Letters from our readers

1 December 2004

The following is a selection of recent letters to the World Socialist Web Site.

On "UK Foreign Secretary Jack Straw rants against Trotskyism"

This article is a brilliant analysis of the Stalinist (i.e., repressive, narrow-minded, dictatorial, autocratic, etc.) government in the UK at present. Thank you, Ann. Please ensure that it gets into the mainstream media!

AM
France
29 November 2004

Thanks for a most interesting article. I am rather surprised that Straw has fessed up to his Stalinist past. I never thought he would, but then it makes a lot of "New Labour" sense!

PA
London
29 November 2004

A really perceptive article. New Labour owes much of its strategies of demonization and vilification to the Stalinist tactics used in the 1960s and 1970s when many of the Cabinet (both in and out of office) were young "radicals." Also, Martin Jacques wrote an article in the *Guardian* two weekends ago about the decline of the Left. He ironically referred to the Labour Party that even he is disillusioned with. However, as we all know, the "Left" exists outside Parliament and New Labour, a fact Jacques slyly avoided. The appalling fact about New Labour has been its betrayal of all the radical aspirations that once influenced these youthful people pre-Blair. They have now engaged in a vicious assault not only on personal freedom (as seen in Don Juan Blunkett's recent proposals) but a contribution to a culture of "no hope" as seen in the dangerous increase of binge drinking in England—once, supposedly, a feature of the old!

TW
Carbondale, Illinois
29 November 2004

On "Iraq veteran Jimmy Massey speaks to the WSWS: 'We're committing genocide in Iraq'"

I was profoundly moved by your article, Mr. Riedel. Maybe there is vindication ahead for all of us. In the *Washington Post*, November 26, 2004, written by Colum Lynch, "Congress Seeks to Curb International Court." It seems the Republican-controlled Congress wants to curtail the power of the International Court. That tells me Bush maybe is worried about war crimes and crimes against humanity. Thank you for your article and keep writing. This White House has got to be held accountable for its actions.

VJ
Gainesville, Florida
26 November 2004

On "New York Times calls for more troops and more Fallujahs"

It is difficult to describe the revulsion that I feel whenever I read Mr. Friedman's columns. It is like stepping into a dank, stinking place. Marx once likened the pens of such people as an integral part of a vast system of plumbing, similar the London sewerage system of his day, that provides an outlet for all the filth generated by capitalism. The foul odor that wafts from Mr. Friedman's columns certainly confirms Marx's observation.

Regards
EG
South Africa
25 November 2004

On working conditions at Shoprite in India and South Africa

I have been working for Shoprite's first venture in India since mid-last year. From the very beginning, even before the store has started, we have been made to work 12 hours a day, except on Saturdays when it is seven hours. In my case, due to traveling time to work, it becomes 14-15 hours a day. Now that it is getting close to opening of the store, we have been working 15 hours a day, with no weekend off for the last four weeks. I need your advice on what I could do about it, without revealing my real name, in order not to jeopardize my job!? Can the Shoprite

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Labour Unions in South Africa help us?

SB

27 November 2004

On the 2004 elections and the SEP election campaign

Regarding your election platform [see "Support the Socialist Equality Party in the 2004 US elections"]—finally, a sense that there is reason, somewhere, in this political climate. Although new to the notion that I may "fit" somewhere, within some political party, I will continue reading and learning. Clearly, the assertions of this site voice most closely what lies within my head. I only hope that in this climate of McCarthyism relived, I may express myself openly, without fear of retaliation when voicing dissention to the current regime in power. Sorry to say, I do not feel my words are allowed by Bush, et al, but things are so wrought with disparity, that it makes no difference. Voices must be heard, strength must be gathered.

JM

27 November 2004

The rhetoric displayed by Democrats that laid out precisely what presidential candidate John Kerry needed to do in his campaign for president was far from being true to its liberal persona. The "anybody but Bush" movement, containing many long-time liberals, disregarded their fervent principles of antiwar and social equality for a weak and ideologically flawed candidate. The Democrat's political demise in the past three decades reflects a relentless desire to reshape its beliefs (moving further to the right) in order to compete with an ever-growing neo-conservative system of government. The Democratic Party's claim of being "the party for the people," while failing to connect *with* the people and failing to provide a viable alternative to this present Orwellian administration, is a another example of our political system being incapable of representing the needs of the majority of the population.

Kerry's plan for Iraq, which proposed a large troop deployment, and his "hunt down and kill the terrorist" aggression, is far from a traditional antiwar/liberal agenda. Kerry proposed a "tactical effort" in combating terrorism—exasperating every resource available in order to keep our country safe from threats. However, the American people fail to understand the effects of "bloating the military" for the perpetuation of global imperialism. It diverts the attention from real social issues only to, in turn, accommodate vile capitalistic policies. Forty-five percent of the US budget each year is allocated for the military (and its subsidies) while social and community-based programs receive a dismal 4 percent. This large disparity of funding detracts from the betterment of society because it continues to provide strength for imperialistic agendas, rather than providing basic needs for the people.

And then there are the well-calculated speeches, written by professional speechwriters with intentions of facilitating an emotional and moralistic connection between a millionaire politician and the poor unemployed voter. This is a demeaning and destructive outgrowth of the capitalists' political campaigns. The truth is, John Kerry owns five homes and shares in the riches of one of the biggest corporate food dynasties in the world—Heinz. His net worth (including Teresa Heinz Kerry) is estimated at $1 billion. The only realistic personal connection that these types of presidential candidates have (past or present) is with those who are at the top 1 percent in terms of wealth.

We have candidates that represent the epitome of our corrupt political system: monetary greed and monopolistic power. The two major parties are continuously working to eliminate the participation of any third party opposition. An example of this are the continuous assaults on Ralph Nader by the Democrats (worrying that he may actually convince voters that the Democratic Party is a fraud) as well as *both* the major parties implementing laws to exclude third party candidates from the right to participate in debates. This is a democracy?

Four years of Democrats, eight years of Republicans—in the end it doesn't matter. The basis of our government continues to be one that eliminates voice and action from the American people. Ultimately, the gap between wealth and poverty is ever-growing, health care is extinct, the environment is profit and war is peace.

MH

21 November 2004

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