect of Friedman's apparent inner conflict: he has become a neo-con, among all of the reasons that you mentioned, we see with him and other previously considered "liberals," a new commitment to "pro-Israel Zionism." They possess a not-so-subtle desire to see Israel protected at all cost, to include the annihilation of any Arab, or any Arab country to remove any possible threat to Israel, whatsoever.

This crowd believes that convincing Bush and the media to lie to the American people for approval of this war is of little significance, since the end justifies the means, in their opinion. How do I know? I have several Jewish friends who have discussed this matter on numerous occasions. Since the American media is chiefly pro-Zionist this was not a hard thing to do. The lust for power, oil and profits by Bush, Cheney, Rumsfeld and others belonging to the military industrial complex made it easy for the non-ideologues to delve into this plot.

These pro-Israel Americans are so fervent in their support for Israel that they can't see how thousands of Arabs' "absolute" deaths in Iraq could matter compared to the "possible" threat that Saddam posed to Israel.

This topic is hard for any journalist to get into these days. Regardless of how honest and impartial one tries to discuss it, they will get labeled as "anti-Semitic," thus beckoning the kiss of death. Your article was so well-written and you have such an obvious knowledge of history, by not including this among your reasoning on Friedman shows that you probably are aware of this as well and decided not to venture there.

This is a great debate among Jewish writers all over the country, "how much, and how far should they go off from the main road of decency" to support Israel. Some have decided to cast their lot in the "neo-con" super highway: support Israel, the good, the bad, and the ugly. I have long seen the goodness of the Jewish people, unfortunately lately, though, mostly what I have seen are the bad and the ugly, but not from the average Jewish people that I know, most of whom were against this war, but from the pro-Zionist leadership of Sharon and the Israeli-American cabal that is driving US government foreign policy and, of course, the media.

What I have discussed is, of course, a great piece of the Thomas Friedman puzzle that definitely ways heavy in his writings.

Sincerely,
EB
5 November 2003

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