

# Letters from our readers

30 August 2006

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

*On "WSWS speaks to families of soldiers in Sri Lanka's war"*

What a sensitive way to present the human dimension of an inhuman war, which Tamils and those who hold the moral and ethical high ground strongly believe is a genocidal or an immoral one to cover up for evil governance.

What is also incredible is the high price paid by Sinhala youth (like their Tamil counterparts) just out of schools, especially from poor families, who are being given breadwinning employment in the military! What is also pertinent is that they are being sent to the front lines so soon after school as canon fodder to satiate ethnic and religious agendas of politicians and priests.

There is only one way to stop this genocidal and inhuman war: Bring the perpetrators of gross human rights violations and war criminals who contravene international humanitarian law to justice under a Special War Crimes Tribunal like what was done in the Rwanda ethnic war.

The reason such a war continues is because war criminals get away, as basic criminal justice is nonexistent as far as the Tamils are concerned at the national level. The Chemmani mass grave case is a clear precedent that the wheels of national justice stop turning altogether when it comes to Tamils.

The numbers of Tamil civilians killed since November 2005 surely justifies such a Special War Criminal Court.

SM

26 August 2006

War crimes are going on in Sri Lanka. The government is bombing its own citizens. Because it is a small country without oil, the international community is not taking much interest. Can you all please do something? The Tamil mouths are frightened to open because of the latest arrests. If there is no room for liberal opinions to voice, radicalism will flourish. We do not want that, do we?

KR

Trenton, Ontario, Canada

26 August 2006

*On "SEP/WSWS meetings in Australia oppose Israeli-US aggression in Lebanon"*

It infuriates us when Howard makes comments to the effect that he is speaking on behalf of Australians. This is so untrue. He would not be aware of what we think. If he bothered to listen, he would have heard how we were against the barbaric murderous behavior of the Israeli government. How can they believe it's right to kill innocent men, women and children, and then blame it on terrorism? Australia has no right to be in Iraq or Afghanistan, or to be fighting wars on the behalf of the USA instigators. How can anyone hope for peace when a country has named itself the police

of the world, with the ability to make laws to suit itself? The laws only apply to every other country but the US. Thank you WSWs for your web site. You have covered many stories that otherwise we would never hear.

AG

Australia

26 August 2006

*On "A damning admission: New York Times concealed NSA spying until after 2004 election"*

Any terrorists who want to communicate with each other are going to naturally take measures to conceal their activity. Rather than blabbing openly about their plans on the phone and risk being caught, all that they have to do is use the free and widely popular Skype Internet phone service, which automatically encrypts all transmitted information, including voice calls. Some experts have claimed that even the NSA has great difficulty decrypting it, which makes it impractical to filter through every single phone call on the network at will.

Thus, no one can make the case that the Bush administration has been up to anything other than mass spying on "their own people," who generally don't take measures to encrypt the contents of their phone calls, as opposed to genuine criminals who certainly do. The government has been attempting to force Skype to make all of its calls automatically wiretappable through the CALEA law, but I don't think they have yet been successful.

RG

23 August 2006

The issue is simpler than you make it out to be. The *New York Times* supported Kerry. Was that support sincere? If so, why not reveal the bombshell before the election? I'm afraid that there is either a grand dog and pony show, or else the *Times* was so intimidated that it kept silent. I believe the latter. Recently the *Times* was attacked for revealing that the Bush administration had taken measures to track and halt terrorist funds, but failed to defend itself by pointing to an actual speech by Bush, October 2001, declaring almost key word for key word what the *Times* "exposed" in 2006. That's intimidation.

The grand show would require that there not be a split in the ruling class, but there is. The dog and pony show account would have the *Times* keeping silent so that the election could be better rigged, but fear is more like it. The 2004 vote count was rigged. Even after all the Jim Crow tactics that kept eligible voters from going to the polls, Kerry won by about 6,000,000 votes. The statistical evidence for this is overwhelming, but the strongest and simplest account of the data is Professor Steven Freeman's book, *Was the 2004 Presidential Election Stolen?*

I believe that the factions controlling the count are in the hard-

right religious, neoconservative camp, and that the Old Guard Eastern Liberal wing of the capitalist party is on the run and trying desperately to regain power, but so far unable to do so because the other side's real strength is the unstated depth of the fascist elements of the military—not the on-the-ground generals who see the folly of the current wars, but something else again. The Eastern Establishment fears mobilizing popular support for all the obvious reasons.

MG

Los Angeles, California, US

22 August 2006

On "Canada to press ahead with Afghanistan intervention despite mounting casualties"

Canada is in Afghanistan for one reason, and one reason only: in 1940, our prime minister sat down with the American president and signed a document known as the Ogdensburg Agreement. Since then, the governing principle of Canadian defense has been a strategy of "interoperability" with the American military. The story is told by Desmond Morton in *Understanding Canadian Defence*, published by Penguin.

Britain abandoned its North American colony because it was too expensive to defend. The sparse population of Canada cannot provide a tax base large enough to support a military large enough to defend our huge land mass. If Denmark were to invade in support of its claim to Hans Island, we could probably not defend ourselves. For the first four decades after independence, the Dominion of Canada had no standing army. The provincial militias were for domestic disputes, labour disputes, and for crushing the Riel Rebellion, and to assert sovereignty over the territories inhabited by aboriginal communities.

Our first military intervention was as a contingent of the British Army during its genocidal war against the Boers; and our first independent military action was also on the side of the British Empire during the First World War. When that empire declined, we switched allegiance to the new American Empire.

Since the close of the Second World War, Canada has pruned back its men under arms in order to concentrate on providing specialized service for the US military. We have tested chemical and biological weapons in Suffield, Alberta, and provided basic research at Canadian universities. We provided surveillance services during the Korean War and built the DEW Line (Distant Early Warning radar installations) in the Canadian North so that the US military could spy on the Soviet Union. We provided hand-to-hand combat training to the American Special Forces teams who rounded up civilians for CIA-run interrogation centres in Vietnam, where over 160,000 were tortured to death.

More recently, despite official refusal to declare war against Iraq, we provided more men and materiel for the American invasion than did any other member of the so-called coalition of the willing. More information can be found at the web site of the Coalition to Oppose the Arms Trade.

In this light, we must view with skepticism Stephen Harper's repeated claims that he will defend the sovereignty of Canada's northern waters, which are becoming increasingly open to navigation as the ice cap melts. If he is building up the military, I can see only one reason. As the economic effects of globalisation

become more disastrous, the Canadian ruling class will need a strong army to quell unrest at home.

JC

20 August 2006

On "John Updike's Terrorist"

Dear Comrade David Walsh,

Thank you for the review of *Terrorist* by John Updike. As you rightly said, many of the writers with excellent narrative powers and technical competence required to make a work of art are poor in political perception and totally devoid of any understanding of history. An Indian novelist writing in English, Raja Rao, who passed away recently in Austin, made an excellent record of India's anti-imperialist struggle led by Gandhiji, but later on got on to read the fingerprints of God. He produced an outpouring of a branch of idealist philosophy rich in intensity—Andre Malraux was all for that strand of idealism known as advaita or non-duality—and never ever wrote again with his finger on the pulse of history.

But you could have thrown in some outstanding writers who have fictionalized history in the way acceptable to us. Or is such material available in WSWs archives?

Some interesting information: The article on Einstein's Annus Mirabilis by Peter Symonds is carried on the pages of a quarterly organ *Teachers of the World* run by two leaders of college teachers' movement in India. They both belong to the traditional left.

With fraternal greetings,

MR

Chennai, India

27 August 2006

Another brilliant analysis by Walsh. I gave up on Updike when I read his piece in the *New Yorker* about watching the planes slamming into the World Trade Center buildings. It was the product of an extreme egocentric.

RLB

Bradenton, Florida, US

26 August 2006

On "Kentucky miner crushed to death in roof collapse"

I think it is a shame how the owners of the coal mines where Cornelius Yates was killed were telling the family members how it happened. The people that worked with Cornelius Yates had told an entirely different story. They said they were going to pay for the funeral, but they didn't. They didn't even put a headstone at his grave identifying who he was. The parents are very upset how the owners of the mines lied about these matters. They didn't even have enough respect to go to the Yates parents and talk with them about him getting killed.

JY

27 August 2006



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