

Letters to the WSWs

21 July 2000

The following is a selection of recent letters sent to the WSWs.

Dear Mr. Walsh,

I have begun reading the WSWs in the past few months and as a painter have been particularly interested in your reviews, and the attitudes toward the principles, which should, but so often fail to inform the arts in America at this juncture in time. I believe it is extremely important that the forces which have led to this paucity be enumerated clearly and forcefully, as you have done, because the failure to do so leaves many artists in America struggling futilely with "the market" and issues of "success" instead of addressing the real reason to be making art in the first place. In your words:

"There is global social inequality. And also there's a universal political problem, that the old parties are discredited, the unions and traditional labor movement have proven worthless. There is a vacuum. People are not happy, but they don't see an alternative. Religious or nationalist movements fill the space and try to appeal to people in a demagogic way..." [from the interview with Yesim Ustaoglu, 24 May 2000, "There are still some courageous people, even in the film industry," 2000 San Francisco International Film Festival].

This failure to see an alternative can undermine the ability of artists to create as well as people in general to formulate courses of action, which oppose this. It is heartening to be made aware of the filmmakers and other artists who continue to have courage to address these issues not in a didactic, but an artistic form. I was already familiar with the films of Iranian directors Kiarostami and Makhmalbof, but your articles have lent me additional insight. I have also been alerted to look for films by directors such as Yesim Ustaoglu and Deepa Mehta.

While having appreciated your reviews of these films, I have been moved to write in response to your review of *The Patriot* in particular, firstly because its invective

was as humorous as it was well deserved —

"In the concluding battle sequence when he [Martin] picks up the famous American flag of the time, with its thirteen stars in a circle, and starts chasing the retreating British, one feels like asking, 'Why an American flag? Why not a banner with his children's faces on it?'"

But secondly and more importantly I intend to raise the film's failure to address concepts of "monarchy, tyranny and democracy" in favor of a homily on "family values" and its use of the American Revolution as no more than a backdrop for the same violent sequences we get in any other Hollywood action film, when explaining to my sons why I won't take them to see this film. Luckily they are young enough that parental opinion carries some clout. And if that doesn't work there is the R-rating (I think)!

I look forward to reading other reviews on the WSWs.

Sincerely,

AP

18 July 2000

A truly fantastic review of *The Patriot* ... indeed, one of the best I have seen on the subject anywhere, and I've read more than 30.

Thanks.

TL

14 July 2000

Dear Sir,

I have just read your article on the case of G. Petty. It is a most disturbing read. How can it be that a great and good country like the US allows an undeveloped child to languish for a potential 85 years in jail. I am only an occasional user of the web and media, and do not have a great knowledge of how it all works, but I would wholeheartedly recommend that you try to get maximum exposure for this case, especially here in London, England. Campaigns of great injustice do get listened to here. I am sorry to say it but we seem to be more civilised in this respect. The only way for

ludicrous things like this to stop happening is to bring some international shame on America. Keep up the good work!

All the best,

M

19 July 2000

Dear Madam, Dear Sir I just wanted to congratulate wsws.org for its journalist Dianne Sturgess. In these times of cheap and biased journalism about Sri Lanka (if available at all...) her articles stand out for their profound background knowledge and an investigative eagerness to find "The Truth".

HV 20 July 2000



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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