

Letters from our readers

26 January 2005

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

On "Bush's second inauguration: America's day of shame"

As we watched on television the caravan of war criminals riding in blackened-out limos, taking place with snow on the ground and during an overcast day in Washington, D.C., we realized that this scene was not an inauguration event but rather a funeral procession.

The occasion was the death of democracy in the US.

Thanks for your excellent coverage and helping towards a true augury of the rebirth of human rights and freedom on the planet.

SZ

21 January 2005

Albuquerque, New Mexico

I am a senior reporter at *Daily Times* in Pakistan and was greatly inspired by your article. In an era when the mainstream media obliterates truth and serves corporate interests unabashedly, we need courageous and objective writers like you.

SH

21 January 2005

Karachi, Pakistan

A brilliant insight! The last paragraph was especially true. The opportunity presented to fill the leadership void resulting from the moral deficit among the moneyed elite which currently rules America must be filled by a new generation of strong spokespeople for the working class, which is sure to suffer greatly in the next term. The policies of this "ownership society" shall present an opportunity for a well-considered populist uprising which will be unequaled in my lifetime. The time for action draws ever nearer, and we must be prepared to exploit that moment.

AB

21 January 2005

Austin, Texas

Bravo! Not since the victory parade after the first Iraq "war" has America been so shamed.

CJM

21 January 2005

Saugerties, NY

On "The social roots of the tsunami disaster"

I have had the same feelings you express about the tsunami when fires raged in California and Arizona and, with all of the technology and resources at this country's disposal, there shows a total lack of ability to deal with such occurrences. If a fraction of the focus currently given to the development of new weapons (user-friendly nukes and all) were given to dealing with natural disasters, countless lives could be saved and devastating losses avoided.

NV

22 January 2005

On "Australia's disability pensioners to be 'coerced' to work"

Here in Wisconsin (USA) we've had required labor for certain disabled citizens for some 10 years now, and things have gone very poorly. The group targeted for required labor (regardless of disability/inability to work) is disabled citizens (primarily women) who have dependent children. The promise that "disability-appropriate jobs will be provided" with funding obtained by reducing benefits to disabled citizens who have children simply never materialized. The result is that many were unable to work at all, while many more found themselves locked into hellishly disability-inappropriate jobs.

This policy was such a failure that it was repealed. Unfortunately, those who had managed to get jobs remained trapped, unable to quit, due to some "creative" policies. Here is what happened: Disabled parents were told that they were required to work enough to earn back the amount of money that had been cut (by the government) from disability benefits. If they failed to do so, the state *could* take their children into "indefinite custody." They might not, but then again, they might. Disabled parents found work, if only in "sheltered workshops" that pay a fraction of the legal minimum wage. A large chunk of what they earn is then cut from benefits, so there is simply no way to keep up. But if they quit working, full benefits won't be restored for anywhere from three to six months. There isn't enough left in benefits alone (due to cuts made by earnings from the previous month) to cover the most basic needs. As a result, the disabled, and their children, became the fastest growing group of homeless citizens in Wisconsin.

These policies don't work. Not only do they significantly harm so many, but the total cost of government involvement (via social service agencies and the social security department) far exceed any gains made by putting people into jobs. In this scheme to create a super-low-wage work force, everyone loses.

DF

Wisconsin

17 January 2005

On "Klansman arrested in 1964 killings of civil rights workers"

Kind of reminds you of Chile or Argentina, doesn't it. Arresting some war criminal like Pinochet, at the end of his life, to try to give a token affirmation that it really is all over, that racism won't return. I am a Southerner. I grew up in Dallas, Texas. It is not over by a long shot. In fact, in some aspects, it never really went away, and in other aspects it is coming back. Busing is gone. US schools are now re-segregating.

In the major cities of the South, the time-old Northern tradition of "white flight" was used to re-segregate schools. This is where

whites move to more affluent suburbs with more affluent independent school districts, leaving a decaying inner city. However, this seems to have run its course, with very affluent, white, chic, young professionals moving back to the city in a process called gentrification. The downside is that poor, mainly blacks and Hispanics are displaced. To where, who knows. Also the whites send their children to private schools.

In the rural parts of the South, and to some extent in the cities, white people just sent their children to private schools, usually religious schools, to avoid desegregation. The public schools then became totally black and taxpayer under-funded: A roundabout way of keeping blacks in inferior segregated schools.

This also has put more power in the hands of the religious right as they get a better chance to indoctrinate their followers. The religion of the religious right is a backward, reactionary, ethnically and culturally inbred, anti-feminist, homophobic, and, under the surface, violent religion. I noticed that besides being a murderer, Killen is also a fundamentalist preacher. This is not a contradiction in the White South. I wonder how many white, Southern preachers will get up and distance themselves and their religion from him. Probably none. The silence is deafening.

So we don't have Jim Crow anymore. We have Jim Grackle. Grackles are a black starling that has become common here in Texas only in the last 30 years. Smaller than a crow, but a lot more of them.

TR
19 January 2004
Texas

On "Fredric Rzewski's 'The People United Will Never Be Defeated'"

I am writing in praise of the recognition of Frederic Rzewski's "The People United Will Never Be Defeated" concert performance. This composition has been long ignored even by the 20th century classical community. I was fortunate enough to have met him and worked with him briefly in Woodstock, N.Y.—truly a brilliant man and a great, underappreciated pianist.

I am looking forward to your commentary on the statement by Condi Rice that the tsunamis are a "wonderful opportunity" for the U.S., and hopefully a review on the Ken Burns PBS documentary about Jack Johnson, and its depiction of socialist/racist Jack London.

Warmest regards. The WWSWS is clearly the most informed and well-written true news source we have.

MGN
19 January 2005
Ann Arbor, Michigan

On "Free market blueprint for Australian intervention in PNG"

Thank you for the very informative article you wrote on what Australia is doing to PNG. We from PNG are not far from Australia. We share the same landmass with Indonesia. We are rich with natural resources. We do not have the money to exploit those resources meaningfully, equitably and sustainably.

And we are told we cannot run our country the way we want by the fully insensitive paternalistic Foreign Government. We are told our police force is incapable of handling our crime situation. We are told, unless we submarine dump waste from our mines or tailed

right into river systems, we cannot develop. We are told that unless we forego our right to our future, to our destiny, we need Australian money, we need Australian mining companies, we need Canberra to set the tune. They play "Waltzin' Mathilda" and we dance the tune.

The problem is that we do not know the steps to the tune, let alone can sing the notes. The dance floor becomes chaotic, because every one invents their own steps.

What we need is dialogue and understanding. Canberra must not be dogmatic in its approach to our sovereign will. It must not suppress our right to take the correct decisions by us and not by Australia. But we understand what Australia is doing. It is not so much how we should develop, but simply because we are a race of black people that do not deserve to be fully independent.

Can we determine our own future? Are we capable? Australia thinks not. Our government is conditioned to think that we are not capable. Our people have been mentally programmed to think that we cannot survive without Australia.

GN
19 January 2005
Kimbe, Papua New Guinea

On "The Vioxx scandal: damning Senate testimony reveals drug company, government complicity"

In October 2004, I buried my husband who suffered a massive stroke after taking the drug Vioxx. Vioxx took thousands of lives over the last four years. No matter what happens, Merck, the company that made this drug, will continue to thrive! Under Bush, this country has lost its soul.

What really bothers me is that there is *no outrage* when people are killed for profit. Merck knew, the FDA knew, and Bush wants to make it impossible to sue pharmaceutical companies. He calls them "frivolous" lawsuits. My God! A human being is dead and that's frivolous. I want to gather all Americans who have suffered or family members that buried a love one. This is not about money. Someone is accountable, and the people who are deserve jail. Bush said nothing about the investors that are suing Merck. As a matter of fact, Merck is settling with them and at the same time saying they will pay out *nothing to victims*. Such arrogance is Bush's trademark.

The war on terror is a war on sick and disabled people, too. They will die because they cannot get medications or die from taking them. This is Germany in 1934, and no one sees it! The Bushes have been into eugenics for three generations. All people have to do is read what they do and stand for...it is not for freedom or democracy. He's not the president, he's a dictator. Exactly what he claimed he wanted to be December 18, 2000, before he took office. He said, "It would be so much easier to be a dictator"!

PJ
19 January 2005
Chicago, Illinois



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