

Letters from our readers

20 July 2005

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

On "Secularism and the American Constitution"

I find the Christian right in the US to be an appalling bunch of hypocrites. All this hogwash about the Ten Commandments is shown to be nonsense when one considers the commandment, "Thou Shall Not Kill." The Christian right supports a government that kills wholesale all around the world. Jesus, for whom I have great respect even though I'm not a Christian, was the Prince of Peace, but the religious right support the "War President." There was only one time in the bible's story of Jesus that he seemed truly angry, when he drove the money changers out of the temple. Well, the Christian right is deeply allied with the money changers and are the tool by which they gain and keep power in the US. Such an alliance is just plain non-Christian, clearly hypocritical. Repent your hypocrisy false Christians, for by your own faith you will have to answer for it before God.

AH

Aurora, Illinois

18 July 2005

I note the recent articles on the encroachments of religion in public life especially in the US and the current drive for more repressive legislation. Under recent proposals in the UK, religion of almost any kind would receive a privileged position, compared to secular views, being protected against insults.

One theme behind this is the desire of the government to manage and manipulate the societies they claim to represent. By managing minority communities they hope to neutralise a potential base of dissent. Not so many years ago it was perfectly normal to speak of a working class within which there were black workers who faced particular problems such as racism and the failure of the official labour movement to represent them. In time, the concept of community replaced that of class, and community itself became endlessly subdivided by language, nationality or religion.

As the concept of class retreated from public debate, the politics of identity advanced. By now, even in meetings of the Left, it seems distinctly out of place to speak of the working class and its independent interests, so far has populism become the norm.

This process was given a boost by government policy in the wake of the Brixton Riots (1981) and the Scarman Report. A strategy was adopted by successive governments of cultivating

leaderships within the now proliferating "ethnic" communities. Even the smallest of these have their own leaders and an internal politics based on competing for grants or favours from the establishment.

The strategy succeeded in fragmenting and factionalising sources of potential political dissent, but ultimately failed because it has created a layer of leaders that has to be pandered to and co-opted but which is not as representative of its community as it claims to be. In particular, a whole layer of youth is thoroughly alienated from these leaders and from wider society. This is most evident in those communities based on Islam because of the radicalising effect of world politics.

How will the government now manage these communities? It is putting them under pressure to spy on and regiment the youth, to win hearts and minds. How they are expected to convince a new generation of educated youth that the whole history of British Colonialism and the last century of its dealings in the Middle East was benign and altruistic, perhaps based on some shared religious values, is not entirely clear.

In the meantime, religion will be added to capitalism as one of the pillars of the democratic society we are supposed to enjoy. It is entirely likely that critical voices will be marginalised and vilified, much as the left was in the McCarthy era.

To challenge this, a secular grouping ought to be formed to promote debate on the merits of reason and science as the basis for politics, as against the manipulation of cultural symbols and religious superstition.

MM

Sheffield, England

18 July 2005

Just a little factoid from the recent Harper's index, which stated that seven of the nine Founding Fathers denied the divinity of Jesus.

BD

18 July 2005

On "Exposure of Rove's lies throws Bush White House into crisis"

If Rove and Cooper can be believed—that Wilson was sent to Niger by, and reported back to, the CIA—it suggests that he was sent there not to prove, but to *disprove*, the alleged connection between uranium from Niger and Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

The Bush administration had been asserting and continued to assert—both prior to and, later, in the face of Wilson's

findings—that Hussein had gotten or sought to get uranium in order to build nuclear weapons. They did not need Wilson’s say-so for them to assert this. So, if the CIA, and not the administration, wanted Wilson to go, it was, at the very least, to raise questions about the legitimacy of this particular WMD allegation.

The motivation of the CIA leadership could have been to protect the CIA against the anticipated charge that it had colluded in the administration’s lies, or it could have been because there was a faction within the CIA which was antagonistic to the Bush desire to make war on Iraq. In the latter case, Wilson was an appropriate choice. After all, he was not a CIA operative and therefore not bound to secrecy. He could later publicize the administration’s lies without suffering any penalty for revealing secrets. And, as we know, he eventually did make the lie public. (Unfortunately for him and his wife, there was a secret to be revealed: his wife’s employment as a CIA operative.)

What then becomes interesting is Wilson’s timing: Why did he choose to publish his op-ed piece *after* the invasion and not before?

EG

Brooklyn, New York
13 July 2005

Your article is excellent! Thank you. You express so much of the frustration at the lack of real attention this story is getting.

PF

New York, New York
13 July 2005

In your article today concerning the involvement of Karl Rove in the disclosure of the identity of Valerie Plame you state as follows: “The exposure of Plame was part of a ‘dirty tricks’ campaign to discredit Plame’s husband, Joseph Wilson, a former ambassador who became a prominent critic of US policy in Iraq.”

I would suggest that the information concerning Valerie Plame had very little value in discrediting Joseph Wilson’s account of his trip to Nigeria or his report that he found no evidence to support the assertion that Iraq was attempting to procure “yellow cake” from Nigeria. The leak had a broader and far more sinister strategic purpose. It was a warning to any other US intelligence officer or official that the White House would use any means necessary to destroy the careers of anyone who disclosed information that would demonstrate that the administration’s entire weapons of mass destruction argument was manufactured and contrived.

LA

Plymouth, Massachusetts
13 July 2005

On “Why the WSWS opposes the jail of Judith Miller—a reply to readers”

Thank you so much for your level-headed, intelligent, even visionary response to your readers’ criticisms of your stance on

the jailing of Judith Miller. I hope those (and all) readers read every word, and fully understand the meaning and positive spirit of the response, and if not, they will write in for further clarification or to challenge it. As usual, the WSWS has acquired a perspective, through extensive background information and research, on the entire affair. This puts the Miller story in a crucial context (specifically a historical and legal context). Bill Maher is fond of saying: “People have a hard time having two (or more) thoughts at once in their brain at the same time.” He means, for example, how someone can be against the war in Iraq (or Afghanistan) or the “war on terror,” and still be “patriotic” or still love their country. Or how can someone understand the real motivations and causes for the attacks on the WTC, and not support the terrorists?

In the case of our discussion, how can someone think of Judith Miller as a hack, a conservative operative, and a liar, even a traitor (helping us get into war), and still have her rights to free speech/press trampled on, and defended by us, her strongest critics. Well, we don’t defend her. We defend the *idea* involving her situation—two separate thoughts. It is in these very situations that we must rise above petty politics. Defending our political friends is always easy, and sometimes wrong, if done blindly; but defending our political enemies against wrongdoing, now *that* is something that will get everyone, both friends and enemies, to wake up and take notice! We must be ever-vigilant to find opportunities to defend our political “enemies,” whenever possible. If we don’t, we will be hypocrites. If we fail in this regard, simply, we will fail in our attempt to better this world.

MS

Venice, California
14 July 2005



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