

Letters from our readers

28 March 2005

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

On “The dysfunctional society: US billionaires on the rise—US roads, bridges in decay”

This issue really bothers me. The elite rich are growing in numbers and strength, crushing the average citizen. CEOs and such earn too much money compared to their employees. It is just crazy. I think if there was some sort of earnings cap then things would even out, but in this society/world it would not work.

JB

25 March 2005

Regular readers of wsws.org are accustomed to articles referring to the “obscenely self-enriching corporate class in America” so often that it begins to seem like just so much rhetoric. But every so often the glaring truth of those references bubbles to the surface. Case in point: James B. Stewart’s new book *Disney War*, about Michael Eisner’s notorious tenure as CEO. The author describes a cozy little discussion between Jeffrey Katzenberg, Disney’s former president, and his friend David Geffen, the music mogul, regarding whether Katzenberg, who is negotiating his bonus after leaving the company, should accept \$275 million, or perhaps go for \$280 million. And here I am, wondering how I’m going to pay my \$90 electric bill! It’s something to behold, isn’t it, the way the mega-rich in our country assume such unspeakably huge paydays are nothing so much as their god-given right?

TH

Las Vegas, Nevada

26 March 2005

On “Deadly explosion at Texas oil refinery part of a broader problem”

I am concerned that once again you are highlighting one aspect of a story while ignoring other, potentially more significant, possibilities. In your article on the explosion at the BP refining plant, you draw attention

to previous accidents there, implying that inadequate safety and corporate irresponsibility is the cause of the most recent explosion. What you overlook, though, is the possibility of deliberate sabotage. There has been an increase of large-scale industrial disasters in recent years, indicative either of a wholesale degradation of safety, terrorist activity, or covert government/corporate sabotage. The scale of these disasters seems to make the first unlikely; while it is plausible that corporations would be careless with the lives of their employees, it is hard to believe that they would be so reckless with their own property. Attention should be drawn to the other possibilities.

KP

25 March 2005

While America’s and the world’s great leader George W. Bush has signed into law curtailment of OSHA safety inspections so his capitalist fascist clique buddies can fill their pockets, faster and faster the speeding express train called America is heading for the cliff of the ravine of total destruction, like the Roman Empire.

FBR

Thailand

It is not just Texas refineries that are burning. If one were to dig deeper, one would discover refineries exploding/burning/coming off line all over the place. Seems to be somewhat of a *modus operandi*. Surely a good way to drive up prices and maximize profits when they are not enough refineries to begin with.

BD

25 March 2005

On “Top insurance company mired in allegations of accounting fraud”

Thanks for walking me through the intricacies and skullduggery of AIG. I worked for 30 years in the insurance business. AIG always had the reputation of

being the most unscrupulous and ruthless of companies. This reputation applied not only in their business dealings, but even more in their treatment of their employees. One could count on being fired for not meeting ever-increasing premium quotas.

AIG was hardly alone, however, in its dirty dealings. In the go-go nineties, the insurance industry was literally exploding with the “finite insurance” deals that your article describes so well. Whole departments of insurance companies and brokers were devoted to these off-balance-sheet transactions of questionable legality. The profits and commissions on this business were considered especially rich.

As illuminating as Spitzer’s and various SEC investigations may be, I hardly think the insurance industry will clean up its act. Sacrificing even a powerful figure such as Hank Greenberg (already pushing eighty) is primarily designed to sanitize the parasites who run the insurance racket in order that they may go on their merry way. I look forward to the day in the United States when, as in the former Soviet Union, the whole industry will be dismantled.

JB

25 March 2005

On “Former Clinton aid and Kerry adviser hails choice of Wolfowitz for World Bank”

With scumbags like this, no wonder Kerry lost. The more I see of the odious comparisons you make, the more I believe you are right. Thanks.

CK

Titusville, Florida

24 March 2005

On “Kentucky students victimized by ‘zero-tolerance’ policies”

I agree with the writer’s viewpoints in this article about felonies being too harsh on students for simply writing a story that reflects violence. If certain states have adopted these standards why then are they not at all hesitant to let film companies make a violent movie in their community?

In this sense I do not agree with the last paragraph set forth in this article which suggests that the violence from the media is responsible for violence in children’s minds. We may as well be back in the “book burning” days if this is the case people continue to make about where violence comes from. People blame movies, music, media, and even books; some of which that were

once banned and now considered classics.

If people want to get to the bottom of where so much violence has come from we should be examining what in our society has changed—education for instance. Most schools don’t offer the classes they used to that relate to teaching students how to act in certain environments—social skills that not only taught you how to conduct yourself, but how to approach outside problems reasonably. Today schools say they don’t have the funding for such “nonsense” classes as social skills or music, etc. So they give students a “fact based” education, but what good are the facts of life without the guidance to use them?

A lot of students—with school, after-school jobs, and time with friends—don’t have a chance to learn such skills from their parents, assuming their parents are even aware that they need to be teaching their children these things. A lot of parents are under the impression that to be a good effective parent all they need to do is get their kid through school, know what their child is doing at all times (which they usually don’t), and keep them away from drugs and alcohol.

DS

23 March 2005

On “Five-year-old arrested in Florida on felony charges”

In the Salem witch trials, adults listened to the irrational accusations of children and arrested other adults. In Tallahassee, supposedly responsible adults—such as policemen and school administrators—listened to the ridiculous claims of a teacher, Linda Green, and have arrested a five-year-old child! And we thought the Salem witch trials were absurd!

JF

Irmo, South Carolina

22 March 2005



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