

Letters from our readers

12 May 2008

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

On “Death toll in Burma rises, as major powers press to intervene”

Am I just imagining this, or are the Western powers (particularly the UK, the US and France) still speaking of Myanmar as if it were their imperial property? Do they not understand that much of the reason that the government’s (correct) suspicion of them (most tragic though it is in this case) stems from hundreds of years of European and North American dominance? Can they still not understand the concept of blowback?

RV

Athens, Georgia, USA

9 May 2008

On “Why the propaganda campaign for international intervention in Burma?”

The people of Burma should read the history of the IMF and WTO as well as American/multinational bankers and avoid them like the plague. After the Indian Ocean tsunami, the native peoples were victimized by the corporatists and had their land and heritage stolen.

PE

Rochester Hills, Michigan, USA

10 May 2008

When I traveled to Burma in 1993, people came up to me to talk, which was actually strictly forbidden, by inviting me for a cup of tea. It was the only country where they said: “I wish the British were back.” It is truly a sad story!

GT

10 May 2008

On “Wage-cutting in the US auto parts industry: The background to the American Axle strike”

I guess history is somehow repeating itself, or the plans of these corporations and the early UAW are finally coming to a reality. I appreciate your work. I also remember when Dorothy Graves was murdered. I

was a teenager. She was one of my mentors at my church. It brought tears to my eyes. Please continue to research the truth, speak the truth, and write the truth. It will set you *free*!

LL

8 May 2008

On “Britain: Scottish refinery workers strike”

I read your excellent article on the Grangemouth strike. As someone who works in the North Sea oil industry, I thought I should let you know that the majority of oil workers supported the strike. I also thought I should let you know that eight Grangemouth workers were admitted to Stirling Royal Infirmary last weekend with cyanide poisoning. I bet that won’t be in the press. Please print this to show people what workers in the oil industry face.

DC

9 May 2008

On “Unprecedented opposition to CAW’s concessions-filled deal with Ford Canada”

Hi Carl,

I read your article today. I’m out of CAW local 707. I thought your article good and forwarded it to other CAW members.

The mood in the plant about opening the collective agreement early was downright ugly; the members were pissed. I used to hold an executive position, until 3 years ago. We pass out a leaflet in which we use the information from the CAW national web site, so I guess if that leaflet had mistruths, I suppose what the national was feeding us was wrong too.

The one thing that came out of all this is that the members have come closer together in solidarity. The leadership should have listened to the membership. One rep told me that he told other reps not to listen to the BS in the plant. I told him that BS elects him into office.

We are going to try to rebuild our union from the left instead of the far right, where it now is.

In Solidarity,

LW

11 May 2008

On “Former prosecutor testifies that Guantánamo military commissions are show trials”

Extraordinary, brilliant writings on the David Hicks saga. Well done.

KW

Southport, Australia

10 May 2008

On “Russia and Georgia on the brink of armed conflict over Abkhazia”

You really think there is a distinct possibility of NATO attacking Russia? I think you are being overly alarmist. NATO couldn't launch such an undertaking without Germany, and there is no way Germany will participate in an attack on Russia in the foreseeable future. The other Europeans wouldn't support it either, and given the nuclear situation, it's even very doubtful the USA would attack.

PF

11 May 2008

On “Britain: Welfare Reform Act to force sick and vulnerable to work”

Wisconsin already tried this, with disastrous results, and finally abandoned those policies.

For several years, the seriously ill/permanently disabled who had dependent children were required to take workfare jobs. In theory, via the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, these people would be placed in job assignments that were disability-appropriate.

In reality (and because DVR was financially rewarded by the state for making as many “placements” as possible in as short a time as possible), there was little concern about the ability of the individual to do the job—or of the consequences of such placements on individuals.

The results were predictable. DVR not only subjected people to tremendous suffering (evidently of no concern to the state), but ended up costing the government far more than it saved in reduced benefits. Not surprisingly, when the ill/disabled are forced to work in jobs that they can't physically handle, it significantly worsens their conditions, resulting in escalating medical costs. (Government pays the medical costs of those determined permanently

disabled.)

People who are ill or in pain (obviously) are not able to perform job functions to a satisfactory degree, so employers/subcontractors were not happy with the results. While there were some exceptions, those exceptions were very few.

These policies weren't dropped out of compassion for the tremendous suffering inflicted on many of the ill and disabled, but because government and business lost a *lot* of money on this particular scheme to create a super-cheap labor force. I would hope that the British government takes an objective look at how these policies failed in the US.

DF

Wisconsin, USA

10 May 2008



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