

Letters from our readers

15 March 2005

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

On "Did the US military target Italian journalist Giuliana Sgrena in Iraq?"

A most important point seems to be glossed over in this article, though it was reported: It is the statement by Italian Intelligence, "It would have been more effective, SISMI reasoned, for US agents to kill her and find a way to blame it on Iraqis."

I think all Iraqis and international anti-war movements would be grateful for any one to investigate and fully expand this most important statement. For an intelligence agency of an important country in the occupation to admit that "for US agents to kill her and find a way to blame it on Iraqis" simply confirms what many Iraqi anti-occupation groups have been shouting ever since the campaign of terrors had been unleashed. The Iraqis simply say these acts [of terrorism] that do not target the occupation are simply carried out by the occupiers.

I wonder if the beheadings, such as that of the young American (the son of an antiwar activist), are also another example of "US agents to kill him and find a way to blame it on Iraqis."

FZ

7 March 2005

I have followed with interest the news media reporting on the shooting of Giuliana Sgrena by US military forces in Iraq. The distorted way in which the event is portrayed in US media accounts is hardly surprising, but it makes me angry nonetheless.

First I heard an NPR report on March 7 headlined "Italian official seeks justice in agent's death." It quotes at length comments by foreign minister Gianfranco Fini without ever mentioning that Fini belongs to the neo-fascist party that is in coalition with the government. The reporter gives details of the incident taken from the Italian security agent who survived the attack. His compatriot Nicola Califpari, who died protecting Sgrena from a rain of American bullets, had phoned US authorities minutes before to advise them that they were approaching the airport. This is where the shooting took place. Yet Fini, an unabashed supporter of Bush and the Iraq occupation, is allowed without question to label the shooting an "accident," and to denounce the "hypothesis" that Sgrena was a deliberate target of a US assassination attempt as "absolutely groundless."

NewTheYork Times in ~~day~~ ^{the} section

similar report, also without identifying Fini as a neo-fascist, who would have every reason to promote the US description of the killing as an "accident." Then, in an editorial entitled "Rules of Engagement," the NYT editors lumped the Sgrena shooting in with the hundreds of others in which Iraqi civilians are massacred at US occupation checkpoints. While feigning sympathy with Sgrena and the Iraqis, the point of the *Times* amalgamation is to deny that the journalist's shooting could hardly have been a "mistake," but was in all likelihood a deliberate assassination attempt.

The Italian population is overwhelmingly opposed to the Iraq war and occupation. Any admission by the government that their ally had deliberately shot a well-known Italian journalist would make untenable its continuing support for US policy. By insisting that the shooting was an "accident" and by demanding a high-level investigation (read: cover-up), Fini and Berlusconi are trying their best to throw sand in the faces of the Italian people. By its uncritical reporting, the US media is trying to do the same to its American readers.

JB

New York, New York

7 March 2005

You note that the very people that had taken Miss Sgrena hostage worked hard for her safety, well-being, and eventually her release. It is now being widely noted that the "kidnappers" refused a ransom. What I seem unable to understand, or perhaps I have missed, is...why would someone take someone hostage if they had no intention of reaping reward via ransom or concessions from authorities? In other words, Sgrena was kidnapped but not really kidnapped? This makes no sense to me. Would it be too much to ask for your assistance in clarifying the matter?

LW

7 March 2005

On "Aesthetic choices: Aleksandr Sokurov's *The Sun*"

Congratulations, Steve, on yet another insightful article from the Berlin Festival. It shows how to focus primarily on aesthetics and ignore history and politics is to be in denial. It inevitably leads to a limited, one-dimensional view of the world, however compelling the images may be. Your wide-ranging quotes illustrated this defect brilliantly. I, and I'm sure many others who read the WSWWS film reviews, rely on your excellent, informed critiques.

CB
London, UK
11 March 2005

On “Kentucky students victimized by ‘zero-tolerance’ policies”

Have any of these law enforcement doofuses checked out some of the right-wing blogs and web sites over the past several years? “Terroristic threatening” seems to spew out of the minds of some right-wingers onto these web pages at a fairly regular and frightening rate. Are they investigated? Are they locked up for the good of society? Are they given psychiatric evaluations to discover the underlying roots of such anti-American hatred? No, of course not. They’re right-wingers. Right-wingers don’t investigate right-wingers. Just look at Tom DeLay’s and George W. Bush’s free passes.

I believe this is how certain concerned German citizens felt while watching the rise of Hitler and his brown-shirted thugs in pre-World War II Germany. God help us all. Because Born-Again Nazis in the United States today are pulling the exact same damn stunt they pulled in Germany 70 years ago. “By their fruits ye shall recognize them.”

PS
12 March 2005

The new ACT test [Academic College Test] has writing as a very important part of the test, yet when students use their imagination for writing they are punished. As usual, here in Kentucky, strain a gnat and swallow a camel.

BW
Paducah, Kentucky
12 March 2005

On “Bush picks right-wing attack dog as UN ambassador”

I think that it’s time that the UN was moved to Europe. The US has shown itself to be thoroughly disrespectful of the UN and of UN decisions. The US does not act in the best interests of peace and international cooperation; rather, it is a rogue state that prefers to go it alone and does not abide by international treaties and conventions.

I’d like to see the UN move to Europe, because if it does not the US will make it irrelevant and dismantle it. It is a good organization. No doubt it could be better, but it will never be able to improve while it is under the thumb of the US and located in the US. What would it take to move it?

AC
Ottawa, Ontario
9 March 2005

On “Sharpening tensions in Sri Lankan government over talks with LTTE”

Excellent study of a highly disturbing situation. In sharing your feature with friends, I said my youthful and early adult ideals that fell in line with left-wing politics—and involvement with the LSSP—were destroyed, and the high point of disgust was the 1972 Constitutional Change headed by Dr. Colvin R de Silva, who in 1956 thumped in the House of Representatives:

“One language two states and two languages one state.” Yet when he had the opportunity to put that aright in 1972, he folded up with a whimper.

Secondly, if the tsunami disaster is not going to have an impact—then there is *no hope for Sri Lanka*. Unfortunately, it is the war situation that will provide the meat for the corrupt military and bureaucracy, and politicians from Tangalle to Point Pedro in Sri Lanka are beyond redemption.

What hope therefore is left for Sri Lanka? Even people like me, who are fit and robust though elderly are ready to help in Sri Lanka by returning to our homeland, are hesitating and thinking twice. I found your feature excellent and to the point, but of course it raises a lot of worry about what lies ahead—immediately and ultimately.

Sinhala chauvinists must come to the realization that no people in Sri Lanka should suffer any kind of discrimination on the basis of race, religion, caste, class and gender. LTTE is a child of Sinhala chauvinism. There is only one solution that seems possible in the country—a federal state perhaps on the basis of North, East, South, West and Central, with Colombo and suburbs as Capital Territory. Even seeking such is going to be tough because Sri Lanka has become the dumping grounds for arms, mostly obsolete, and this also ensures vast sums of corrupt funds changing hands. Colombo is the centre of intense drug activities, and tourism serves the morally corrupt. Amidst this, what kind of future do we have?

Even the tsunami and the loss of 40,000 lives have not stirred our conscience.

RK
Brampton, Ontario
9 March 2005

On the WSWs

A note of thanks to all at the WSWs for the excellence of perspective of your articles, reports and polemics, etc. I have found if you want to improve your knowledge in a particular area, that you can’t make a better start than first reading the relevant reports by the WSWs that pithily cover all aspects of the desired subject and their inter-relationships, providing a solid basis on which to continue your research. I enjoy reading the readers’ letters, so a big thanks to the comrades who take the time to write in.

DD
Melbourne, Australia
9 March 2005



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