Letters from our readers

7 February 2005

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

On “PBS officials cave in to Bush administration over children’s program”

It should come as no surprise to anyone that PBS would “back down.” After all, their funding comes from the Congress with many strings attached, and from the sponsorship of corporations, both of which are right-wing-controlled. The word “Public” is another Orwellian illusion. The public does not have a broadcasting outlet. As long as the fundamentalists control our sights and sounds then we will have nothing but hate given to us, fear fed to us, and our children deceived.

Sincerely,

RV

5 February 2005

Upper Marlboro, Maryland

On “A special report from Poland”

Sadly, I must confess there’s nothing in this brilliant report that surprises me; a concentration of wealth by multi-national corporations at the expense of the working-class—this is the same old story. The Ford Motor Company produced trucks in Germany for the Nazis during WWII, while at the same time asking for wage concessions from workers in its US factories to help with the Allies’ war effort.

Fast-forward: now, these multinational corporations pit workers in the industrialized countries against workers in less-developed countries so as to basically enslave (in-place) workers in poorer countries. This is euphemistically referred to by the Bush administration as “Spreading Freedom and Democracy.” I can assure you it won’t be long before workers in Ukraine face a similar fate as their fellow workers in Poland and elsewhere.

There remains but one question: In the face of this brutality against the working classes worldwide, how much worse must it get before the working class internationally subscribes *en masse* to the doctrine embraced by the WSWS?

JL

5 February 2005

New Orleans, Louisiana

On “Facts and myths about Bush’s plan for Social Security privatization”

As a crisis based on Social Security funding, there is none. But there is a Social Security crisis based on ideology and on the total national debt. There are those that would destroy all social programs. The Reagan ideologues hoped to create such deficits that social programs could not be maintained. Paul O’Neill in interviews with the *Financial Times* in 2001 as much as said that Social Security should be eliminated and old people could work longer and save more. And one can argue that privatization is a gift to Wall Street political contributors.

But the real crisis is with the national debt and how Social Security and the other trust funds hide our true debt.

When we say that the next fiscal year will produce a deficit of $423 billion, we hide the fact that, were it not for the trust funds, the real deficit would be $600 billion or so. If it were not for the trust funds, the government would have to go into the market for $600 billion. The trust funds are buying $180 billion of that debt. Without the trust funds, the government would have a harder time financing deficits in the open market, and there would be upward pressure on interest rates, further increasing indebtedness.

As the baby boomers retire, starting in 2008, presumably the yearly Social Security surplus will decrease, reaching 0 in 2018. This means that to finance the operating deficit, the government will have to go to the general market with larger and larger demands. Will that market be there, and if it is, at what interest rate?

Starting in 2018, this problem becomes compounded by the liquidation of the special treasury bonds. The government redeems bonds all the time either through tax revenues in times of surplus or in refinancing debt. These special securities are no different as a government obligation then those owned by a Japanese investor.

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But if as result of tax cuts, unending wars, and irresponsible spending, we are still running deficits in 2018, then these redemptions will increase the pressure on the market for US debt issues. The market may not be there, or if it is there, only at exorbitant interest rates.

That's what no one wants to talk about. Obviously our government could not afford to default on debt to Central Banks or other investors. But it can default without penalty (other than political) on trust fund debt. That is something the ideologues would welcome and that the result of decreasing trust fund surpluses, continuing operating deficits, redemption of trust fund securities, and rising interest rates could dictate.

In other words, the question should be asked, "Are they planning to steal the Social Security funds to pay for war, tax cuts, and irresponsible spending?"

As for the president's plan for privatizing, it brings the crisis closer. They have suggested that of the 12.4 percent of payroll, 2 percent, 4 percent, or 6 percent be used. Even though they may cap it at $1,000 a year, it will have a substantial impact on the Social Security yearly surplus. What does that mean? It means that the surpluses will disappear before 2018, and that the point at which the trust fund will be exhausted will be sometime before 2042.

If we keep running deficits, it is unlikely we can save Social Security. But it's not because there is something wrong with Social Security; it's because they plan to default and in effect steal the money.

BR

3 February 2005

Orange Park, Florida

The idea of privatizing Social Security is so infuriating that I simmer with rage from dawn to dusk. Would you consider publishing a series of leaflets that are very simple and easy to read that would help persuade citizens to act against this proposal? May I suggest making the leaflet attractive to people of all political parties, so none may feel unsympathetic? I would write these leaflets myself, but I have no talent for writing and I am not an expert in this field. I believe the time to act is *now*, and I am anxious to do what I can to keep this horrid administration from doing more damage.

BN

4 February 2005

On "The historic decline of US imperialism and the prospects for socialism"

After following the WSWS Internet press for several months, I want to register my recognition and appreciation of the atypically high literacy, political seriousness, and Marxist scholarship manifest therein.

I was particularly taken with your recent opening report to the SEP national membership meeting, most notably your citation of the Lenin-Kautsky ultra-imperialism polemic as vital background to the evolution of post-1945 imperialism and the looming crisis of post-9/11 American imperialism.

With comradely greetings,

WS

3 February 2005

Imperialism is, basically, theft. Formerly, the Soviet Union kept the thieves in line. Now the band of thieves has fragmented and the strongest thief (or so he believes) is trying to take the biggest share of the pie. The ultimate end of imperialism, as has been shown by two World Wars, is militarism and war. When the thief no longer can steal with a pen, he must resort to armed robbery.

TR

2 February 2005

Garland, TX

On "Iraq election sets stage for escalating political turmoil"

Anything to do with Mr. Bush will definitely not be in the people's best interests. Countries have been involved in this war that should never have sent troops in the first place. The troops were following orders, and we have seen what happened to the ones that refused. I still ask the question: Who made Bush the leader of the world? He is the largest war criminal of them all. So many innocents have lost their lives for one man's greed. Saddam was a dictator, but what is the difference between the two? What a sad and sorry sight our world has come to. I don't believe Bush has read the Declaration of Independence. If he had, he wouldn't be so incoherent.

AG

5 February 2005

Australia

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