Letters from our readers

25 March 2008

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

On "Five years after the invasion of Iraq: A debacle for US imperialism"

I find your concise history of the five-year war to reflect almost exactly my own take on it. Bush and Co. went into the war with the thought of more or less confiscating the oil of Iraq and controlling a larger part of available energy resources in the world. While they turned out to be incredibly naive in that respect, they were rewarded by finding that by merely destabilizing the oil-rich region they caused oil prices throughout the entire rest of the world to skyrocket. Without even gaining control or Iraqi oil, they were rewarded with profits greater than if they had.

TJ
Bentonville, Arkansas, USA
19 March 2008

On "American Axle strikers in Detroit determined to halt wage-cutting"

I support all your efforts, to fight corporate geed. I am a member of UAW local 699 Saginaw, Michigan. We had a contract with Delphi. They wanted more concessions, took away our cost-of-living adjustments, about $4,000 per year. Thank you for fighting the good fight against corporate greed (American Axle). I wish our union had the balls to do the same and go on strike. You are in my thoughts and prayers.

Thank you *all* again. I know it's not an easy thing you are doing. There are many people laid off as a result of this strike, I might be laid off right after Easter shutdown. If this is the case, I will be down there walking the picket line with you.

AD
Saginaw, Michigan, USA
21 March 2008

On "France: LCR leader Daniel Bensaïd reassures Socialist Party of his collaboration"

I always read with intense interest the articles exposing the reactionary rightward trajectory of the so-called socialist organizations such as the LCR [Ligue communiste révolutionnaire] and Lutte Ouvrière in France and the Left Party and the WASG [Election Alternative—Work and Social Justice] in Germany.

Not only is the analysis contained in these articles of paramount importance in preparing for the inevitable struggles that lie ahead, it is also a further vindication of the principled, unwavering perspectives of the SEP. As Trotsky wrote in *From October to Brest-Litovsk*, "What characterized our party almost from the very first period of the revolution, was the conviction that it would ultimately come into power through the logic of events."

DD
Melbourne, Australia
23 March 2008

On "A letter on the 'Cool/Cruel Britannia' trend"

Mark Halprin, in his introductory essay as editor of "Best American Short Stories 1988," lamenting the then-current trends in fiction (which still persist)—especially those coming from creative writing programs, influenced by postmodernism and the worst idiocies of critical theory—said the following:

"In the tunnels of contemporary American literature, the moles are singing. They are singing in unison, singing to each other, and they are singing of the darkness."

Certainly, disgust is a natural artistic response to the horror we are presented with every day, but it cannot be the sum total of our response. Also, the world—outside of academe and the feted circles of the well-heeled—is a dangerous place, where real things happen to real people, not just some exercise to amuse critical theorists and postmodernists—who mostly are comfortable and middle class, quite often with extremely limited experience. It is understandable that they might conclude that works of literary art are mere "texts" to be studied outside any context. Since the postmodernists have nothing to say, they assume the world has nothing to tell them.

It's time to move past this.

RM
21 March 2008

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How relevant this letter is, especially given the recent March 11th *Village Voice* article by David Mamet announcing his conversion to conservatism! From what the writer has stated, the play is little better than a theatrical version of the *Saw* and *Hostel* series, indicative of a culture than has chosen deliberate depravity rather than rational alternatives. Recently a New Labour minister has spoken about bringing back the Victorian workhouse, and others gleefully deport either dying aliens or gays back to places where they will face immediate execution. This is the real face of "cool Britannia" begun by Blair and continued by Gordon Brown, seen with McCain outside Number 10 Downing Street. Unfortunately, this type of art is reflecting the real nature of a culture than encourages it.

TW

21 March 2008

On "Despite a nervous 'backflip,' Australian government plans deep welfare cuts"

I assume the Australian government is fully aware of just how destructive such policies are, based on the example of the US. As a result of our government's anti-welfare policies, infant mortality rates among the poor have soared while the life expectancy of America's poor is now below that of some Third World nations. In short, these policies kill. Of course, those in government do not find this disturbing, but these policies are not only horrid for the poor, they are damaging to the nation.

During the years when welfare aid was raised to the poverty line, and people had access to education and job skills training, our economic disparities fell to historically low levels, and the middle class greatly expanded. Since President Clinton's repeal of the entitlement of aid, our economic disparities have soared, predictably creating a range of issues that have done much to weaken the nation. The creation of a vast, bottom-wage workforce of people who have no fundamental labor rights has had a dramatic impact on wages in general, on unions, on workers' rights and protections.

Desperate people take desperate measures, and we now have a prison system that makes the old Soviet gulag look puny in comparison; note that corporations are increasingly taking advantage of sub-minimum wage prison labor, enjoying stunning profits at a time of economic hardship for citizens. Every job that goes to prison labor is a job taken from the general population, causing further economic deterioration. The impact in whole, all of it negative, would require a lengthy report.

It should have been enough to point out to the US, which endlessly crows that it is the world's protector of human rights, that these policies directly violate the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but the US has fallen far behind on human rights over the past quarter-century. Handling the results of welfare repeal, it turns out, is far more costly than a legitimate welfare system. The prison population has exploded, and the number of children taken from their parents solely on the grounds of poverty has dramatically increased.

We have watched our economic system collapse, and many Americans are now getting first-hand experience with our anti-poor policies. These policies exist solely for the enrichment of the few at the expense of the many. And hopefully, as more and more people fall to the bottom, losing everything, we will find the backbone to fight back.

DHF

Wisconsin, USA

23 March 2008

On "Shades of 1929: Bear Stearns collapse signals deepest crisis since Great Depression"

While I am no a financial analyst by any means, it appears to me that all corrections are made from the top-down, which help the unregulated banking institutions. Why not a bottom-up method to preserve ownership for those headed toward foreclosure? If the meltdown is due to extensive foreclosures, why not save the homeowners who ultimately are paying the tab anyway? Individuals are preserved under corporate structures, but individuals headed toward foreclosures have no recourse but to bite the bullet and at the same time have to face rising prices of subsistence goods. How fair is a free market that has safeguards for the wealthy while leaving the average taxpayer with the burden of the debt in the aftermath?

MP

Maggie Valley, North Carolina, USA

18 March 2008

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