

# Letters from our readers

22 July 2008

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

*On "US continues its killing of Afghan civilians: Bombs wipe out wedding party, 47 dead"*

And, candidate Barack Obama wants to enlarge the US warmaking (killing) in Afghanistan.

MS

18 July 2008

*On "Australia: Unions give Qantas a 'breathing space' to prepare fresh assault on engineers"*

What a coincidence, just as Qantas announces that they will be laying off 1,500 staff (1,300 in Australia), with airline analysts predicting the need for even more retrenchments, the ALAEA union has announced it has come to an in-principle deal with Qantas management for a new four-year deal.

Qantas CEO Geoff Dixon applauded the conclusion to the protracted pay dispute with the airline's engineers union.

Dixon said. "The airline reached an in principle agreement with the engineers yesterday, after resolving negotiations with the pilots' union on Wednesday. The contracts provided flexibility and certainty for the airline during the volatile time of restructuring."

No details will be released of the "confidential" agreement until next week. It is so top secret that the engineers themselves are forbidden to see it. However that hasn't stopped the union from calling off all industrial action ... again.

There is little doubt that this deal will be almost identical to the one that was previously rejected overwhelmingly by the engineers. The layoffs will be used to coerce engineers in accepting the deal, as those that do not will have the prospect of dismissal looming over their heads.

The more intense the antagonisms, the more the union movement resorts to ruthless underhanded chicanery in advancing the interests of capital against labor and the more pronounced is the vacuum on the left.

DD

Melbourne, Australia

18 July 2008

*On "Sydney's World Youth Day: a spectacle of state-sponsored obscurantism"*

A good description of the foulness that hit Australia with the Pope's visit. Most of the pilgrims are the usual people that have to attend any big gathering no matter what it is, in the expectation of having a huge party. I suspect that 99 percent have no idea at all what religion is all about—that is, money, greed and power. The name Pope alone demonstrates the hypocrisy of what he professes to teach. Matthew 23:9: "And call no man your father upon the

earth: for one is your father, which is in heaven." As for love and peace see Luke 14:26 and Matthew 10:34/36.

MH

Melbourne, Australia

18 July 2008

Reading about the pope's trip to Australia to propagandise and poison the minds of the world's youth, with his message of blind faith against all reality, had me thinking about the history of the church. So I read some the previous articles WSWWS published when Ratzinger went from being the Grand Inquisitor to pope. Looking at some of his comments, I could not help but notice that he's not only a bad theologian, but a worse historian (but I suppose someone like him would not be concerned about historical realities unless it suited his particular dogma). For example, in reference to his opposition to Turkey's application to join the European Union upon his coronation, Ratzinger states, "Europe has a culture which gives it a common identity. The roots which formed ... this continent are those of Christianity." If one listened carefully to what he said and did a little reading, one could have pointed out to him the centre of the Byzantine or Eastern Empire when the Roman one was splitting and declining in the fourth century was in Turkey, which managed to maintain a strong Christian identity, albeit certainly different from the western version for over 1000 years, until 1453, when it was finally overthrown by the invading Ottoman empire.

Meanwhile, Islam, supposedly *not* a western religion, was already in Spain and France for over seven centuries, until the various independent confederations were solidified under singular rules in their respective countries which, in turn, eventually overthrew Muslim rule, along with the considerable Judaic influences, thereby all but killing most of the great intellectual and scientific developments that had been occurring during the Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance, which would not have happened had they not translated the works of Plato and Aristotle and the mathematicians, propelling the era of scientific exploration.

Europe, moreover, has nothing resembling a common cultural identity and Christianity has certainly not been that unifying influence, except as a toll of oppression and ignorance. Many European cultures resisted Christian influence for centuries and recognised the papal office for the predatory imperialism it represented, even if it did not use such terminology. Europe also has a history of various "invasions" from the East, including Turkey, as was recently discovered when archaeologists and biologists traced the origins of the Etruscans who were in Italy until the fifth century BCE, when they suddenly disappeared with few traces of their culture. The Celts came from Eastern Europe, but also from the Asian steppes of the Caucasus. Not to mention

the Basques of France and Spain, who may indeed be an indigenous people.

I could go on, but I use these as examples of how the papacy is willing to obscure anything, be it science or history, to promote its particular brand of willful ignorance and enforced idiocy. And you are also right in that it has been in the service of economic predation, which goes back to the early days of the Inquisition, established in 1215 through the papal bull *Ad Extirpanda*, giving it the “right” to seize the property of those accused of heresy or dissent against the Church. Some things have not changed about the church, but they can and must be, resisted. Keep up the good work

CC

Glasgow, Scotland

19 July 2008

On “One million names on US government ‘terrorist’ watch list”

Where or how do I look to see if I’m named as worthy of the “terrorist watch” list? The semanticist in me, plus the sense of humor I sometimes employ in dealing with these things, makes me note that the verb, ‘to list’ refers to a ship which is not level, and tipping to the side, something which will portend danger. So the government has a list and maybe I’m to be watched, like clocked? I hope they have a good time.

I’ve been told that if a person writes to the FBI to inquire if there is a file on himself, that in doing so, a person initiates a file because his inquiry is enough to open one since something must have been done to warrant that inquiry. Maybe I’ll inquire and suggest file sharing, thus the government can bloat itself more by employing one agency to share with the other, energetically or listlessly...

Seriously, again, the freedom to publish (speech), to find by research (read and have literature), is one of the best bulwarks against fascism, control of government by big business and militarism.

And back to the present: if calling the Bush regime and its neo-con allies’ war criminals makes one worthy of the list, then sign me on. I hope the infectious boil festers and swells.

MS

Santa Rosa, California, USA 17 July 2008

On “US bailout of mortgage giants: The politics of plutocracy”

You write: “Their Ponzi scheme structures have been undermined by the collapse in home prices and the virulent spread of foreclosures. Over the past nine months they have lost a combined \$11 billion and their stock has fallen by as much as 80 percent—a decline that turned into a rout last week as their stock values were cut nearly in half.

“Their debacle is the latest and to date most spectacular expression of the decay of American capitalism. It is another refutation of the myths promoted by the US ruling elite about the miraculous workings of the capitalist market—supposedly the pinnacle of human achievement.”

When I want the facts, not the ideology, I have learned to go to the bourgeois press, here the Rothschild-backed *Economist*, which postures as the friend of the US taxpayer while being a propaganda sheet for international finance. Still, it tends to tell the story

straighter and more fully than has been done by WSWWS, and it underscores the mechanics that threaten the entire finance system. The Fed has systemically monetized losses by allowing investment banks, and now Fannie & Freddie, to borrow freshly minted (i.e., electronic marker!) USDs backed by their junk paper as collateral taken at face value. That is, the junk paper is exchanged at its face value for USDs, hence the Fed that used to loan dollars for collateral of the highest quality such as treasury notes, now takes in the unmarketable SIV’s as though they were still worth what they once cost.

The deregulation that turned Fannie & Freddie into speculative investors of other institutions’ bad paper—at great profit while the party lasted, due to the lower interest rates for which they qualified because they were perceived as US-backed—now allows the USD to be backed by these GSE’s acquired junk paper. I haven’t heard much from WSWWS about the theft of the middle class’s savings by the predatory inflation against the USD—perhaps it’s too reformist or Ron Paulish for your taste- but there it is staring us in the face. For those who had the prudence to save, it is a theft as pure and simple as any another. The unsurprising decision to foist the losses onto the backs of the US working class falters before the limited financial resources of that class, drowning as it is in debt, especially as the outlook for wage increases remains grim to none, threatening to sink the US Treasury. We expect to hear Volcker soon once again intoning about the need for an international currency, the devil of which will be in the details.

MG

Los Angeles, California, USA 18 July 2008

On “‘Equality is not good’: Barney Frank and the putrefaction of American liberalism”

Wow, Bill. Another thoughtful, factual and insightful piece of writing from you. Thank you for giving the background of this Congressman.

VS

18 July 2008



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