

Letters from our readers

10 December 2005

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

On “An act of barbarism: Nguyen Tuong Van executed in Singapore”

I would like to thank you for writing this article. I have been deeply moved by the tragedy of this young man whose life has now been extinguished in, as you write, an unmitigated act of barbarism. Like me, many hundreds of thousands have been outraged and sickened by his hanging. You have given a focus and a conscious expression to this profound anger. As you say, together with the Singaporean dictatorship, the entire Australian political establishment is complicit in this state-sanctioned murder. Howard and Downer repeatedly claimed that all action was futile. Their very refusal to act itself plays a decisive and reactionary role. However, even more than a refusal to act, all of them—Liberals and Laborites alike—have acted in unison to actively obstruct several possible legal avenues that may have prevented the execution from proceeding.

Robert Richter summed it up when he said: “We know that the Singapore government is susceptible to pressure; it has not been pressured at all....” I believe that the death of this young man will have far-reaching consequences. At present in Australia, the Howard government—with the full support of the Laborites, trade union bureaucrats and other “opposition” parties—is ramming through Parliament a series of laws that aim to devastate the social position of the working class and suppress political dissent. The open connivance of the Australian politicians with the Singaporean dictatorship in its obscene barbarism, their inhumanity and their disgusting hypocrisy will be remembered by the Australian working class. The Australian workers will soon understand that the policy towards Van Nguyen—indifference, contempt and above all the eagerness to sacrifice his life for the profit interests of Australian capitalism—is in fact the policy towards the entire working class.

KM

Melbourne, Australia

4 December 2005

On “US press echoes consensus in ruling elite to continue slaughter in Iraq”

The ones really most interested in getting us out of Iraq (even more so than the average taxpayer) are those families that wind up having their children in the military. We will not exit this war by trying to convince those profiting from it that it is wrong, and we know that those profiting are also those who are running this country.

The way to begin an exit strategy is by starving the military machine of troops (bodies). There is already a known shortage.

The recruiters are showing desperation. Even the government had to sneak certain legislation into school funding (the No Child Left Behind Act) in order to find likely targets for possible enlistees. There was never any serious talk of a return of the draft. It would be an act of political suicide for any politician to do so. This would also openly pit the minority government representing business against our own majority population. An attitude of “anything but the military” needs to be started amongst our young and their parents.

BS

3 December 2005

Echoes of Orwell’s *1984*. War hysteria is most intense in the upper echelons of society, the very same people who know that it is most futile. Apparently it is possible to hold two contradictory points of view, believe in them both, and not even flinch at the mental acrobatics this must involve. Is the US honestly trying to help the people of Iraq, or just use up a surplus of consumable goods (including Iraqis, US soldiers) by maintaining a constant state of (world) war involving its own armies and by propping up brutal dictatorships throughout the rest of the world? As far as the mainstream press is concerned, they’ll toady to their rich owners’ whims and spout those same owners’ opinions.

JB

Toronto, Canada

3 December 2005

While I do not regard myself as a socialist, I am appalled by the *Wall Street Journal*’s tenacity in supporting the president and his neo-con lunatics. The publication’s editorials have always been dishonest and amateurish in their support of the ultra-rich, but these days they are simply going too far. The May 17, 2004, lead editorial is the worst I have ever seen in a national publication—approving torture while claiming the US military brass had nothing to do with it.

My point in writing is to inquire whether any significant effort is being made by any organization to encourage people and responsible corporations to cancel their subscriptions to this fascist publication.

BH

3 December 2005

On “Rice defends illegal ‘renditions,’ threatens to reveal European complicity”

Thank you Mr. Marsden for your article. The Bush administration is calling for the European ruling class to unite with the American ruling class in more aspects of the “war on terror.” Having wilted before the US with regards to Afghanistan and Iraq, should we be surprised that Europe *once again* has concentration camps on its soil? Should we have any doubt that the capitalist

governments of Europe *will* unite with the US on renditions, torturing, etc.?

How many more times will humanity allow the capitalist system to throw the world onto the course of genocidal self-slaughter? Can there be any further proof of the desperate need for revolution?

Fraternally,

JB

6 December 2005

On "US military covertly pays to plant stories in Iraqi media"

Regarding Kate Randall's story on the US planting stories in Iraqi media, I couldn't help but chuckle at one of her last quotes: "White House spokesman Scott McClellan commented, 'We're very concerned about the reports.'" Note that it's not the actions they're concerned about—it's that the actions were reported!

JH

2 December 2005

On the war in Iraq

How many more have to lose their lives (in all countries) before these idiots who are running this sham realize we are not winning anything. The more I read, the more disgusted I get. The WSWS is the only place reporting an honest account of this war. We need a party for the working class to stop this nonsense. I'm with you all the way, WSWS. Thanks for the time and hard work.

LP

Ecorse, Michigan

5 December 2005

On "Week one of Canada's federal election campaign—posturing, demagoguery and reaction"

It might be well noted that Stephen Harper and George Bush share the philosophical stance of Leo Strauss, a philosophy of deception. Strauss believed that the common person was too stupid to know what was good for him/her and thus concluded that the elite leaders should construct "noble lies," that is, indulge in concealment and secrecy about their real intents regarding the working class. It has become the norm of politics today. Lie, lie and lie—and do it gradually so not to spook the public. Galvanize support through populist issues, use doublespeak to confuse, add religion to the mix to stir people emotionally, and most importantly, get people to fight amongst themselves; through such measures democracy and civil liberties are covertly destroyed, often with public support. The public votes, but the systems are all the same, so there are no choices.

An example of how deception works in Canada, to get rid of NAFTA would now be a revolutionary act, something Canadians do not do very well. Social services will eventually be in the same category—only an act of revolution would get them back. Starve the population through inadequate education, job insecurity, expensive medical insurances, debt enslavement, imbecilic entertainment and monopolized presses, and you have a population unable and unwilling to become revolutionary. The elite know from history not to push the working people over the edge because when they feel they have nothing to lose, they will fight back. So, give 'em crumbs, as little as they need to keep them enslaved but not too little to rankle their sensibilities. Oh, and don't forget to tell them that God sees this as the best system. You can't argue with God,

especially when you can't afford the heart operation and He's the only card you hold now.

Always and forever, in a democratic (or other) society, it is the power of the people who will support or defeat injustice. It is the citizens' collective will, through large mass movements with clear objectives that needs to push humanity forward, and to contain the greed and narcissism of the elite. Nothing else will work. Socialism demands worker participation, not exclusion. Neither should it be afraid to have an educated, well-informed public. Capitalism despises both, because both threaten their existing social hierarchy.

SN

Powell River, Canada

6 December 2005

On "Realism and nostalgia"

Stefan Steinberg,

At last you are back again with your well-informed articles on contemporary films. It was hard to understand what was wrong with them without your perceptive input. So few filmmakers today face the deeper implications in their films. *The Constant Gardener* is a case in point. The Brazilian director relied on decorative drapery to cloak picturesque natives rather than engage with individual Africans who were being betrayed. It's as if filmmakers aren't risk being labeled as serious. Your seriousness and integrity distinguishes you (and other WSWS film critics) from mainstream criticism.

CB

London

2 December 2005

On "A red-baiting attack at the US Transport Workers Union convention"

Thanks for getting the story right on Mike Quill [one of the founders of the Transport Workers Union—ed.]. My grandfather, a fellow traveler of Quill's, and one-time president of Towerman's local, was finked out by Quill and called before New York City counterpart to the House Un-American Activities Committee. He told them to go f*** themselves. He and a Jewish fellow were the only two who refused to testify. His union brothers and comrades abandoned him. He lost his job and his pension, but never his dignity, and continued to fight his dismissal with counsel Leonard Boudin until his death in 1961. I am sickened that Quill is now hailed as a hero of the working people. Perhaps he was at one time, but he sold out, like most labor bureaucrats.

BI

4 December 2005



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