

# Letters from our readers

20 April 2004

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

*On “Bush’s press conference: evasions, lies and a promise of more bloodletting”*

Dear Mr. Grey:

Thanks for the insightful analysis of the Bush press conference—your summary is very concise and your conclusions about Bush’s state of “mind” are depressingly accurate. I personally think he’s having a walking nervous breakdown and belongs in Bellevue [New York psychiatric hospital]—along with his psychopathic administration.

Best regards,

JG

April 2004

Hi,

I read you guys all the time, but I just had to compliment Barry Grey, on his excellent article on Bush’s press conference. My partner and I watched it, with utter shock at his total evasiveness, and stupidity. It’s absolutely frightening the guy is in charge (or has people around him in charge).

I enjoy reading your very thoughtful and intelligent analysis.

Sincerely,

MF

16 April 2004

Bush mentioned—I believe three times—“illegal militia” when referring to Moqtada al-Sadr and his followers. What authority is it that makes this an illegal militia? Iraq’s ruling council? Paul Bremer? If so, what authority do they have to say what is illegal and what isn’t? I would think that the occupying forces were the illegal militia.

When Bush was asked why Cheney and he had to appear together before the 9/11 commission to answer questions, his reply did not address the question and did not make any sense at all. Was I just imagining things or is this what others had heard also? I had been under the impression that the White House had made it clear that they did not trust Bush to testify without Cheney by his side. If so, why would this have been such a hard question to answer?

I’m still wondering why if Bush was “confident” that he had made some mistakes, why it was impossible for him say what even just one of them were? Perhaps Cheney should have been by his side during the question-and-answer period of this conference.

Did Bush appear to be sweating bullets during these questions by only a few selected members of the press? What if he had been asked questions by all the press members? Would he have sweated enough bullets to supply the units that are occupying Iraq?

It seems that all I got out of these Bush’s “answers” was more questions. Perhaps the answers to my questions could be found on a turkey farm.

WL

16 April 2004

Hello Barry;

Your review of Bush’s rare news conference performance was exactly as I saw it, also. The few parts that I missed were caused by my having to absent myself from the TV because he makes me nauseous.

You touched briefly upon his physical appearance, to which I could only add that his color was not good, he is showing aging from strain and his eyes are beginning to show signs of his panic. As insensitive as this dolt is, I believe that even he recognizes that he will be a one-term president, like Poppy.

He reminded me of the way students acted before the class when one was presenting a book report for which he was most inadequately prepared. I wonder who is backstage, prepping the guy. I can’t recall whether Cheney is right or left handed. It makes a difference concerning which knee Bush will sit on when answering questions before the 9/11 investigating commission.

JS

16 April 2004

As usual: well written. But there were messages in the opening text that ought not be ignored. The division of the insurgents included remnants of Sadaam’s military, members of radical Islamic groups who have infiltrated Iraq, and subversives within the country. Subversives were further refined to include “conspiracy theorists.” I have not read the speech, but my instinct at the moment left me with the sick feeling that Dubya was referring to dissidents here in the US.

Dubya placed no limits on the type of arms he is to use in order to secure the “peace.” It’s not so much that the US is killing innocent men, women and kids (as bad as that is ...) It is more that the US has not placed a ceiling on the amount of force it’s willing to use against civilians in the process of obtaining its goals. As with North Korea, all options are on the table. Within this framework, it seems very possible that Dubya and Co. are demanding unconditional (and immediate) surrender from the various factions who are in opposition to the occupation. Why else would the US believe it reasonable to expect clerics who possess enormous popular support to give themselves up?

The question behind the scenes, it seems to me, is this? Exactly what is the message being passed on to the leaders opposing the occupation? Would the US go one up on Israel by detonating a tactical nuke? This notion harks back to Truman’s use of nukes in 1945.

However, if the insurgents now in Iraq turn out to be loosely organized with restricted means of communication, the potential—as with Palestine—for top-down control is questionable, and therein lies the THREAT behind Dubya’s words; “threat” being an inside out rhetorical method of telling key members of the insurgency that the administration “means what it says.” This speech ranks up there with the “evil empire” speech.

FD

15 April 2004

*On “Letters and a reply on ‘Professor Chomsky comes in from the cold’”*

I just read your latest and noted the string of negative responses. I’d like to write a reply favorable to David Walsh’s article. Even though I’m an Australian I do feel the American elections are of grave importance to everyone everywhere.

I’d like to say that I was someone who a while ago was influenced by Professor Chomsky and I still think he is a very good critic of capitalism in general and US imperialist policy in particular. But I see a startling

double standard being demonstrated by the critics of Walsh's article. Chomsky himself has made some of the most deplorable, petty and doubtless sectarian attacks of any leftist I know.

He has called Lenin and Trotsky opportunistic and enemies of socialism; he has declared the Democrats better than the Bolsheviks (in reply to one Marxist's polite criticisms of Chomsky's positions). He has declared Marx to be what he himself is, a critic of the present with no real view of the future. (I don't believe that about Marx, but without a doubt Chomsky himself only ever voices vague visions of a better world, claiming he doesn't know much about how to achieve it.)

There are other statements which I won't go in to. To be honest, I did flirt with anarchism for a while; I've seen both sides and Marxists are the ones who tend to be the nicest, the most civilized while still of course committed passionately to their views.

I agree with Walsh, anarchist this, libertarian socialist that, Chomsky has played in to bourgeois hands. He has supported a pro-war pro-big business candidate, no matter how reluctantly. In this respect he'd fit in marvelously in the Spanish Revolution, telling workers to hold their noses while the popular front sold them up the river.

In Australia I will support neither Liberal nor Labor. I understand fully the desire to break away from two-party domination and lesser evilism.

SH

17 April 2004

Could someone please tell me who made Bush ruler of the world? For the time he has been in power he has caused more bloodshed and death than I care to remember. He is not the leader of Palestine and he definitely has no right to give their land to Sharon. Both Bush and Sharon are guilty of war crimes, as are many others who didn't have the backbone to stand up for mankind.

Howard has put the safety of his country at risk to be used as America's lapdog. He also has broken the law, forgone the truth and attacked another country which posed no threats with WMD. Still the killing goes on, mainly due to Bush wanting to have the say-so over Iraq's oil. Why have the Arab nations forsaken Palestine? If they trust Bush they will lose. I pity them. Mr. Howard couldn't tell the truth to save his life. What a mess our country is in from one man. Unless common sense prevails throughout the world we will all be damned.

AG

Australia

19 April 2004

As a former teacher I am appalled that the "Joe McCarthy years" are in danger of being repeated. Being a religious zealot and having that kind of admittance into people's lives gives John Ashcroft and the rest of the administration, favored by the religious right, undue power. I consider myself to be a good, Christian woman but this sort of "spying" and "interpreting" makes all kinds of warning bells ring in my head. We had this sort of thing with Ken Starr in the previous administration and he proved nothing with his invasions into people's private lives and wasted taxpayer dollars in the process. This could be far worse!

FG

18 April 2004

On "Thousands dead and wounded: US military seeks to crush Iraqi uprising"

The way George W. Bush's America behaves in Iraq brings the Occitania history to mind. Occitania is the former name of the area now named Languedoc-Roussillon, Languedoc from *Langue d'Oc*, the local languages, once the richest area of France, and now among its poorest.

Evidence of the region's turbulent history is everywhere. Ruined châteaux and ancient citadels, torn apart on the orders of kings and popes, litter the landscape and tell of brutalities carried out in the 13th century.

The Languedoc saw the first act of European genocide, when over 100,000 members of the Cathar were massacred on the order of the Pope

during the Albigensian Crusade (named after the town of Albi, a Cathar stronghold). It was specifically for the interrogation and extermination of the Cathars that the Inquisition was first created.

Eight centuries later, many of the present day locals still burn with hatred of the people who carried out the massacres of their ancestors, and suggest that there has been an official cover-up over the centuries, a conspiracy to prevent the Cathar massacres story from being more widely known.

America could have learned from history that two different religious sects in the same country, Sunni and Shiite in Iraq this time, WILL at times join hands in a struggle of life and death.

Bézier in Hérault in Languedoc-Roussillon is a good example. In 1209 every last inhabitant of the town was mercilessly hunted down and slain by the Albigensian crusaders. There was an enclave of 222 Cathars living there unmolested by the population in general. The Count of Bézier did nothing to persecute or suppress them, and it was this that particularly angered the crusaders.

They demanded that the townspeople—ordinary Roman Catholics—either hand over the Cathars or leave the city so that the remaining Cathars could be more easily dealt with. This demand was made on pain of excommunication. The Roman Catholics were given a chance to escape the coming massacre, an astonishing thing happened. *The townspeople refused to comply with either demand.* As the Cistercian monk des Vaux-de-Cernat wrote in 1213, they preferred "to die as heretics rather than to live as Christians." And according to the report sent to the Pope by his representative, the townspeople took an oath to defend the heretics.

Accordingly, in July 1209 the crusaders marched into Bézier and with no difficulty, took the city and killed everyone in it—men, women, children and priests—and the place was put to the torch. Between 15,000 and 20,000 people were slaughtered [while] just over 200 were [branded] heretics—"Nothing could save them, not cross, nor altar, nor crucifix." It was here that the Pope's legates were asked by the crusaders how they would know the heretics from the rest of the townsfolk and received the now notorious reply: Kill them all, God will know his own." (Sounds familiar of the arrogant talking Bush's commanders, fascist clique and US media?)

With a lack [of knowledge] by the majority of Americans of world history ... they already have forgotten about the massacres carried out in their name by the US military in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. So, it is no wonder that they can sit contented on the sidelines gorging themselves on their Easter ham dinner with all the trimmings while their military in Iraq conduct massacres.

Americans may not care about history but people who have been under the US imperialist jackboot do not forget, like the people of Languedoc-Roussillon; eight centuries later they still remember and hate the people who did it to their ancestors. The same will be the case for Americans by the Iraqi people. American people are under the illusion that they are now liked in Vietnam, from observations and, talking with the Vietnamese people as a non-American, they very soon indicate that they conduct themselves politely following Buddha's principles and tolerate Americans who are visiting Vietnam, but not like them. This is the same in other countries that have been under the American jackboot, the people tolerate the Americans visiting their country. Of course, with typical American arrogance, Americans say, "These people like our \$." Is there anything the Americans do that does not have dollar signs connected with it? All the US military in Iraq are there because of dollar signs for one reason or another.

As always,

FR

15 April 2004



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