Letters from our readers

2 September 2003

Below we post a selection of recent letters to the World Socialist Web Site.

On "As 'post-war' casualties top invasion's: Bush Iraq policy in disarray"

Editor,

With CNN, MSNBC, Fox and other news channels distributing 24 hours of propaganda each day there is one curious omission in their programming schedules. I have yet to see the funeral of a US serviceman. I have not even seen bodies being unloaded from C-130s. What happened to all of those funeral reporters that were pumping the 9/11 event? What happened to all those tears of the "left-behind"? Are we supposed to rely on *Al Jazeera* coverage for these events?

Is it because these young boys and girls coming home are the sons and daughters of the working class and not account executives, stock brokers, bankers, lawyers and members of the ruling elite? Two more servicemen died this morning and their bodies will probably be tossed into the cargo bay of a transport plane alongside mailbags and oil-drilling equipment being sent back to the states for maintenance. If our own men and women are treated this way can you imagine how the Iraqis are being treated?

PK

27 August 2003

Dear Bill,

The mounting death toll amongst US soldiers, including an undisclosed number of "non-hostile gunshot wounds," and what is proving to be a large number of "mysterious" deaths from what sound like the effects of depleted uranium, is a telling indictment not only of the Bush administration's postwar Iraqi policies to date, but of the entire process leading up to war. It goes beyond the lies told to the public to gain support (or at least acquiescence) for the invasion. It unveils the truth that there were no plans for what might have been expected to happen. That is, might have been expected by anyone not blinkered by a perverted messianic mission, fueled by the burning fires of greed and indifferent to any reality but its own.

That the mission is crumbling away is no surprise to anyone who has watched events unfold. That Bush and Rice and Rumsfeld in their speeches before safe audiences like the American Legion keep repeating lies is only to be expected. But Bush's breathtaking calling of Iraqi resistance to occupation "terrorism" gives the game away. He speaks as if Iraq is a part of United States territory being invaded by aliens and declares that using any methods whatever in its defense is therefore justified. No matter that it involves the terrorizing of families and children as their homes are searched and they are threatened. No matter that non-American journalists continue to be killed "accidentally." No matter that mosques are violated. No matter that there is no electricity or clean water. No matter that US soldiers are committing suicide.

As Maureen Dowd in today's *New York Times* writes, "team Bush is sticking to its mantra that everything is going according to plan." And the plan is? Apart from using Iraq as one large oil well, the plan is apparently, as Bush told the American Legion, "confronting terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan ... so our people will not have to confront terrorist violence in New York or St. Louis or Los Angeles." This is a despicable lie whose intended effect is to engender amnesia in US citizens about the danger of their civil liberties being shredded by the invasive Department of Homeland Security and the Patriot Act. It is intended to make them forget that the federal government is demanding that cash-strapped states pay for security measures that they can't afford. Above all, it is to make them stop worrying about the forces that, through deregulation of the electrical power generation system, created the circumstances that caused a massive failure of that system in the northeastern United States, putting lives at risk because the transmission grid has not been maintained or expanded in years.

What the blackout revealed about the unpreparedness of city hospitals, water treatment plants and emergency response teams was shocking. Those people in St. Louis and Los Angeles better be prepared for what happened to the people of New York on August 14.

Then, after their candlelight dinners, they can watch "The Battle of Algiers" on televisions plugged into car batteries.

CZ

San Francisco

27 August 2003

On "US occupation force in Iraq recruiting former Iraqi secret police"

Thank you for your continuing excellent coverage and analysis of the Bush regime's various outrages and intrigues. Regarding the news that the US is recruiting members of the recently deposed dictator's old secret police to staff the occupation's new secret police—this is outrageous, but not surprising.

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The US's position in Vietnam in the 1960s is often cited as being analogous to its current Iraq predicament. The analogy is not perfect but, with regard to the US's "counterinsurgency" efforts against the Viet Cong in South Vietnam, it is becoming increasingly relevant.

As the US's control of South Vietnam deteriorated, the US became more brutal in its repression. The ultimate expression of this brutality was the US's Phoenix Program, in which locally hired thugs, under the direction of the CIA and the US military, carried out a massive program of political murder and intimidation—aimed not just at Viet Cong cadre and sympathizers, but at any opposition (whether armed or civil) to the US and its puppet junta in Saigon.

To better understand the thinking behind the US's bringing members of Saddam Hussein's old secret police into the occupation's security apparatus, a study of the Phoenix Program would be instructive.

So far as President Bush and his cohorts are concerned, the two main lessons that this country's leaders should have learned from its involvement in Vietnam are that the public's perception of its government's behavior has to be managed (thus "embedded" journalism and the increased control of access to information), and that no violent means can be ruled out (for the Bush crowd, the US lost in Vietnam because it hadn't been brutal enough, three million dead bodies notwithstanding).

Much has been said lately by politicians and government officials about the need to "put an Iraqi face" on the occupation. Now we have a better idea of what that face will look like.

LG
Sioux Falls, South Dakota
27 August 2003

Dear WSWS,

Last night PBS was reporting the federal government's desire to remove the University of California from the administration of the Los Alamos nuclear laboratory and instead have the lab administered through some private contract, after bids. (I wonder if there will be a site on which one can bet on who will get the contract. Not Halliburton, of course...)

The possible results of such action are staggering, and seem to threaten all that has been accomplished to prevent nuclear proliferation ... in favor of Proliferation for Profit.

I hope that the free liberal press will keep tabs on this and be sure to make it more widely understood, before the event, if this is actually under serious consideration. Could it be a ploy to distract the public from our energy problems, and/or revive the undead nuclear industry as a power source? Although it sounds bizarre, bizarre things are becoming much more frequent than they used to be.

Thanks for all your great work,
NR
27 August 2003

Regarding your otherwise excellent Right-wing Alabama justice engineers 'Ten Commandments' showdown," you write "Significant sections of the US media continue to treat Moore with sympathy, as perhaps misguided or overzealous, but a 'man of principle,' a 'man of God walking a lonely path,' and so on." In that same paragraph, you describe "(Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, Gary Bauer, James Dobson and company)" as "neo-fascist." My argument is that there is nothing "neo" about the fascism of Robertson, et al. Don't pull your punches. These are old-style, dyed-in-the-wool, real-life fascists. Their support for corporatism displays true fascism as Mussolini defined the term.

Thanks and all the best wishes to you and yours,
WI
27 August 2003

On "How 'entertaining' is the American entertainment industry?*":* Charlie's Angels; Hulk ;Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl; Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines

David,

Coincidentally, I had seen *Pirates* just the day before your review appeared. A friend dragged reluctant-me to the Cinerama, but I thoroughly enjoyed the spectacle—especially the self-deprecating sense of humor and the ironies.

It was after watching the feature that my friend informed me that it is based on a ride at Disneyland; not a book, nor a previous movie, but a *ride*!

I appreciate the polemics on the industry and the illustration of its lack of totalitarian reach. We do get glimpses of humanity past the corporate gatekeepers occasionally. French cinema used to be more humane than ours, but I'm not sure that it's true anymore. They are pretty darned antiseptic and bourgeois nowadays...

I'm so glad to see that you agree with my assessment of the film. Thanks!

JF
27 August 2003

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