

Letters from our readers

5 April 2008

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

On "An indictment of the profit system: High school drop-out rate in major US cities at nearly 50 percent"

While Colin Powell's organization reveals the problem of unequal educational achievement, and even goes so far as to note class inequalities, the odds of these being identified and addressed by the political establishment are essentially nil. The great American myth is that education is the key to financial success, when the actual direction of the relationship is reversed.

American schoolteachers are expected to be miracle workers, somehow able to undo the effects years of poverty has had on young children. Even well-funded schools can't do this. Poverty during formative years is very destructive, limiting nutrition, eroding health, reducing mental stimulation, and often exposing children to stress and fear that make learning difficult at best.

The myth is essential to the continued hegemony of economic and political elites. The establishment goes through the motions of promoting education because to admit education is not in fact the primary causal variable is unthinkable. The class system is last on the list of things to blame, as can be seen in Bush's failed "No Child Left Behind" policy. This policy, dubbed "no child left untested" by teachers, conveniently blames teachers for the failure of the class system to produce human capital.

BB

Oklahoma

3 April 2008

On "American Axle strikers in Buffalo determined to resist wage cuts"

Your report incorrectly gives the impression that work at AAM Buffalo was drawn down to 700 workers over a six-year period. As of January 1, 2007 there were 2,100 workers. 1,500 took the first buyout due to threats and intimidation by the local union. The remainder took buyouts just before the plant closed. Technically, the first 1,500 just quit their job for no reason, or greed, according to the AAM/UAW Partnership. This fact is backed up by news releases on AAM's site as well as other news stories available on the Internet.

Some workers have filed charges against Local 424 and AAM for collusion, misrepresentation, etc. Workers feel they were forced into quitting their jobs in an effort to save AAM and the UAW money in unemployment, health insurance, etc. Taking a buyout also meant they were ineligible for unemployment, NAFTA TAA, and other programs that help those who lose their jobs due to foreign competition.

I'd appreciate it if you could print a correction. Thanks
AO

Cheektowaga, New York, USA

3 April 2008

On "Reject UAW plans to sell out American Axle strike"

I would like to add my two cents. I am a GM hourly employee currently laid off because of the strike. I agree with the idea that there needs to be a revolution of the American workers. I believe it needs to start with the auto industry.

The GM strike last fall in 2007 was a joke in my opinion. When we voted or ratified that contract, they (the UAW) let all the temporary employees vote on it also. Most of these temps are young kids out of school, and \$14.00 an hour sounds like a goldmine to them. So of course they voted yes, and there were a lot of them. I have to ask why in the hell should I let these kids decide my family's future and livelihood. I have two small children; most of these temps don't have families of their own yet.

On another note, we will have some employees like myself making \$28 an hour verses others at \$14 an hour. Solidarity along with morale will be at an all-time low. I don't think this is the way to unite our union brothers and sisters together.

MT

Michigan, USA

3 April 2008

On "Australia: SBS television's bogus debate on Northern Territory intervention"

Thank you for your continuing coverage of the "quarantining" of the Northern Territory in Australia. We get little to no coverage of that here in the States, though a number of leftish papers were practically saturated with glowing, sopping reports of the "Apology Day."

Interestingly, the continuation of such things as the current invasion of the territory was not addressed in the reports. Fancy that.

I also applaud the continuing coverage of the plans to expand the measures being taken into non-Aboriginal communities. Indeed, it is common for draconian measures to be tested out in areas where there is little to no power before application on a broader scale. It is time for the working class as a whole to unite against such things; it is the only way to ultimately bring justice into our communities.

CMS

Portland, Oregon, USA

2 April 2008

Rarely have I watched such a one-sided presentation on what is widely regarded as a wide-ranging, participatory and no-holds-barred TV discussion programme. In fact, the bias was so blatant, that I switched the TV off before the end. The worst cheerleaders for the military/police intervention were undoubtedly Allison Anderson and Mildred Intamala, both cherry-picked to give an Aboriginal pro-intervention slant to that bogus discussion.

Thanks to WSWS for picking up on SBS's attempt on disinformation, and the hidden subtext of forcing the Aborigines off their land, where there are 'mineral riches,' and the extension of the intervention to the wider population, i.e., the working class.

MS

Queanbeyan, Australia

3 April 2008

On "US food stamp use projected to swell to record levels"

Here, as it relates to food stamp benefits, is just one example of the upward shift of wealth in the US in the past three decades. In 1975, I was 27 years old and out of work. I was not sick nor was I disabled, just out of work. As such, I qualified for \$25.00 per week in food stamp benefits, which comes to \$109.28 per month. In today's dollars, that would amount to \$454.73 per month.

Flash forward to 2008. My mother is now retired and 87 years old. She has three sources of income: her Social Security, her Supplemental Social Security Income, and about one-fifth of my deceased stepfather's VA pension—plus \$68.00 per month in food stamps. Therefore, in 1975, at 27 years old, I received, in today's dollars, \$454.73 per month in food stamps. While, in 2008, at 87 years old, my mom is getting \$68.00 per month in food stamps.

What economic class in the US do you think pocketed the difference?

TF

2 April 2008

On "Independent Kosovo: Anatomy of a Western protectorate"

I went through the articles regarding Kosovo and the Balkans by Paul Mitchell, Paul Bond, Peter Schwartz and also went through the related link articles. This is the first time I have been able to find the right answers to questions which have troubled me for a long time. The Western media has always portrayed the Serbians as the perpetrators of atrocities, but the common Serbians whom I know through my work in Tripoli, where there is a lot of expatriate population from Serbia, came across to me as normal people.

Another point is that though there is constant demonizing of the Serbians by the western media, I have met and talked to several Serbians who actually told of the misery of the civil war. One staff nurse working in Tripoli summarized it very well, "When I used to go home for my yearly holidays, they used to wait for me to give them some money as there was civil war and employment was not easy. I would give some money to all the children of the family, to buy cake. In those 10 years the children forgot what is cake."

However, the common Serbians were not able to explain properly what is going on, and the articles which have been written very lucidly and giving detailed information and analysis have helped clear questions held for a long time. I showed the articles to some Serbians and they too have read them with great interest.

AB

Libya

2 April 2008

On "Congressional Democrats defer to Fed Chairman Bernanke on Wall Street bailout"

If taxpayer/government money is being used to bail out Wall Street banks, then there should be nationalization of those banks. Tax the banks, big business, and the wealthy. Press criminal charges.

SB

3 April 2008



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