

Letters from our readers

9 January 2006

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

On "West Virginia towns mourn deaths of 12 coal miners"

One additional facet of this tragedy that was noted on *Democracy Now!* on Thursday, January 5, is that the entity seemingly in charge of the accident scene is not MSHA, but ICG [International Coal Group]. This is like putting a perpetrator in charge of the crime scene. And no one in the media has called attention to this outrageous new tactic.

How is it that a federal agency has abrogated its duty to investigate the causes and enforce or create regulations designed to minimize future catastrophes of this nature? Lastly, the fines levied against mining corporations for serious safety violations are in most cases less than the fine for running a red light in the Bay Area.

SE

San Jose, California

7 January 2005

To the families of the miners: I cannot imagine your grief and pain during this time of loss and the years to come. I am very sorrowful for your loss and the heartbreak you are enduring. I am terribly hurt for the circumstances in which you were placed having received conflicting reports of the status of your loved ones. You all, each and every one, will remain in our thoughts, prayers and in our hearts for all time to come. I wish there was more I could contribute or say to help you through this terrible time; I am only able to offer my heartfelt thoughts, feelings and hope for your peace. May God bless you and yours,

NW

Gadsden, Alabama

7 January 2005

On "Art as humanization: Munich, directed by Steven Spielberg"

David, well done! Another lucid, insightful and charged review, which cuts to heart of the matter. I find your work consistently excellent, and appreciate all the wonderful reviews. I have seen both *Munich* and *Paradise Now*, and have to agree with most of your comments. With *The Bourne Identity*, or James Bond as Hollywood spy thriller alternatives, *Munich* looks even better.

BV

Boston, Massachusetts

3 January 2005

Reading your articles on *Munich* and *Saving Private Ryan*, I

had the feeling that if one's "heart is the right place," one will grope and fumble one's way toward socialism. Love and care for the individual next door (much less one's self) will compel one to analyze questions of larger historical significance, and embrace some form of socialism. Hopefully.

I feel thankful for both Spielberg and Mr. Walsh, both of whom teach us to see through art a new world, as well as the world as it actually is.

An interesting synchronicity: Immediately after reading Mr. Walsh's most recent review, I turned to the "common dreams" web page and read James Carroll's article on the demise of the nation state. He's quite a good writer, despite his liberal Catholicism. It is well worth reading, and it appeared in the *Boston Globe!* Bravo!

JB

4 January 2005

On "Large vote against union-backed concessions at Ford"

You write, "During the court session, attorneys for the UAW argued on behalf of the GM bosses. 'To paraphrase an old fable,' UAW attorney Julia Clark told the judge, 'A dead goose doesn't lay any eggs.'" It's way past time for the workers at GM to lay hold of the goose and keep all the eggs.

TC

3 January 2005

On "The class issues behind Australia's race riots"

As an Aboriginal person, I feel for the Lebanese people, as racism is an issue in Australia and it always has been. It's in schools when teachers talk about Captain Cook discovering Australia. What about the Aboriginal people who were already here, surviving for thousands of years in their simple way of life, which was called backwards because we didn't conform to their way of life? One comment that was made to my son by a white South African teacher was, "Why do I bother teaching you, because you can't learn anything and you won't amount to anything?" What about our fathers and grandfathers who fought to protect this country? When they returned, they weren't given a pension and land for their service. I won't go into the Stolen Generation and what government officials are responsible for.

I have been working since I was 13. I am now 50, so I consider myself to be an Aussie Battler, and I still feel discriminated against. In certain shops, by certain people, the way they look you up and down or follow you around because you are black. To me, the government has always been about a

white Australia. Never mind that there are different groups with different cultural backgrounds. To me, the issue is racism. It's about unemployment; it's about education, housing and health, and surviving week to week. This government is making it harder and harder to survive

IP

Australia

4 January 2005

On "The Abramoff affair: Corruption scandal threatens Republican control of US Congress"

Representative Jim Moran (Dem.-Virginia), during a Town Hall meeting on C-SPAN tonight, January 5, was asked the possibility of convening a committee to investigate the many discrepancies, lies and manipulations of the Bush administration. Impeachment was alluded to several times. Rep. Moran replied that they (committee members) weren't successful even in a hearing on the Downing Street Memo, which would hold the president, et al., accountable. He thinks the Republican Congress will thwart all attempts to do so in the future. In his opinion, it will be impossible to find a judicial body that will impeach George Bush no matter how egregious his "evil deeds."

If, with all the facts that have surfaced in the past three years proving the president and his cabinet not only incompetent but engaged, past and present, in criminal activities, they are still protected by members of Congress, then US citizens cannot expect justice to prevail. Therefore, your headline "Corruption scandal threatens Republican control of Congress" is misleading. It gives false hope that wrongs could and would be righted by legislators listening to their consciences. Possibly, we could anticipate they would take appropriate action at the urging of their constituents. Once again, the American people are daydreaming. There seems to be little evidence that we can expect effective action from the 109th Congress.

Today's WSWS article on Abramoff testifying against others involved in his payoffs mentions Democrats who are guilty of similar money exchanges. [See "Top Republican lobbyist turns state's evidence in Washington corruption scandal"] There is a rush to the exit doors to "return moneys received" by all politicians in an effort to protect themselves, to distance themselves from a source of possible embarrassment. If Rep. Moran is correct in his assessment of future judicial determinations from the District Courts and Supreme Court, if we can no longer depend on our legislators to uphold the Constitution and Bill of Rights or to represent fairly and ethically the citizens of this country, if these men who we have put in office so blatantly disregard their office and responsibility to the people, then the government based on democracy no longer exists. We didn't even notice the dark shadow of the coup as it approached.

Thank you for the most accurate, in-depth, complete reporting anywhere in the media. Your coverage is well researched and gives me the most information. After reading the *Guardian*, *Al*

Jazeera, the *New York Times* and/or *Washington Post*, I go to WSWS and get "the rest of the story."

CC

South Lake Tahoe, California

5 January 2005

Yet another "pearl" by Thomas Friedman

You may well have seen this already, but I thought I might bring it to your attention just in case. In the January 4 edition of the *New York Times*, Friedman wrote the following in the context of extolling the deeply "pro-hegemonic" book by Michael Mandelbaum entitled "The Case for Goliath":

"*USA Today* recently quoted David Walker, the U.S. comptroller general, as saying we are about to be hit by 'a demographic tsunami' that will 'never recede.' The baby boomers total 77 million, and their first wave turns 60 this year. Unless we trim the Medicare and Social Security benefits promised to these boomers, the paper noted, America's 'national debt will grow more than \$3 trillion through 2010, to \$11.2 trillion.... The interest alone would cost \$561 billion in 2010, the same as the Pentagon [budget].'

"The same as the Pentagon's! So either Social Security and Medicare shrink or the Pentagon shrinks—because higher taxes seem to be out of the question for now. If history is any guide, Americans will prefer Social Security and Medicare over paying to make the world safe for China, India, Russia and Iran to pursue their interests.

"If so, the world may soon test out one of the most important theses of Mr. Mandelbaum's book: that the greatest threat to global stability is 'not too much American power, but too little.' "

Both implications of Friedman's words—that social safety net programs are a threat to national security, and that this security is directly a function of US military budget and, presumably, its military presence overseas—are quite, quite telling.

GO

4 January 2005



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