

# Letters from our readers

17 December 2004

*The following is a selection of recent letters to the World Socialist Web Site.*

On “US sailor refuses deployment to Iraq in protest against war”

Just a short note to thank you for covering my brother’s decision to be a conscientious objector. I hope it does spark debate and conversation among all. Thanks! His family stands 100 percent behind him. We are proud of his courage and unselfishness.

VP

11 December 2004

On “The siege of Fallujah: America on a killing spree”

Words cannot express how impressed I was by your article “America on a killing spree.” I wish your article could be shouted from the mountaintops, that it would be made required reading in all the schools. I was especially impressed by the profound insights you presented, concerning serious shortcomings in American society that lie at the heart of our actions and attitudes to the outside world—shortcomings that have their roots in the inherent contradictions and nature of US capitalist society and the accompanying “values.” FYI, I am a rural Nebraska farmer who is increasingly appalled by what is happening to this country, and also what we are doing abroad. The media and supposed “mindset” in the Midwest has not quite managed to pull the wool over the eyes of all of us who live here in rural America. Please tell anyone you meet from other countries that opposition to the war in Iraq specifically and America’s actions in the world in general is profound and extensive from many persons throughout the United States.

DW

14 December 2004

Leigh, Nebraska

On “Mike Hoffman of Iraq Veterans Against War speaks to WSW: ‘We’re fighting average Iraqis who don’t want the US there’”

Mike Hoffman, I salute your bravery in speaking out against the war. I am horrified by President Bush’s arrogant attitude. It is resulting in the death and injury of many on all sides. Please keep up your brave works.

AM

9 December 2004

Milner, Georgia

On “Attackers storm US consulate in Saudi Arabia”

Thank you for the only real piece of journalism that I have

read concerning the recent attack on the American consulate. The NBC nightly news for 7 December 2004 did not even mention the event in the first segment that I watched nor was it scheduled for the second segment. The filtration of news stories in this country is troubling. The massacres being committed by Bush and Blair are indeed giving rise to an exponential rise in anti-US sentiment. The entire region is becoming destabilized due to the strategic blunder of “Iraqi Freedom.”

NO

8 December 2004

North Las Vegas, Nevada

On “US troops confront Defense Secretary Rumsfeld”

It’s sad to see a country send their soldiers to battle first on a false pretence and second without the proper equipment. I feel that what the American government has done to its troops is a heinous crime. I also believe that to send soldiers to a foreign land to oust a dictator and make their country a living hell worse than when they had a dictator is just plain stupid. Someone with morals needs to step up to the plate and correct this ugly wrong. Bring our men and woman home from the Middle East and let them rebuild their own country. They refuse to let us help them so let them do it on their own. We also need to really focus on where the hell is bin Laden and focusing on why the US let his family leave the country on 9/11. Whose idea was that? Maybe President Bush should send his daughters into the combat zone and see what it’s like to have your loved ones come home disfigured or mentally incapable of making a simple decision.

SR

12 December 2004

I think something should be said about the nature of that parliamentary illusion that Lenin struggled against successfully when he refused, in the face of huge opposition inside his party and outside, to follow the other radical parties into the Constituent Assembly and held out for a form of rule by a different democratic forum, the Soviets. The current problem of the oppressed voting for their oppressors is not a new one. Marx and Engels experienced in their late lives the British masses voting for the Tories at a time of severe economic crisis that lasted for decades. Similarly, a large section of the German masses turned to Hitler in the 1930 elections against their own interests. Democratic elections in a time of crisis allow for the demagogic spokespersons of “security” and “national honor” to rally people behind them on Election Day, and afterwards

disregard their interests.

The mechanism for this engineering of votes is fully on display in the Ukraine, Georgia, and Yugoslavia even now. I wonder if the extra-parliamentary opposition expressed in the massive demonstrations against the Iraqi adventure, the growing flight of disenchanted Americans to Canada and the revulsion expressed in so many other ways may find expression in self-organized structures and assemblies like the Soviets. I honestly believe that the experience in Iraq of American soldiers and the suffering of their relatives at home may well create the American equivalent of the Soviets as the necessary, though not sufficient, condition for revolutionary change. The recent outburst against Rumsfeld at a "town hall meeting" in Kuwait is a case to the point.

AL

9 December 2004

On "Any act of violence in an unjustified conflict is an atrocity": US soldier seeks refugee status in Canada"

You wrote a good article. All this crap coming out of Canada about soldiers having to accept killing civilians is wrong. I was in the US infantry for three years and nobody ever told us that killing civilians was our job and nobody ever told us that that could be expected of us. And I am fairly sure that no one in my company would have, under any circumstances, been prepared to kill civilians. We were taught, should there be a conflict, to kill combatants, and that excludes civilians.

JF

11 December 2004

Puebla, Mexico

I'm a libertarian, not a socialist. I believe that small government, not big government is best. That said, I agree with Joseph Kay about Iraq. The USA should never have gone there. We should get out now. I hope that Canada gives Jeremy Hinzman asylum. I remember similar circumstances during the Vietnam era when those who refused to fight went to Canada.

KM

11 December 2004

On "Kerik declines Homeland Security nomination: why Bush lost his hand-picked henchman"

Fascinating article. Here in the UK the only reason we were given for his withdrawal was the nanny business. Bush et al really are a bunch of gangsters.

PA

12 December 2004

On "Interview with WSWs correspondent: Changing political attitudes in twenty-first century China"

I was more than surprised that you found workers who knew the difference between Marxism and what the Chinese Communist Party represents. I traveled throughout the old USSR in the '70s and found almost all the workers defending their system. In private they let their guard down a little, but not much. There was no question they saw many problems with their Communist Party, but had no way or interest in reading

any Marxism than was required in school. They grew up hearing every day how they lived in a communist country getting better all the time. They believed they lived in a communist country, but saw little or no improvements.

Talking to my Russian friends on this side of the ocean, it's impossible to have a rational conversation with them about socialism. To them, there's nothing good about it. They know what it is, they lived it, there's no difference between Trotsky, Lenin, Mao or Stalin. It's all the same. It has been tried, it goes against "human nature" and it failed miserably. It's like talking to a wall. They weren't allowed to read real Marxism, and they're not interested now. They're one of the chief obstacles in talking to workers about Socialism today. To them, they lived Stalinism, and Stalinism is Communism. That's why I'm surprised the Chinese workers, who must have been given the same doctored up versions, had any interest or ability to discover the difference.

JC

9 December 2004

Frisco, Texas

I am very impressed with the depth of knowledge and analysis on this web site; your writing is among the most eloquent in journalism today. You are wonderful citizens of America and the world. If in the future when they utter the lame reply, "No one told us," your site and many of its articles will be a testament proving otherwise. The reality then as it is now will be, "You didn't listen when we did."

WB

13 December 2004

Lynchburg, Virginia

Just read a few of your fine, courageous pieces. Very impressed and humbled at the honest journalism on display here.

NY

12 December 2004

Otago, New Zealand

Thanks. Your web site produces some of the very the best analysis out there! Always stretching, pushing, creating new, original thought.

KA

10 December 2004

Spain



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