

Letters from our readers

9 January 2007

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

On "US death toll reaches 3,000 in Iraq, with no let-up in sight"

Isn't it funny how there are billions and billions of dollars available for this continuing slaughter, while social programs in the US are starved for funding? Schools, healthcare, housing and other vital programs are continually cut back or eliminated because there is "no money" for them. Politicians stand up and blather on about how our society "cannot afford" to provide a social safety net for its citizens, while at the same time a tame Congress votes again and again to feed billions into the war machine and into the pockets of corporate criminals like Halliburton. It's sickening.

In order to finance these wars of aggression and windfalls for arms manufacturers, poor and working class youth are shoved into the meat grinder. Meanwhile, the United States steadily becomes more and more like a third-world country, with the destruction of manufacturing jobs, a bloated oligarchy, thousands of people living on the streets and dying of preventable diseases and the environment being destroyed by the rape of the planet for resources that never make it to the people who are exploited into providing the labor that produces it.

Welcome to the world's biggest banana republic.

CZ

San Francisco, California, US

3 January 2006

On "Financial Times cautions the 'plutocrats'"

I entirely share your opinion on this subject. You could also take into account Karl Marx's theory of the progressive impoverishment of the working class and enrichment of riches as a result of the capitalistic rules.

MB

Viareggio, Lucca, Italy

29 December 2006

The article on the plutocracy and their charitable ways is fine. The *Financial Times* has courageously pointed out that conspicuous display of wealth by members of the business tycoons is not only in bad taste, but is also likely to fuel public resentment against an unjust social system.

SMJ

Lucknow, India

29 December 2006

Good work *Financial Times* David. Recognizes the difference between a right and a privilege. If one abuses a privilege then it should be taken away. Your piece also helps us to deconstruct concepts used by this administration, such as liberty and freedom.

RLB

Brandenton, Florida, US

29 December 2006

Thank you so much for this thought provoking and resourceful article about the problems of the plutocracy in the US and the UK. I find it horrifying that we should be applauding the charity of the capitalists heads like Buffet and Gates amongst others who made their money or accumulated their wealth by destroying the lives of millions. In the wake of their wealth building lie billions of folks around the globe who have to put up with the capitalist way of doing things. I wonder why Buffet and Gates have not used the platform that they gained from their wealth to shout out against capitalism instead of promoting charity, which will only reach a limited number of folks. Why don't they fight the problem at the root?

I am appalled at their lack of hindsight and lack of farsightedness. As well, I am angered by the fact that they are receiving so much publicity for throwing water on a drought, which they created in the first place. I for one will never benefit from any of the money that they have given away. I don't understand how no charitable organization has ever reached out to me, a single mother of three who lives in dire poverty.

I used to receive assistance in the form of food stamps and Medicaid. However, since the war costs and the post 9/11 climate in Miami, I was cut off even though they knew that I had no way of feeding my children, no work and I was in the process of being evicted once again. The shocking thing is that I have a graduate degree from UC Berkeley and I am ABD [all but dissertation] at UPenn and Florida International University!

I am unhappy to say that I am one of those people who live on less than \$7 a day (in fact much less). And we have to hustle to keep our place. We have been homeless with our kids, and we felt blessed to have a car to sleep in on the streets and parks of Miami. I felt affirmed by the observations from Balzac, Oscar Wilde and the others. I believe strongly that the wealth builders in this capitalist system are truly evil workers of inequity and I wish that we could take them to a court where they would be held accountable for their crimes against humanity.

I have appreciated David Walsh's movie reviews and critiques. However, this is truly one of the best articles that he has written. I beg you to keep writing these kinds of articles because they affirm folks like me who live in dire poverty simply because we are black, immigrants, and come from working poor backgrounds.

It would be great to know if the \$2 trillion that the Bush administration has stolen from the US economy to conduct their killing spree abroad against innocent people in Iraq and Afghanistan could solve the poverty problem in the US with strong global implications. I am so tired of my situation because I do not know how to get out of it. I feel terrible for my children who I try to teach that a good education is important when I have had a good and expensive one that has not earned me a job or helped me to climb the social ladder. Go figure.

MNP

Miami, Florida, US

1 January 2007

On "Maryland Reservist killed by police after refusing deployment to Iraq"

Excellent article. Disgusting police-state behavior. I'm irate. It's totally inexcusable. Thank you for bringing the matter to light. Unfortunately, we feel very helpless, and sorry for the young man and his family. If you could somehow convey this to those surviving the deceased. More and more I am disappointed in the country I call "home."

CM

31 December 2006

On "Two years after the Asian tsunami: Sri Lankan survivors face civil war and squalor"

It is sad to see the growing numbers of displaced people, once by the tsunami then by the civil war. President M. Rajapakse is going to build a "unity among the diverse community in order to face the challenges and build a safer nation" over dead bodies of common people where children and women are no exception.

The "nation" is sacrificing lives of thousands of youth in turn to achieve "peace," as it is like in an adventure game, but this time the path lies over a deadly trek. Evidently this "nation" is trying to win Tamil speaking people's heart using advertisements. These days a TV channel is advertising to assist displaced people while praising the military oppression with all their might. I would like to thank you for the facts you have gathered in this article.

SW

Colombo, Sri Lanka

2 January 2007

On "Britain: Poorer student numbers fall as tuition fees are hiked up"

Yes, the article paints a very depressing situation. But can it be no accident that Britain is now facing the highest rates of teen and twenty alcoholism in the whole of Europe, where this age range is having liver problems only confined to middle age

and elderly drinkers a generation ago? It is reaching the form of a national crisis and resembles the massive drinking problems in the former Soviet Union and the nineteenth century, when people drowned their sorrows to disavow their life in cultures of "no hope." Although alcoholism existed in the time of Dostoevsky and Zola, it is hardly surprising that it is now occurring in another time of "no hope," where poor and lower middle class students are losing out on access to higher education thanks to New Labour's abolition of the British grant system and its efforts to make higher education the sole province of a twenty-first century Brideshead Revisited generation.

TW

27 December 2006

On a letter on "Pianist Jay McShann, last of Kansas City's jazz giants, dies at 90"

The lucky people who heard him in his late years and wrote to you of Jay McShann's modernism are right, but thank you for noting him. I heard Jay McShan often in Toronto and marveled at his modernity. I think you hear it best with the other representative of the romantic strain underlying the hard bop period, Buddy Tate, doing "Crazy Legs and Friday Stru," and his own composition on Sackville, circa 1977. I was there night after night when played at the old Cafe des Copains and can testify that he kept up to date.

AL

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

28 December 2006

On "Australia: A grim start to the summer bushfire season"

I just wanted to congratulate you on the wording and content of the above article. I work in insurance and have been following the bushfires in Australia very closely, reading many articles published about them from many different forums. Yours was the first I have enjoyed reading.

I thought the article was very well written and provided a good summary of the situation. You have also gone where no one else seems to want to go and discussed the political background and issues surrounding the lack of funding and difficulties in finding volunteer firefighters. No doubt the new industrial relations laws will also be playing a part in this, with most small businesses exempt from unfair dismissal laws and employees fearing for their job security even more.

So, thank you, congratulations and have a happy New Year.

NS

28 December 2006



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