

Open Letter From A US Citizen

I WRITE to ask for your help in stopping the Bush regime's abuses at home and abroad. The citizens of the United States cannot be counted on to stop Bush. The countries of the United Nations cannot be counted on to stop Bush. But the citizens of the world do have the power to stop Bush simply by keeping their hands in their pockets.

I wonder if you can imagine what it is like in America right now. The people seem to be hypnotised or perhaps walking in their sleep. Propaganda, disinformation, and rousing advertisements combine to induce in the population a constant state of paranoia, smug superiority, and frustrated desire. This volatile emotional state leaves people vulnerable to the seductive rhetoric of a pseudo-populist leader who assures them that they have a right to feel both fearful and grandiose and to blame all of America's problems on foreigners, liberals, and hostile nations.

The atmosphere of these United States these days is ominous. Fascism lurks around every corner. Flags

and other patriotic symbols are everywhere — on the flagpoles, on the buildings, on the cars, and on the people themselves. School teachers are instructed to decorate their classrooms in red, white and blue, and schoolchildren are encouraged to dress in those colours. Every day, Bush or his proxies talk to the American people about our "evil" enemies and our endangered "homeland." We are told that liberty and justice are uniquely American values and that those values, rather than past and ongoing US aggression overseas, are the reasons that terrorists want to kill Americans.

The important thing to remember is that many, perhaps most, of the people really do believe the propaganda; really do fear attack; really do believe that we are going to "liberate" the people of Iraq; and really do believe that those who oppose the war are idiots, cowards, or sycophants of tyranny. They truly do not see that Bush is the more dangerous tyrant; truly do not yet realise that their own civil liberties have been sharply

circumscribed by this tyrant; and truly do not comprehend that their own country has been the aggressor again and again and is about to become the aggressor yet again.

Our esteemed "free press" is of little use, being almost wholly controlled by the corporate interests Bush serves. The newspapers and news programs play along with the Bush regime, allowing reports of alleged terrorist threats to supersede news of domestic and international dissent. Thanks to the mediocrity of the public school system, which was designed to produce dutiful workers rather than skeptical thinkers, most Americans lack the analytic skills needed to decipher the daily deluge of propaganda to which they are subjected. Many can't distinguish between advertisements and news or between fact and opinion. Remember, these are the people who believed the newspaper editorialists when they said that the best way to preserve democracy would be to support "President" Bush whether or not he had legitimately gained control

of the government.

Of course, that doesn't hold true for everyone in the country. Some did protest the bloodless coup that brought the Bush regime to power and some have been demonstrating against Bush's attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq. Unfortunately, these protests cannot and will not stop Bush. Remember, this is a man who seized power even though he was not elected. He has made it very clear that he doesn't care what the people think. He certainly isn't going to change his course in response to entirely symbolic expressions of dissent by a minority of the population.

If all was right with the world, the United Nations never would have recognized the Bush regime as the legitimate government of the United States. If all was right with the world, the United Nations would reign in any regime that attacks another country without provocation and in defiance of international law. If all was right with the world, the EU and other important trading partners of the United States would make it clear

that their markets are closed to rogue nations that break treaties and wage wars of conquest.

Unfortunately, we cannot count on the United Nations or its constituent countries to do the right thing. Thus we must call on our last best hope for peace and freedom: the peace and freedom loving people of the world.

Uncle Sam needs you to save him from George W. Bush. The Industrial Workers of the World used to say that the workers can stop the world just by folding their arms. Similarly, the consumers of the world can interfere with market capitalism just by keeping their hands in their pockets. Bush listens to the language of dollars and cents. When the corporate spon-

sors who brought him to power begin to complain, then and only then will he change his ways.

If the people of the world are serious about their opposition to a US attack on Iraq, they must stop giving their money to the US military-industrial complex. Ideally, they will boycott all multinational corporations based in the United States, using letters and telephone calls to tell the companies why they are doing so. At minimum, they will reduce their reliance on US goods and services while also reducing their consumption of the fossil fuel that is at the heart of this conflict. As soon as the corporations feel the pinch, they will put the squeeze on Bush. Please begin to boy-

cott today. Do not worry about hurting the workers, because the budget cuts Bush will use to pay for war will hurt working people and the poor more than any boycott ever could. In addition, by supporting local and non-corporate goods and services, you will be helping to build a better global economy for everyone.

I hope you will choose to act in solidarity with the people of the United States and Iraq by helping to stop a war between those two countries. I promise that if you are ever in a similar situation within your country, I will act in solidarity with you.

Patrice Jones
Maryland, USA
Via e-mail

Your Letter Could Win A Prize!

EACH week we will be giving a prize of N\$50 to the winning letter! We will be selecting what we think is the best letter of the week (from our regular Tuesday and Friday letters columns) which will earn the writer N\$50. We will also state, in our view, why the winning letter was selected. Preference will be given to letters by writers using their real names and not pseudonyms, and addresses must in all cases be their own as winners will not be able to collect and/or receive the prize if the name/address is not legitimate. Criteria for our selection may vary. The winning letter could be chosen because it is well-written, succinct and to the point or because it concerns a matter of public interest, among others. As always, The Namibian encourages members of the public to exercise their freedom of expression. Please do remember that all letters received and those that