

Letters from our readers

24 May 2006

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

On “In the face of mounting popular opposition, Canada dramatically escalates its military intervention in Afghanistan”

Thank you for providing clarity to the reasons behind the Harper Conservative government’s escalation of Canadian intervention in Afghanistan. Over the past few months, since Harper has become prime minister, the residents of Hamilton, Ontario, have seen evidence of this escalation as Canadian Reservist troops now train in the working class neighbourhoods on a regular basis for the “street combat” conditions in Afghanistan.

In early April of this year, residents received a letter in their mailboxes by the Lieutenant-Colonel of The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders of Canada (John Foote Armouries) that they would be training a Reserve Force Infantry in the “urban environment,” to conduct “peacekeeping and peacemaking tours in countries such as Afghanistan.” He wrote in this letter, “The city streets located around the Armouries provide an exercise area that meets these requirements while also demonstrating to the local public that our citizen-soldiers

are committed to their career as professional Reservists whose interest is to defend our nation.”

This is an impoverished area of Hamilton with very high unemployment. The sight of the troops marching in the streets on some afternoons, I believe, also acts as a recruitment exercise to assist in Harper’s escalation of military intervention in future “environments such as Afghanistan.” I have since seen one of these “urban warfare” exercises with weapons on display (supposedly unloaded) late in the evening, and it’s a disturbing spectacle to an unsuspecting resident or visitor to the area. One can only imagine

how disturbing and deadly this spectacle is for the innocent and impoverished people of Afghanistan.

Kind regards,

JB

Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

20 May 2006

On “Bush’s immigration speech—an appeal to militarism and reaction”

The speech was very clear: from now on, any foreigner willing to go legally in the United States in order to work there will have to communicate his fingerprints while entering the country. They will have to subject themselves to these

procedures, formerly only imposed to criminals and to spies, not to immigrants and visitors, and even less to citizens. Indeed, Bush said in his addresses on immigration reform: “A key part of that system [for verifying documents and work eligibility of aliens] should be a new identification card for every legal foreign worker. This card should use biometric technology, such as digital fingerprints, to make it tamper-proof.”

The proposal launched by president Bush to deploy the National Guard at the Mexican border and to introduce sophisticated electronic devices is only part of a brilliant communication strategy. Its actual function is not to protect the border, but to direct public attention far from the true reform set in motion by the Bush Administration: biometric security.

PM

17 May 2006

On “US offers closer defence links with New Zealand”

The duplicity of the New Zealand Labour Party over “defence” ties with the US and the merging of foreign policies with the National Party that you outline in your article puts me in mind of George Galloway’s comment about Tony Blair and Gordon Brown (and the same applies to the two major political parties here in Australia) they are but “two cheeks of the same arse.”

Kind regards,

JO

Brisbane, Australia

18 May 2006

On “Witnesses, video document massacre in Haditha: US Marines killed Iraqi civilians ‘in cold blood’”

My utmost revulsion of the Iraq War occurred as US forces were set to invade Fallujah the very week of the US presidential elections in 2004, as if to ensure that the assault on Fallujah would happen regardless of the outcome of the presidential election.

The BBC ran a sympathetic story titled “Prayers and Tears in Falluja” in which Iraqi journalist Fadhil Badrani was interviewed by telephone. He too recognized the futility of a Kerry victory in the US: “We followed the US elections very closely from Falluja. It was a matter of life and death. Many people were hoping John Kerry would win because they felt he would not have allowed our city to be attacked like this. Of course, we also know that the US policy in Iraq at large is not going to change. We do not forget that George Bush and John Kerry are two sides of the same coin. Still, as far as our city is

concerned right now, a Kerry victory would have brought some hope.”

The antiwar movement in the US itself felt much the same way at the time. Nevertheless the US military amassed its troops on the outskirts of Fallujah, readying for the assault either way.

Recall that US forces would not let any males between the ages of 15 and 65 out of the city, as these “men” would be assumed as insurgents. These incredibly cruel rules of war created the conditions for a very moving photograph attached with the BBC story in which, the day before the assault, the streets of Fallujah were filled with those very men not allowed to leave the city. Many of them were weeping, and all seemed resigned to their fate. The photo and the interview can be viewed here: [Who are the terrorists?](#)

CG

21 May 2006

So once again the echoes of Vietnam raise their heads in this totally misguided war. In both Vietnam and Iraq, American soldiers were all too readily turned into trigger-happy thugs; they have become the world’s bad guys. The country is run by people who have no foresight, decency or honor. They are greedy in the extreme, like vampires who desire endless streams of flesh blood.

PP

Machynlleth, Wales, UK

20 May 2006

On “Major naval battle: Sri Lanka Plunges toward open civil war”

One couldn’t agree more with the realistic presentation. There is a puzzling aspect regarding the assassination attempt on the Army Commander. If, as the Government made out, it was the work of a “female pregnant woman bomber from Puvarasankulam in Vavuniya,” why did the retaliatory aerial attacks by the air force take place on the poor Tamil villagers of Muttur?

The Japanese envoy’s initial sanctimonious silence on the killing of Tamil civilians while condemning the naval incident shows the unbalanced and partisan approach to the conflict. Of course, Japan is holding up the \$4.6 billion package because it is also good for business, but a more critical and realistic appraisal of the causes of the conflict on the part of the Co-Chairs is required for a durable and effective settlement. The Co-Chairs said not a word of condemnation when a Tamil MP and another to replace him were gunned down in the east! So much can be read into their “support” for democracy.

Yet another development is the stunning election of Sri Lanka to the Human Rights Council! The views of the UN Watch Dog on human rights have counted for nothing. Now isn’t that a slap in the face regarding all the gross human misery caused to the Tamils over the past decades? Now that Sri Lanka is on the HRC, are we going to see more of what happened from 1983 to 2001 as the “final solution” to the ethnic problem? Yet another

development doing the rounds is the so-called formation of civil defence brigade in Colombo under Gen. Anuruddha Ratwatte. Are we going to see a repeat of Holocaust 1983 in 2006?

SM 13 May 2006

On “Woody Allen directs Match point: No Dreiser”

Thank you for your review of “Match Point.” I just saw the film this weekend, and I really enjoyed it. I was giving Woody Allen the benefit of the doubt—I assumed that he didn’t really believe that it was all about “luck.” But his quotes in your review make me think otherwise, maybe.

Maybe I projected my own worldview onto the filmmaker’s, but I thought we were supposed to find the rich and corporate worlds to be unappealing. The best and maybe only human and egalitarian moments were those shared in the “bad” neighborhood’s apartment building—tenants looking in on each other, age, gender and race not being a factor.

So, I’m still not sure about it. Your review makes me think maybe Woody really is OK with the status quo (in as much as he maybe doesn’t think that it can be changed); but, while watching the film, I was sure that Woody was satirizing the status quo and showing how, within its framework, life really is a tragedy.

I just think Woody had more going on in this film that he’ll even tell people.

TM

Minneapolis, Minnesota, US

15 May 2006

On “Britain: Sunday Times ‘Rich List’ celebrates unprecedented wealth accumulation”

I thought that a particularly interesting point is that the rich are getting richer, not by creating new wealth, but by transfer of income from the mass majority of the population. Seems to be the same in US. What worries me is that it may be a sign that the rich and powerful believe correctly that a world depression is coming and they are filling their coffers before it hits.

RLB

Bradenton, Florida

15 May 2006



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact