# Letters from our readers

**28 January 2004**

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

*On* "Michael Moore enlists with General Clark: the pathetic—and predictable—logic of protest politics"

Hi,

I would be wary of Wesley Clark's judgment. In the Balkans he nearly caused a major confrontation on the ground between the Russians and the Allies (British & US troops). This was defused "to stop WW3 breaking out" by the British commander who served under him, but ignored his (Clarke's) orders. Your articles are very interesting, by the way.

Regards

PA

27 January 2004

David Walsh eloquently points out the absence in the currently corrupt US political system of two cosmetically different parties whose agendas are the same, of a genuine representation in defense of the legitimate rights of the majority of working Americans, whether doctors, engineers, teachers, writers, farmers, technicians, public and private employees, workers, and so on, who create all the country's wealth through their services and products only to see a significant portion of it robbed by a greedy and powerful elite through stock market speculation, false accounting, favorable taxation and fraudulent wars abroad masquerading as a War on Terror.

AY

27 January 2004

Dear Mr. Walsh:

I just now read with interest your article of January 27, 2004, and took special note of the next to last paragraph of the article. I was reminded of a statement by Richard Hofstadter in the introduction to his book, *The American Political Tradition*, published in 1948. He said: "Although it has been said repeatedly that we need a new conception of the world to replace the ideology of self-help, free enterprise, competition, and beneficent cupidity upon which Americans have been nourished since the foundation of the Republic, no new conceptions of comparable strength have taken root and no statesman with a great mass following has arisen to propound them. Bereft of a coherent and plausible body of belief—for the New Deal, if it did little more, went far to undermine old ways of thought—Americans have become more receptive than ever to dynamic personal leadership as a substitute. This is part of the secret of Roosevelt's popularity, and, since his death, of the rudderless and demoralized state of American liberalism." Amen. You can see us doing our substitution thing every time you watch TV news ... and when you read the Michael Moore quotes.

Sincerely,

JB

27 January 2004

Editor:

This episode is indeed sad, yet, as your article states, unsurprising under the circumstances.

In fact, it's a symptom of what I term the "double bind" of US mainstream politics which, briefly stated, assures that the broad masses of the populace are screwed either way they choose to turn within this debased two-headed mono-party system.

Two heads having the same puppet master at the helm. That master being, in my view, the profit-imperative, monopoly-seeking, time-is-money-paradigm political/economic regime which has most of the globe in its thrall and is wildly seeking to subjugate the remainder.

I am grateful that such entities as wsws.org are employing the Internet to present a wider perspective to those aware enough—and having the technological means at their disposal—to avail themselves.

SZ

Albuquerque, New Mexico

26 January 2004

*On* "Mad Cow discovery punctures myth of US 'firewall' against disease"

My name is Dave Louthan. I'm the guy who shot that mad cow in Moses Lake. I have talked to dozens of reporters about all this trouble and they have done a pretty good job getting the story out, I guess. The USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture] appears to be on the run, but I still have a lot of work to do.

My main problem now is informing people about the splitting saws we use to split the cow carcass in half. You see every beef slaughtered is split right down the middle from tail to neck. This means that a band saw cuts right down the exact center of the spine, cutting the spinal cord in half the long way. There are hot water jets spraying on the blade at the guides to clean off the fat, blood, and bone dust. As the blade cuts down through the spinal cord little bits are torn out and mix with this hot water slurry which runs all over the beef inside and out, totally contaminating the meat. When the butcher starts cutting the steaks and roasts with his knife or saw this contamination is smeared across every cut he makes.

So as you can see, it doesn't matter if it's hamburger or fillet mignon, it's contaminated. Please help me warn the unsuspecting consumer. Thank you for your time.

26 January 2004

*On* "US consumer debt reaches record levels"

I personally think that it's no accident that US consumer debt is at record levels at the same time that US joblessness is so bad. I think that the corporate elite want to keep Americans scared for their jobs and financially enslaved with outrageous levels of debt so that they may be more effectively controlled. Americans are being set up with the record levels of debt prior to a change in the bankruptcy laws if Bush gets elected. It will become considerably more difficult to get out of debt through bankruptcy. The imperialist fascist elite mean to enslave the American proletariat, and they are well on their way. Let's make no mistake about that. We the oppressed American

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proletariat must band together and fight the fascists at every turn and in every possible fashion. We begin by doing our research and disseminating the truth about the horrible Bush regime. I will not be misled. I hope to lead others down that path.

CS

26 January 2004

To the WSWS,

At the end of Patrick Martin's film review of the Peter Weir film Master & Commander: The Far Side of the World, he writes:

"This distancing of Aubrey from the crew seems the result of a conscious decision by the filmmaker. The first novel of the Aubrey-Maturin series, *Master and Commander*, has a scene in which the captain halts his ship, even when being followed by a more powerful French warship, to rescue a midshipman who has fallen overboard. He saves the sailor, then devises an ingenious method of escaping his pursuer. In the film, Weir stands the incident on its head—Aubrey cuts the drowning man loose to save the ship.

"The political implications of this are unmistakable: lives must be sacrificed for the greater good of the nation. The sailors serve as cannon fodder to achieve military victory."

In the News Ltd. newspaper *The Australian* on January 23, I read an article by the current Australian federal health minister, Tony Abbott, (derived from a speech to a Young Liberals conference). In this bizarre, delusional and hysterical piece (which can be read in full), Abbott uses that event in Weir's film as justification for the actions of the hard right-wing Howard government.

Abbott writes:

"If it's possible to appreciate the strong moral case for Crowe's Captain Jack Aubrey, why not the moral case for the Howard Government? Why not accept that, in dealing with rogue states, terrorism and challenges to the long-term survival of the nation, compassion is a fine thing for individuals, but a most uncertain guide for governments?

"There is a moral case to be made for the policies of the Howard Government such as Work for the Dole, the war in Iraq, the mandatory detention of illegal boatpeople along with much else which is supposed to indicate its heartlessness. But it's a much harder and more complex argument than that which holds that the proper role of government is to play the Good Samaritan on an epic scale."

Abbott has worn like a badge of honour his belief in sacrificing the interests of ordinary people for the "greater good" of the ruling elite cloaked under the title of nationalism. No doubt his current spearheading of the ending of Bulk Billing in Australia and the ending of the opportunity for ordinary people to see the doctor for free will be championed along the same lines if and when it becomes law.

Martin's final comment in his review is that Weir's film "has been cut and trimmed to suit the current retrograde political and cultural climate." As Abbott's article shows, a film that doesn't challenge the current political and social climate can invariably be used to justify it.

Regards,

MT

25 January 2004

Dear WSWS editor,

Please explain to me, I'm confused. Why hasn't Bush and his administration gotten in legal trouble for their illegal activities, not just in Iraq and Afghanistan, but also here in the United States?

Why is Bush still our president when he and his Cabinet members act so mean? Is it true that Bush can't be impeached because the Congress is controlled by Republicans?

Why will anybody vote for Bush on 11-2-04 if he is such a bad man? Thanks for helping me understand the American criminal justice system.

KM

26 January 2004

I wish to comment on the article, "Black Hawk helicopters over Las Vegas, snipers in Times Square: 2004 begins with massive military mobilization in US cities," by David Walsh, 3 January 2004

Up until now it had always been my experience that reading a socialist perspective on anything meant reading a collection of hysterical, unfounded conclusions. As I read this article, however, I noticed that something was different. But at first, I couldn't figure out what. And then it dawned on me: What I was reading was statement of fact, after statement of fact, after statement of fact, etc. While the change is refreshing in a certain sense, I must say that—aside from the congratulations which I owe you for a generally well-done article—I find it frightening to think that so very, very much of what you said in this article is true!

I was a Reaganite in the '80s. I STILL AM A REAGANITE. And to think that I have found inspiration for liberty on a socialist web site is, for me, a little disconcerting, to say the least. (I do not possibly see how we can possibly have socialism without the "authoritarian rule" which you so correctly fear in your own article.)

All I can say is, congratulations again. And generally, a job well done. And duck! Much of what you have said is probably going to come true!

Best wishes,

LJ

Tucson, Arizona

23 January 2004

*On* "Kodak axing up to 15,000: Bush touts pittance for worker training as job cuts mount"

On Wednesday, while Bush fiddled around Ohio and Arizona, Kodak announced the permanent elimination of no less than 12,000 of its workers. On Thursday, the hyenas of Wall Street, in a seemingly mindless manner, channeled yet more finance capital (that great driving engine of the economy, which, due to its primacy within the system, persuaded Marx to name "Capitalism" after) into Kodak's "struggling" portfolio, raising its "value" from $3.49 to $30.95 on the NYSE at the close of trading—a one-day increase of nearly 13 percent. Thereby, in effect, inspiring yet more incentives to realize profits by downsizing. Or, in other words, stoking the flames of the conflagration which is on the cusp of engulfing our beautiful green earth. Surely our finance capital masters have lost the "right" to own slaves even if they haven't lost their perceived right to private property. Isn't that the historical case? When the slaves can't be adequately fed, the master loses his title.

Keep up the good works.

Fraternally,

HS

Burbank, California

23 January 2004

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