

Letters from our readers

4 February 2005

The following is a selection of recent letters received by the World Socialist Web Site.

On “Bush’s state of delusion: speech to Congress ignores crisis at home and abroad”

I just wanted to compliment your pithy, insightful, and eloquent analysis of Bush’s “state of delusion.” I have personally come to loathe the Democrats’ prostration before this increasingly fascist juggernaut we call a political system. How disgusting that Kucinich would sink so low as to rush to shake the hand of the war criminal Bush.

In the last few years I bit the bullet and supported Democratic candidates financially. No more. The Democrats’ reaction to Republican supremacy has been increasingly to veer right. This tactic, mainly ineffective, vindicates your position that the entire political establishment has broken with reality. Now that a majority of Americans are against the war—and a vast majority of Democratic voters—how can it make sense that Democratic politicians continue to placate the administration?

Your analysis is that they are all one party, the business party. While I wholeheartedly agree, I have also concluded that Democratic strategy is like the American strategy generally: fragmented, disorganized, fearful, and short-term. Democrats support the fascists because they fear *them* more than they fear the American voters.

BB
Oklahoma

3 February 2005

On “The American media and the Iraq election”

I’m glad somebody else has spotted the, er, slightly unbalanced nature of western media outlets’ treatment of the pseudo-elections in Iraq. The BBC has been doing exactly the same thing as the US equivalent ever since the weekend and it has been nauseating. Tellingly, though, there wasn’t one mention of anything going on in Iraq on last night’s news. Presumably, we are either invited to forget it all in some Orwellian fashion or conclude that the elections have “cured” the Iraqis of their wayward

ways. Keep up the brilliant work—I enjoy the site; a rare burst of sanity.

SB
2 February 2005
Reading, UK

I read the article about the media failure to report accurately the situation on the ground during the elections and was wondering if you’d read the Robert Fisk article about “Hotel Journalism” (available at, for one, <http://www.commondreams.org/views05/0117-24.htm>)

It seems interesting that the media would give such glowing reports without the likelihood of their having been where the action (voting) was taking place. If Allawi was staging (hiring supporting cast extras) the visuals, it becomes even more “Potemkin”-like.

AR
3 February 2005

On “Detroit mayor rides in luxury as city decays”

A mayor cannot be seen riding around on public transportation. He/she needs to set an example to all of his/her constituents that greed, bending of rules, political connections, and backstabbing can bring one the riches that one deserves. Is this not the American way?

PK
2 February 2005

On “Weapons of mass destruction in Iraq: Bush’s ‘big lie’ and the crisis of American imperialism”

I’m a big fan of your site—have been reading it daily since you started it up. Please continue the good work. I am a retired navy intelligence officer and appreciated your fine analysis from the beginning regarding no WMDs in Iraq. Scott Ritter and others had it right all along, and am sure most people in intelligence community knew this (although I have been retired since 1994 and do not speak from privileged sources, but logic and open sources can get us there, even with the lies and obfuscation of the mass media).

RM
3 February 2005
Mobile, Alabama

On “Cheney at Auschwitz: an insult to the memory of Nazism’s victims”

Yet the US vice president’s ability to deliver his obscene speech at Auschwitz condemning “evil” and “cruelty” make it clear that today the “moral sense of mankind” finds no reflection in international law. Only the emergence of an independent and socialist political movement of the working class can create the conditions for bringing these war criminals to justice. Excellent article, mate.

Yours,

A socialist soldier in waiting

28 January 2005

On “Why this dishonest portrait of a despicable figure?”

A friend of mine who teaches film in the US sent me recently info concerning WSWs and your review of *The Aviator*. I consulted it, was quite fascinated and have just seen the movie. I have also been given to understand by this friend that you are considered politically dogmatic by an online discussion group. I would argue that one *must* analyze Scorsese’s often stunning *mise en scène* to understand just how strongly this film endorses the most extreme economic liberalism via the fetishization of individualism. In other words, you didn’t go far enough as far as I’m concerned! But then I’m a professor of film studies.

Basically, I agree entirely with the WSWs review, but would add the following:

When Howard Hughes denounces the Hepburn family for being born with money, whereas most people must earn their living, the script contradicts itself grossly: the entire opening (stunningly directed, of which more in a moment) insists on his huge private fortune which he certainly hadn’t had to work for as he’s only 22 at the outset!

The script brings in the red-baiting question when Hughes asks the newspaper reporter (Dafoe) who’s got the dirt on Katherine Hepburn and Spencer Tracey if he’s ever been to a Communist Party meeting. The whole question is then dropped and taken up in a splendidly inverted form: it’s Hughes who is persecuted by a Senate Committee (which makes no attempt to condemn him for contempt of Congress, despite his behavior and refusal to answer questions) and makes just those claims for freedom of speech and action that got the Ten (a matter of weeks later) pilloried in public—and later radicals thanks to none other than Hughes himself. I see this, of course, as an example of the intellectual dishonesty of Logan and Scorsese and not as a subtle attempt to denounce red-

baiting by showing things upside-down.

There can be no doubt that the ideology of the film will have Bush weeping buckets of grateful tears. Hughes is shown as having no interest in anyone’s welfare other than his own (which the script denies via Hughes’ comments on his employees) and the film explicitly defends the notion of going to the bitter end of one’s capitalist logic in the name of free enterprise, initiative and inventiveness. “Do things your own way and damn the consequences,” the credo of neo-liberalism, is also that of *The Aviator*.

I find distasteful to say the least the hatred of Hollywood shown by Logan and Scorsese: It’s fine to be bankrolled by Hollywood capitalists, provided that means you can do what the hell you like with the money. Ultimately, Scorsese sees himself as a modern Hughes, but that could backfire, given the psychological aspects of the movie. Ludicrous, of course: we’re expected to swallow scenes of Hughes sinking into a form of psychosis, then emerging freshened to trounce a Senate Committee!

The film’s direction, often inspired, is a perfect example of fetishism: the shots of planes flying, or shot from below, raises them into some self-contained object of worship for the audience which, whether Scorsese realizes it or not, encourages us to identify totally with Hughes (and, significantly, to want to be him). His megalomania seems to have rubbed off unconsciously onto the director, which may explain the curiously uneven aspect of the film and the way Hughes is shown during his worst breakdown as literally merging with the images of his own movies. Be careful, Martin!

RH

28 January 2005

Paris, France



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact