# Letters from our readers

**25 November 2005**

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

*On* "Political conflict intensifies over Bush's Iraq war lies"

Thanks for your writing. I would like to add that Kerry is incapable of finding words stronger than "mislead" in referring to the Iraq war. He said that Cheney "continues to mislead America about how we got into Iraqi and what must be done to complete the still unaccomplished mission." It seems these guys are brain-dead, or have in fact been bought off.

RK

19 November 2005

*On* "Senate Democrats back Iraq war, Guantánamo prison camp"

Feeding placebos to a raging elephant, I would suggest, is, at best, a futile gesture to be taken just prior to being trampled. Has no one in the Democratic Party read the GOP instruction book? Organizers of the Project for the New American Century (PNAC) are not trying to hide anything in the documents they've prepared for the takeover of the world's resources, and that includes people: people already classed as resources and nothing more. That includes those people now being maimed and slaughtered in Iraq, Afghanistan, and soon Iran and all of Central America. There is no plan for withdrawal because the exhibition is not finished, nor will it ever be. The money and effort being spent outlandishly by Halliburton and company is being spent to construct military bases to serve as intimidating and quick response, hostile launch platform from which to rain terror and destruction upon those who may object to the takeover of the world by the as yet Unincorporated States of America.

GO

Little River, South Carolina

17 November 2005

*On* "Film documents American use of chemical weapons in Iraq"

While focusing principally on the assault on Fallujah, this article and the documentary it concerns is yet another concrete verification of the unconscionable horrors wrought of the illegal colonial invasion and occupation of Iraq.

The closing paragraph is instructive: "The use of chemical weaponry by the US-led forces in Iraq is indicative of the criminal character of the entire war. Chemical weapons are indelibly associated with many of the most barbarous episodes of the twentieth century—from the use of mustard gas in the trenches of World War I to the indiscriminate unleashing of napalm and Agent Orange in the Vietnam War. History will soon come to remember the Bush administration's crimes in Iraq alongside these atrocities."

History, to be sure, has a very long list. Perhaps one should recall that when the United States government illegally intervened in the Korean Civil War in 1950, the USAF dropped 97,000 tons of bombs and 7.8 million gallons of napalm on Stalinist North Korea. Violating the Geneva Conventions, the US military decimated agricultural and industrial facilities, cultural institutions, hospitals, schools, villages, and entire cities. This is documented. In a span of three years, the northern half of the Korean peninsula was transformed into a wasteland, and an estimated 2 million civilians were killed.

Furthermore, these monumental crimes are compounded with the hitherto contested, yet plausible, allegations of an American biological weapons program in Korea. Needless to say, I actually wonder if such heinous weapons were employed during the destruction of Fallujah. But however they may have been committed—whether through chemical bombs, helicopter gunships, tanks, or torture—the massacres perpetrated in that city are not the first nor shall they be the last brutal war crime committed with the endorsement of the American capitalist class.

What a colossal tragedy it is that, following the jubilant defeat of the Nazis at the end of the Second World War, the legacy of sixty years of US imperialism has been a mountain of skulls and entrails. What a reason for the international working class to finally bring an end to the barbarism of imperialism and its useless wars.

Sincerely yours,

ADW

15 November 2005

*On* "New revelations of US military use of white phosphorus in Iraq"

White phosphorus grenades, or Willy-Petes, have been in use since the Second World War. They created havoc during the Korean "police action," because of their widespread effects upon detonation. They came into their own, horribly, during the Vietnam conflict.

When the Australian infantry battalions returned to Oz, at least after their rotation, and *very* much after the end of the conflict, there were several "things" that were not to be used during training and not to be used during "live-firing" exercises. The most obvious were: the "splintex" anti-personnel fragmentation round for the 106mm recoilless rifle; the M18A1 "claymore" anti-personnel mine; and, the ubiquitous "WP", "white phos" grenade.

These anti-personnel munitions were in full use during the Vietnam conflict but, apart from training with the (dummy) M18A1, were effectively banned from use in and for Australia.

PW

Adelaide, Australia

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21 November 2005

Thank you for an excellent article. I wonder if you have read a *New York Times* article by Scott Shane, dated 21 November ("US is Slow to Respond to Phosphorus Charges"). It is amazing how blatantly they hide the real news at the end of the article. I have had it printed so to use as an example of distorted journalism with some of my students. Now I will print yours to show them real reporting. Thanks.

AH

Taiwan

22 November 2005

*On* "Political issues facing US auto workers discussed at Kokomo meeting"

I attended the meeting here in Kokomo and found the organization and information very impressive. I do admit I have reservations about the work-to-rule strategy because I believe the corporations can and will have ways to beat it. It has become unfortunate that the unions have lost their militancy. I have said before and will say it again this is much more than union issues—these are community issues; these are working class issues. Now more than ever union and non-union must embrace each other. Minimum wage worker, your voice will no longer fall upon deaf ears. It is important that all working class people stand together. Only together can we defeat this capitalist greed.

CR

Kokomo, Indiana

15 November 2005

*On* "Police claims raise new questions about 'terrorist' raids in Australia"

What I am having the most difficulty with in this story is the part about the plot against the nuclear power plant. In January there were people who were milling around the plant; it had a gate snipped preparatory to something, and the police appear to have done nothing until November. That really doesn't make sense to me.

LV

New Zealand

20 November 2005

*On* "When is an 'antiwar film' not an antiwar film?"

I often enjoy reading your arts reviews on this sight for their depth and thorough analysis of the strengths and the weaknesses of films (and the like). It's telling, isn't it, that at a time when over half of North America thinks the war in Iraq is a mistake and doing no good to/for anyone, Hollywood comes out with a film which is unable to take a strong position against the war. Are we surprised? But then, Hollywood has rarely been about bucking the status quo, and it more often than not churns out products that support the ideology and systems of the powers that be, of which *Jarhead* is a perfect example.

I think we have reached a point where film (at least in a linear, narrative sense) may have trouble competing with reality—it simply cannot keep up with the constant affronts in the headlines and the reverberations of those headlines on everyday life. After all, we reside in a world that has seen men unleashing dogs on (mostly innocent according to the Red Cross) men (and assumedly women and young children); a world where the Pentagon has had to backpedal on its own lies about not using chemical weapons (white phosphorus, napalm) in Fallujah (and presumably other Iraqi cities); a world where American citizens are made refugees and left to die (New Orleans) due to the callous indifference, incompetence, and carelessness of the U.S. government.

Simply put, reality and its accompanying horrors occurring under this neo-capitalist system have surpassed anything Hollywood could do justice to. Sam Mendes has always been a conservative parading as a "liberal," a member of the bourgeoisie. Was *American Beauty* about anything? Was *The Road to Perdition*? *Jarhead*? All films do share one thing: the theme that it is the white (American) male's god-given right under the capitalist system to screw whom he pleases (*American Beauty*) or kill whom he pleases (*Jarhead*). A sociological reading of the racist, patriarchical tendencies of Mendes would be interesting.

Anyway, thanks for the review and keep 'em coming!

JA

18 November 2005

*On* "The pain you go through in this country to start a new life ..."

As a Buenos Aires citizen I can tell you that the portrait given in *Bolivia* is very accurate. It's true that the character's motivations are somewhat forced, yet the way Bolivians are treated here is shameful, and the film succeeds in capturing this.

AG

Buenos Aires, Argentina

20 November 2005

*On RSS news feeds* http://www.wsws.org/rss.shtml

Congratulations on the addition of RSS news feeds! This is a step which may not at first be noticed by many of the regular readers, but will prove to be very significant in disseminating WSWS content to an even broader audience across many new platforms, including PDAs and iPods. While the "mainstream" media becomes increasingly subservient to the political requirements of capital, it is invaluable to provide access to a socialist perspective as widely as possible using the latest technology available to us.

JW

Detroit, Michigan

16 November 2005

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