

Letters from our readers

25 April 2005

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

On "From 'grand inquisitor' to pope: Benedict XVI to head crusade vs. secularism, democracy"

Thank you for an extremely well-researched and necessary document. These past few days, however, sorting through all that is being said about the new Pope, one claim has stuck with me. While Ratzinger claims to have been forced to join the Hitler youth, he also claims to have left on his own in 1945. Didn't the war end in 1945? Hmmm...

SS

Toronto, Canada

21 April 2005

On "Longstanding Sri Lankan Trotskyist dies: Velupillai Sarawanaperumal (1948-2005)"

Dear WWSW, Please accept my sincere sympathy and condolences in the death of Comrade Velupillai Sarawanaperumal. While one cannot too deeply lament the parting of such a dedicated Trotskyist fighter, there is consolation in knowing that his name and experience shall remain forever inscribed in the annals of international socialism.

Sincerely yours,

ADW

21 April 2005

On "Washington Post glorifies US military ruthlessness in Iraq"

Quoting the *Post*, you write, "'Ruiz,' his 23-year-old platoon commander Lieutenant Colin Keating declared, 'plays by the rules of Iraq, not by the rules that are written by some staff guy who's never been on the ground.' *Post* readers were reassured that the sergeant had 'never crossed the line,' presumably a reference to committing outright war crimes, 'but he'll go right up to it time and time again.' " This follows the attitude of Bush and Co., who do not play by the rules written by some guys in Geneva. The *Washington Post* has become increasingly conservative since the death of Katharine Graham (long-time friend of Jessica Mitford). Their employment of people like Charles Krauthammer and George Will is indicative of their general slant. Though they might run a below-the-fold Molly Ivins piece here and there, this does not make up for their ever-rightward shift in recent years. I do not think their being based in DC (about three blocks from the White House, if I remember correctly) helps much, as it does provide easy access. As this war has progressed, their embedded reporters' writings read more and more like a direct feed from the Bush Administration. Contrast this article to any random piece about the local (DC) violence, and you'll see quite a different story. Kids in gangs at home? Monsters! Monsters all! Photos published of those committing murder in Southeast DC are not well-lit, flattering things captioned with glowing descriptions of the gang insignia or colors. Funny how when we export thugs, they're all of a sudden ok, eh?

CMS

Portland, Oregon

20 April 2005

On "An interview with Louis Pizzitola, author of Hearst Over Hollywood"

Again, David Walsh deserves congratulations for being the most politically aware film critic of his generation, especially in terms of publishing this very enlightening interview about a figure who resembles Rupert Murdoch and those other "robber baron" descendants who are gaining unprecedented control over our media. Recently, a right-wing history professor in our university was "outed" by six courageous female faculty members over using material from a right-wing web site whose origins were "abbreviated" when disseminated to students to supposedly evoke free discussion. A cry of outrage has now resulted, with buzz words of "academic freedom" and parallels to the "witch-hunt" used both by this opponent of affirmative action accepted by the University Senate and by his supporters, including the ACLU and certain "liberal" professors. Gone are the days of "No platform for Fascists" espoused in the 1960s and 1970s. These people use the spurious premise of "academic freedom" which they will deny to others once they obtain positions of power. The internet (with your notable exception and others) is the new equivalent of the movies used by Hearst in his day. Thus, these disturbing parallels between the past and present must always be emphasized. The fight thus goes on. It is gratifying to read relevant comments concerning Hearst and Howard Hughes on the part of those who see beyond the images of "great men" celebrated by Scorsese and others in contemporary cinema today.

TW

Illinois

20 April 2005

On "Eminem's new release, Encore: delusions, megalomania and social confusion"

Marc Wells is right to point to the regressive political tendencies displayed on Eminem's album *Encore*. If one reads the popularity of Eminem's music as a symptom of the underlying condition of American society, then the prognosis is not good. The fact that this music resonates with so many listeners clearly indicates that extreme levels of social antagonism exist and that, in the absence of any progressive political outlets, these social antagonisms are generating a proto-fascist environment characterized by a diffuse longing for violence. "So much anger aimed in no particular direction" is how Eminem correctly characterizes himself and his listeners. The fact that fascist demagogues are capable of directing diffuse anger of this type against the scapegoats of their choosing—Saddam Hussein, "liberals," Frenchmen, Arabs, "gays," etc.—is currently being demonstrated in the American political arena. That being said, it is also important to look for countervailing tendencies in Eminem's music, as his confusion reflects that of the working class itself. Yes, in the absence of real

alternatives, large segments of the working class are capable of being seduced by fascism, as was demonstrated in the 2004 elections. Likewise, it would have been easy for a white rapper like Eminem to adopt the jingoist redneck stance of his fellow Detroit native Kid Rock, one of the most degenerate representatives of an increasingly bankrupt capitalist culture. Instead, Eminem on *Encore* has clearly moved to the left. Instead of mocking gays, he now mocks Bible-inspired homophobes on the track “Rain Man.” And however simplistic his political analysis in “Mosh” (the video to which is, incidentally, far more hard-hitting than the track itself), he should be praised for the fierceness and fearlessness with which he denounces Bush. If there is anything redeeming in Eminem—and I do not mean to suggest that the good outweighs the bad—it is the way in which he generates the model of a working class subjectivity for which no aspect of the bourgeois order retains the slightest shred of legitimacy. In his music, he always takes on the establishment from a position of strength, and he refuses to be impressed or intimidated. However backwards many elements of Eminem’s conscious worldview may be, there is something about his psychological attitude of which the bourgeois establishment is rightly afraid.

HM

22 April 2005

On “Canada’s Liberal government faces imminent defeat”

It is an historical fact that a strong labour movement results in a strong democracy and there can be no solution to the problem of the on-going global assault on labour accomplishments (pensions, safe work environments, fair wages, sick/disabled benefits, labour freedoms, etc.) than for the ordinary person to get informed, get mad, get organized, get resistant and take political action to challenge and change the elite whose main drive is toward totalitarianism and enslavement—especially now with a covert war for scarce resources. It has been said that governments are shadows cast by business over the people—so why are we surprised at the Liberal Party’s boondoggle?

Governments, if allowed, will continue to boondoggle along unless there are lawful reforms in place to prevent it. Thomas Jefferson knew this only too well when he proposed that too much wealth in the hands of too few would destroy democracy. Big business is not, nor has it ever been, democratic, and they most certainly like governments that curtail democratic processes, whether that is an outright nightmare government like the Conservatives or a wolf in sheep’s clothing like the NDP. Rather than being outraged by this shadowy Liberal scandal, focus one’s rage at the substance, the abuse of big business towards the common person in all its ugly ways. He who whispers in the King’s ear is more important than the King.

It is time to bring the WSWS into as many homes as we can; information is the totalitarian’s worse fear.

SN

Powell River, Canada

20 April 2005

On “Impeachment of Mexico City mayor sparks political crisis”

Thank you for the well-researched article on the political crisis in Mexico. My country is at a crucial point in its transition from a one-party state to a multi-faceted oligarchy. The PRD is but the other side of the same coin, a corrupt party seeking to advance the interests of a few. It is interesting that you point out their historical ties to the PRI, because for many years the PRI played lip service to nationalism and populism while repressing worker movements in the late 1960s and 1970s. The PRD seems to feel that this old populist demagogy is necessary to advance its interests.

AA

18 April 2005

On “Fox’s 24: propaganda thinly disguised as television programming”

I agree with absolutely everything you said in your April 5 article. In fact, I was going to write a similar editorial for my local paper. I am a progressive liberal and a big fan of FOX’s 24 since the first season. This is the last season I intend to watch. Last night’s episode (04-18-05) was the absolute worst example of “thinly” veiled propaganda I’ve seen yet. In fact, it was hardly veiled. I remember in the last season when there was one incident of (protagonist) torture on the program and it was considered a major plot twist. This season, torture is regularly used as a vehicle for obtaining information quickly. Even more disturbing in last night’s episode was the direct way in which a weak president, activist judges, a timid attorney general, and “Amnesty Global” (an obvious simile of Amnesty International and the ACLU) are all portrayed as unpatriotic obstacles standing in the way of national security. I don’t understand how the FCC allows such immoral, socially deflating commentary to air unabated—particularly after setting precedent by taking such a strong position on the issue of wardrobe malfunctions. Thanks again for your article. I’ll be replacing my Monday night routine with reading your web site very soon.

ADM

Madison, Wisconsin

19 April 2005

On right-wing ideology

I am listening to the Mike Malloy program tonight, just for kicks, and being that it’s Hitler’s birthday, Mike has turned the phone lines over to only right-wingers. The interesting thing is that none of these people can articulate a single rational point. I was interested in the concept of some agitated right-wingers actually challenging the fiery Malloy and his left-leaning views. However, it is two hours into the program and a recurring trend is that these people are hurting as badly as any progressives are in this country. None of them can honestly defend Bush. They’ve been propagandized by the corporate media into the ruling elite’s class warfare on the working class. It’s very interesting. I think you’re right when you said that Bush’s “support” is based on only the lies propagated by corporate media, unyielding nationalist militarism, and religio-fascist nonsense. Make them think that their problems are unrelated to the policies of the national government, but are instead caused by advocacy groups like the ACLU. Is this the best the right can do? Who is it we’re fighting here? Is it not possible for we on the left to defeat these Nazis (republican or democrat)? It is going to happen some day. There’s only so far social regression can take you politically before the masses finally wake up.

Thanks for telling the truth,

JS

Jacksonville, Alabama

21 April 2005



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