Letters from our readers

12 February 2005

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

On "Judge imposes pay cut on United Airlines mechanics"

This is just a note to compliment you on your detailed, well written, objective article. As a retired United Airlines employee, I can attest to the shabby management which is primarily responsible for the bankruptcy. I was actually involved in organizing the Employee Stock Ownership Program in 1994. At the time, UAL predicted eminent bankruptcy ... long before 9/11. I guess the Bush administration would prefer to pour millions into Iraq than assisting the viability of the transportation industry. Of course our pensions will probably also go down the drain. That's a great retirement reward after 36 years of service to the traveling public! But it's good to know that after just a few years in the company the "Senior Executives" will lose none of their "Golden Parachutes."

MR
8 February 2005
Cary, North Carolina

I am 62 years old and recently retired from United Airlines as a mechanic. I had worked for United two different times. The first was from 1966 through 1969. The second was from 1984 through 2004. When I worked there the first time, the atmosphere was cordial and friendly. The working conditions were good, the wages were good, and the benefits were acceptable. *That was before deregulation.* I went back to United in 1984, because I was working at Greyhound when deregulation also hit there. The conditions at Greyhound got very, very bad. There was a violent strike in 1983 *just to keep what we had*. So I left, not realizing that United would be affected also. Since my return to United the situation has of course gotten extremely bad. We (retirees) are so very fearful of losing our pension benefits *and* medical benefits. How are we to survive after our careers are over? Your article was the best I have ever read. Thanks. Re-regulate the transportation systems!

TD
9 February 2005
Antioch, California

On "Guantanamo videotapes expose brutality against detainees"

An excellent article. I have tried to be a good American for 82 years, in combat in World War II from Omaha Beach, then through France to the German border, and I was called back by the army during the Korean War. I did nothing heroic in those wars, but I did my duty as best I could so no man has a right to impugn my loyalty to my country. I hate to say it, but I am ashamed of my country today and I do believe there are grounds for trying some of our policymakers as war criminals, by an international tribunal. This country is on the verge of becoming a fascist dictatorship, I think, and it saddens me.

Did we fight Hitler in the 1940s, only to have him come back to life in this century in Washington, only without the mustache, and with the look and the sound of a moron? Sad!

EH
8 February 2005
Walnut Creek, California

On "Lawyer for US deserters speaks with WSWS: 'It cannot be irrelevant to a soldier that a war is legal or illegal'"

On behalf of the War Resisters Support Campaign, thanks for an excellent article. We will be sure to use it as a resource in our work.

Lee Zaslofsky
10 February 2005

On "Bush's budget: government by fraud and lies"

It was so refreshing to read your article. I thought I was going crazy in trying to find some honest, truthful answers to my concerns. I have no titles or qualifications, but have had the fortune to experience economic hardships. The smell of Bush's proposal in the case of Social Security is too overwhelming. I'm sickened by the failure of democracy in our country to the point of not being able to sleep at night. I would warn the rich, to which the politicians aspire with "conservative" zeal, that nothing opens eyes better than the "misfortune" and hardship to which they are pushing the people on whom their material wealth depends. Well, thank you again. I will be saving your article as it voices quite well what I'm thinking and has preserved my sanity for now!

LC
Philadelphia
9 February 2005

I agree with all you say. September 11 was a godsend to Bush. It took people's minds off how he got elected, or selected. The reason Bush was so worried about WMDs was twofold. First, it gave him an excuse to invade Iraq and beat the countries who were dealing with Saddam for his oil. Second, Bush knew the Reagan administration had given chemical weapons to Saddam during the Iraq-Iran war. Bush intends to take over the world's oil and has made a good start, including his deal with Libya. He blathers about democracy but dealt with one of the world's foremost terrorists, Qaddafi. He is also fomenting unrest in Venezuela to get control of their oil.

WL
8 February 2005

On "The social roots of the tsunami disaster"

The statement said that there should have been a tsunami warning system in the Indian Ocean. Well, there was one. I read

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that the Americans have one on Diego Garcia, their base in the Indian Ocean. They had at least an hour's warning of the wave, plenty of time for them to warn other countries. Why they didn't is anyone's guess.

FA

Milford Haven, Wales

9 February 2005

On "The Aviator*: Why this dishonest portrait of a despicable figure?"*

Thank you for the recent review of *The Aviator*. I am the author of *Hearst Over Hollywood: Power, Passion, and Propaganda in the Movies* (Columbia Press, 2002), and much of what you write about the life of Howard Hughes and Martin Scorsese's interpretation of that life reminds me of my own attempt to tell the truth about William Randolph Hearst and his role in Hollywood. A biography of Hearst by David Nassaw that was published two years before my book presented Hearst as a "sympathetic" figure and downplayed his anti-Semitism and fascist connections. It presented Hearst's role in Hollywood as a mere sidebar, repeating the usual myths about Hearst entering the movie business to promote his mistress. Critics were all too happy to praise Nassaw's glorification of Hearst the Individualist, Hearst the Capitalist. The darkness at the core of Hearst, as creator and creature of Hollywood, did not make for the happy hero package that the times seem to demand.

Louis Pizzitola

10 February 2005

On "Poor, distraught and desperate: Oregon man threatens suicide on floor of state Senate*"*

Totalitarian regimes (whether they are called Stalinist, Fascist, or otherwise) have often sought to medicalize and depoliticize acts of dissent such as the desperate suicide threat made by the Oregon man last week on the state Senate floor. The response in this case is typically American, and closely resembles our response to the Columbine massacre several years ago: increase security. It's a classic example of treating the symptoms of the disease instead of the cause, and reveals an unbelievable lack of insight in the American consciousness—a lack of sociological imagination. From our perspective, all deviance is due to individual flaws in character, never to basic problems of the social system. While some industrialized nations view, for instance, homelessness as a social problem requiring institutional change, in America we fall over ourselves in search of reasons to blame the victims.

Noah Page adds nuance to this analysis when he rightly points to the priority Oregon officials have given to protecting those seen as more worthy of state intervention—elite politicians threatened by one poor, knife-wielding soul.

BB

10 February 2005

On the "war on terrorism"

There is no war on terrorism, and there is no fight for freedom and democracy, except by those who are fighting against corruption and war everywhere. A replacement dogma for the expired war on communism, the war on terrorism is blinding people into accepting a deluge of national and international crimes committed by our government. Misnaming US war crimes of rendition, torture, murder, and robbery in Iraq and Afghanistan as the "war on terrorism" does not obscure the crimes. This illegal war based upon lies is a dishonor and a betrayal of our nation's sacred trust, especially to those sent to fight it.

Fear and the urge for revenge ignited by the 9/11 attacks was exploited and made corporeal by Bush's declaration of this counterfeit doctrine and mantra. Some believe one of the reasons the attacks were facilitated and manipulated by certain US officials was to scare Americans into placidly accepting an annulment of the Bill of Rights, the last democratic code of civil protection forestalling the imposition of a totalitarian regime.

Devilishly conceived, proffered, and conducted in the name of defense and patriotism, the war on terrorism is a planned war upon US citizens. Spawning the US Patriot Act, the Homeland Security Act, and separate pieces of odious legislation surreptitiously added to other measures—it is the foundation of the government's assaults upon our liberty and freedom. Under these acts and without due process, anyone, including US citizens, can be declared a terrorist by official declaration, jailed, stripped of US citizenship, taken to any surrogate regime on earth and held incommunicado indefinitely.

In casting the war on terror as a world imperative the administration consistently publicizes disinformation that it wants rooted in the public's mind. The lies are taken up, magnified many times over, spun and reported as fact by a colluding media. The litany of US WMD lies provide a glaring example of how this is done.

There are wars against people who oppose U.S. control over their cultural and national interests. There is a Bush-Cheney terrorist war to redeem Hitler's failure, one nation's seizing control of the lifeblood of the world's industrial societies, *oil*, without which nations revert to feudalism, and slavery. US troops deserve our full support by bringing them all home, *now*.

There is a war to seize Social Security, the jewel in the crown, guaranteeing the future impoverishment of US workers. Privatizing Social Security simply means setting it up to be legally looted by Wall Street's mafia. The reality is *there is no war on terrorism. There is a war on citizens*.

CC

28 January 2005

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