

More letters on the case of Terri Schiavo

26 March 2005

The following is a selection of letters received by the World Socialist Web Site in response to the article, “‘Culture of life’ or culture of lies: an exchange with WSWS readers on the Terri Schiavo case”

Thank you for your fine article on this. I am at a complete loss to understand why anyone would think that an adult married woman should now be regarded as in the custody of her parents, at any time since her tragic illness.

I think what shocked me even more, was that readers of this forum would side with the Bush administration, with Jeb Bush and with the parents with regard to this issue. I regret so much that many of the posts were abusive and reflected, as you generously suggested, widespread ignorance of the issues.

MJR
Oakland, California
* * *

Keep up the terrific work on this subject (as well as many others). I visit your site with increasing frequency to obtain both the relevant news and insightful perspectives sadly absent in other “mainstream” media outlets.

As a politically “moderate” person, what I find most disturbing in this case is that these supposed “law-and-order conservatives” (i.e., the Republicans in Washington) who are pushing this action are using a case which has been so fully litigated pursuant to the laws of this particular state and by all accounts tried completely, fairly and fully over seven years in conformity with those laws, where no ineffective assistance of counsel, false evidence, corrupt judicial action, or the like has been demonstrated (much less even advanced as a cause for the legislative action). They essentially are “second guessing” the findings of fact.

That, alone, reveals their utter hypocrisy, for the laws enacted by a state legislature are historically considered sovereign and reflective of the will of the people.

However, that the “reasons” these people seek to overturn the decisions of the courts of Florida are so plainly unfounded simply makes the motives all the more transparent and the situation all the more disconcerting to me. This is a fraud in the fullest sense and I am stunned these people aren’t being called out for it.

Meanwhile, the Democrats play along in complicity and in apparent fear as if they have something meaningful to lose. As far as I’m concerned, they sold out their supposed “principles” long ago and therefore have nothing left that they need fear losing—at least from me.

Keep up the good (and increasingly important) work!
JP

Chicago, Illinois
* * *

The aspect of this case that interests me the most was not covered by today’s article. This aspect is the attention given to it by the media. With all the thousands and millions of people throughout the world suffering and dying because the US government’s militarism, the US

government’s resistance to international cooperation, the US government’s resistance to birth control information, etc., it is simply amazing to me how the Schiavo case has caused these other US government-created tragedies to be put on the back burner.

One might even suppose that this was deliberate. I don’t know that I would go that far, but I would assert that the focus on this one case is misplaced. People ought to be devoting their whole-hearted energies to stifling the Bush administration’s many-sided worldwide actions and policies.

EG
Brooklyn, New York
* * *

Now that the facts about the case are surfacing, I am feeling so used for having paid any attention at all to their claims. In the future, I will remember that the religious right is only interested in issues that highlight their unique religious beliefs. They are less interested in solving problems than in conversion and celebrating their own personal moral understanding. It is hard to find any other reason for someone to demand that the Palestinians simply pick up and move away, or claim to have the only complete understanding of sexuality, and life and death.

I will also remember that the conservative movement is devoted to using the big lie, followed by a campaign of personal demonization, leading to the inevitable justification and call for going outside the law during the “present emergency.” I’m still burned about the orchestrated campaigns of lies used to justify the first Gulf War, the Clinton impeachment, not counting Florida’s votes in 2000, not investigating 9/11 until after the wars were done deals, and generally calling for preemptive attacks and torture in order to have any chance at all for survival.

JH
P.S. The article about James Rubin supporting Wolfowitz has further demoralized my partisan soul. It can’t be said enough, however, that the opposition party led the Kosovo War, and was promising to continue the Iraq War, only better. What a mess.

St. Louis, Missouri
* * *

That was an excellent article. I cannot stand the hypocrisy of Bush and his gang of criminals. How dare he pretend that this one woman’s life matters and should be prolonged when he was responsible for over 150 people being executed when he was governor of Texas, and had the nerve to say that Texas has never wrongfully executed a person? Remember that? Then add to that the fact that that piss-poor excuse for a president knew the 9/11 attack was coming and did absolutely nothing to prevent it or alert the country. The blood of those 3,000 people is on his hands.

Bush does nothing but insult the intelligence of this country with such obvious acts as running back to Washington from his vacation over the Schiavo case when even the tsunami catastrophe that killed

tens of thousands more did not bring him back. He was publicly embarrassed by the small amount that he gave initially, and it was only then that he pledged more. The state of Florida got far more than he originally gave to India.

Just who does he think he's fooling? I can't stand the man, and I was sick to see that the world has to put up with four more years of him. Kerry was no better a choice. So in my opinion, America is just doomed by the thugs that now control this government.

LC

Carrollton, Texas

The ancient Inca mummified their elite at death, took the mummified corpses into the battlefield and ceremonially fed them three meals daily. As a nurse, I have seen flies crawling in and out of the mouth of a non-responsive patient lying in a room with the light on. We call the Inca practices bizarre but no more so than wanting to keep this poor woman "alive."

VD

The fundamental point that your writers make about the "dumbing down" of the American people is well put. The attack on scientific thinking and rational discourse is not widespread across Western Europe and it is there that one finds a general acceptance of same-sex marriage, national health plans and huge majorities opposing US wars for empire.

Of course, these material gains and more can be snatched back by capitalist forces no longer willing or able to grant concessions to human betterment. Great Britain is a prime example of this development.

BS

I have a lot of respect for your web site. However, in this instance, your political and legal analysis is severely flawed. By attempting to save Ms. Schiavo, those same right-wing zealots who you at the WSWS instinctively abhor are in fact trying to prevent a murder. Since there is absolutely no unequivocal evidence that Ms. Schiavo actually wants to die right now, she should be permitted to live. Alleged anecdotal evidence offered by an adulterous husband with unclean hands should not be taken for the highest truth, especially under the circumstances where he will clearly benefit emotionally as well as economically from her ultimate demise.

Further, her obvious lack of "usefulness" should not be relevant in a civilized society (see Third Reich), and thus all your convoluted medical explanations of her exceedingly pathetic condition are absolutely moot in attempting to justify such an awful decision.

Although I often find myself in agreement with you over a variety of topics, I think in this instance it's very possible that your general disdain of religion's involvement in state politics, and of Bush in particular, is clouding your judgment on the issue of the "right to die."

EW

New York

Thank you for your web site's continuing cogent analysis of events. I am no socialist—I consider myself to be a libertarian (more or less)—but I find myself agreeing with your conclusions more times than not. Latest case in point: the political soap opera/media circus surrounding the Terri Schiavo case. Contrary to the calculations made by the Bushies and the media, on this issue the public is showing some ability to think things through. Even a lot of people who take a firm

"pro-life" stand have seen through the cynical and manipulative nature of the Bushies' grandstanding.

It is interesting to note how the general tone of TV coverage of the Schiavo case has changed over the past week, from breathless hysteria to being somewhat more balanced (but still sensationalist). In any case, the widespread public revulsion does give one hope that the American public is comatose, vs. in a persistent vegetative state—i.e., they have the capacity to wake up.

LG

Sioux Falls, South Dakota

It's real simple: Michael Schiavo has absolutely nothing to lose by divorcing his wife and allowing Terri's parents to care for her. He (if one believes in god) is living in sin. Due to the fact that nothing was in writing about Terry's wishes, there is no proof Michael is telling the truth. The only reason this man is pushing to kill his wife is because he has something to hide. There are many people who are willing to help Terry, and many people besides her parents who are being devastated by the relentless pursuit of Terry's death by her disloyal husband. This is real simple, even for you people at WSWS to understand.... A "real man" would not cause this undue hardship on the parents and others. A "real man" would walk away.

DB

Ontario, Canada

Your article had me crying at work today. My younger brother, Patrick, died last October after 41 days in a non-responsive coma. He had tried to take his own life by hanging, after admitting to our parents that he had a crack cocaine addiction. He was only 26. While my mother, sister and I believed that his feeding tube and oxygen should be removed to allow him to quickly leave, my dad was very confused.

We are Catholic, and my dad spoke to three priests about this dilemma. The doctors had confirmed that he was brain damaged beyond repair, and that if he ever did wake up, he would be a violent vegetable (violent due to the last thing he ever did to himself). Each priest agreed that if he was actually on life support that we could "pull the plug," but that they disagreed on removing the feeding tube. They concluded that we cannot deprive a living person food and water, even if we are caring for their every need.

True, we are Canadian, but our religion doesn't recognize borders. I feel so bad for Michael and Terri's parents—her husband for making the hardest decision of his life, and her parents for not seeing that there are no other options. I can't believe that the American government thinks that it can step in and decide for these poor people. Well, I guess with all that has been happening down there for the last couple of hundred years, maybe I do believe it. It's just such a life-altering experience to go through—the government has no place in it. By the way, once my family decided that it was time to let Patty go, he went on his own. Life is funny that way, sometimes.

LM

Alberta, Canada



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact