

# Letters from our readers

26 April 2004

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

Dear WSWS,

SEP Presidential Candidate Bill Van Auken's "Iraq Crisis Spurs Call for US Military Draft" is a much needed article on the criminal machinations of American imperialism. Although Mr. Van Auken states that the Bush administration and military are conducting a "low-profile recruitment campaign" to induct "volunteers" into the Selective Service System (SSS), I would like to add that reenforcement of the draft is thoroughly constituted in this shameless conscription agency. While I am sure the WSWS, international organ of the ICFI, is aware of the facts, such was not the case for me until after I entered college.

When I was 18, which was six years ago, I received a curious pink postcard from the federal government threatening to throw me in jail if I did not register with the SSS. As my family had departed from a brutal military dictatorship in Nigeria in the early '90s, learning of covert conscription in a "democratic" country which supposedly abandoned compulsory military service in 1973 was a revelation so mangled that it hit me with the ferocity of a thunderbolt. In a state of dismay, hopelessness, and fear, I placed my signature where instructed and returned the pink card to the relevant government agency. The SSS has since appeared to me as if under a magnifying glass or a loud speaker wherever I read or hear of it.

To be sure of its implications, the Selective Service website <http://www.sss.gov> officially states that registration is a federal law applicable to all males 18 to 25, and failure to comply with its stipulations is a felony punishable by a fine of up to \$250,000 and/or five years in prison. Moreover, non-registered persons are ineligible for government-based student aid. All of these facts ostensibly apply to green card holders and definitely to dual nationals such as myself. Particularly for the former group, avoiding or ignoring the veritable conscription law may affect immigration benefits such as US citizenship <http://uscis.gov/graphics/howdoi/selsvc.htm>.

Something is truly afoul in the republic of the United States where prerequisite to the rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, is potential and forced military service;

where it is inculcated in the youth, as it was with me throughout my primary and secondary public school education, that the draft is dead, when it has only been a slumbering monstrosity, a *lusus naturae* that shall be awakened to devour the flesh and bones of the American, immigrant, and Iraqi working class.

Sincerely yours,

AW

24 April 2004

I see that the draft-dodging b\*\*\*\*\*s in Washington are now looking to draft our young people. Well, I want to see Bush's daughters and Cheney's children the very first and I do mean the first to be drafted. Bush hid in the Texas National Guard. Cheney hid first behind marriage then got his wife pregnant so he could get a hardship deferment. Rumsfeld made sure he served between wars and Wolfie did not serve. Neither have very many of their fellow Republican cohorts. So let's make this draft fair. Make sure the Bush girls and the Cheney girls are the first up when this draft starts. This would only be fair since the poor white and black South have always fueled the armies.

Do I speak as someone who has no connection to the military? No. My son spent six months in Baghdad. My nephew was there when it all started. In other wars, my father, my husband, my brother-in-law, three uncles, and a grandfather in the Civil War. One cousin died in War World II in the English Channel. So, we have done our part. Now it is time for the moneyed set to do their part. It is time they gave back instead of being welfare cases.

CG

College Station, Texas

23 April 2004

After reading your article about the possible reinstitution of the draft, I was sadly reminded of a story that aired on some news radio programs yesterday. For the first time in four decades, the University of California cannot accept all eligible applicants. Why? Due to the "financial crisis" in California, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has requested that the UC regents cut enrollment by 3,200 students. This will supposedly be accompanied by a guarantee of transferring as juniors to students willing to attend junior college for the first two years. This is a complete shame!

Well, why not ask Enron to pay the difference?

For many people, getting a college education at a state school is the only affordable option (yet many students still need financial aid/loans to help pay the bills). For many, attending a UC school is the only way they may be able to go to college. I really can't imagine what it would be like, after four years of high school, making sure you have all the "right" test scores and combination of qualifying "well-rounded" activities (student government, honors classes, drama, athletics, community volunteering, etc.), to find out that there isn't enough money for you this year.

And then to think about getting a job in the current economic environment (without any college education), avoiding getting drafted if it is brought back, or what? What options are out there for young people today? The current system is just folding in on itself, and as each day goes by, it becomes ever more apparent that the interests and needs of the working class will be further suffocated.

Best regards,

CL

Seattle

22 April 2004

On "What the September 11 commission hearings revealed"

Mr. Martin:

John Ashcroft's report as to why he did not fly makes a good "story," but what can be the explanation for the "stand down" of fighter planes when the commercial airliners were judged to be off course? And what is the real truth behind Flight 77, which supposedly crashed into the Pentagon when all the evidence is to the contrary? These and other critical questions have not been answered let alone addressed by the commission. It smells badly of a cover-up.

You are doing an admirable job of reporting this farcical event and I trust you will continue. But will the truth ever be acknowledged or will politics keep it forever enshrouded?

Thanks for your unrelenting work.

FB

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

22 April 2004

On "The Negroponte nomination: a warning to the people of Iraq"

Dear Editor:

A little known fact is that the Mossad had a hand in setting up and training Honduras's COBRA "special unit" "elite" force in the early 1980s. The COBRAs are alive and well today with a role in the over 2,000 extrajudicial executions of youth and minors (see casa-alianza.org). The relationship between 3-16 and the COBRAs is murky: they were both under the FUSEP (military police); they may have been pretty much one and the same entity. In public admittances,

Honduran government officials have linked 3-16 to Argentineans, but never to Israelis, as far as I know. And, another useful context for the Negroponte years: this was during Iran-Contra. You also had the activities of Ramon Matta Ballesteros, Honduran billionaire drug lord, in the same period. Given the Iranian/Saudi/Israeli tie-ins to Iran-Contra, Mr. Negroponte was certainly in Honduras at a propitious time.

Mr. Negroponte's movements indeed bear very careful scrutiny.

MB

Professor of geography

21 April 2004

Another informative exposé, living up to the high standards I've come to respect and depend on from the SEP web site and its editors.

Thank you.

PT

23 April 2004

On "Indian general election begins"

Dear Mr. Keith Jones,

Thanks for an interesting article.

The Indian left parties seem to have lost their credentials today. It seems today that their only agenda is to side with a "secular" party. You are right, the BJP and the Congress have no ideological difference, and whatever economic reforms that have led to the present "liberalized" scenario in India were given a start only when they were in power (which ought to matter to the left parties). That the issue of "secularism" in India has a context cannot be refused, but the interests of the working classes, which ought to be their primary interest, don't seem to figure anywhere in what they have been doing in the past two decades or so. Many a conscious person in India is left baffled by their election strategies and left undecided as to whom he should vote for!

Yours truly,

OV

22 April 2004



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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