

Letters on the US elections

11 November 2006

The following is a selection of letters sent to the World Socialist Web Site in response to recent articles on the midterm elections in the United States.

On "Rumsfeld's firing: First casualty of post-election crisis in US"

A rumor is in circulation suggesting that a deal is in place between Pelosi and the administration. The rumor indicated that Pelosi agreed not to issue subpoenas from Congress to Pentagon personnel. Rumsfeld's resignation was preordained, since the results of this election have been forecast and accepted in political circles for some time. After all, it was a mid-term election. (Personally, I don't see an overwhelming mandate for the Democrats in any of this, but that's not the issue.) Pelosi's announcement regarding impeachment is—according to rumor—merely the label heading up a package of agreements between Pelosi and the administration.

Also, attention might be given to the right-wing pundits' interpretation of what this election means. Many of them are saying that the Democratic leadership has mounted a successful appeal to conservative-leaning independents. The result being that the election is an indication of a rightward movement of the party leadership, not a leftward movement of the electorate.

This rhetoric, it seems to me, obscures the reality. I believe that people are concerned about basics such as health care, jobs, retirement, etc., and are moving to the left. I also believe that the public is getting a glimmer of the oppressive laws that have been approved by members of both parties. If my view is correct, the electorate has most definitely moved to the left—with respect to social programs as well as the war—and the picture being drawn by right-wing pundits is misleading.

JG

9 November 2006

On "The Democrats in the 2006 elections: the second party of reaction and war"

Jim Webb was mentioned in the article "The Democrats in the 2006 Elections: the Second Party of Reaction and War" as one of the most right-wing and reactionary candidates the Democrats are offering. I would like to add to some commentary about his campaign in Richmond, the capital of Virginia.

The city of Richmond has a population of around 200,000, which is heavily working class. Traveling daily in these areas, it took weeks to realize there was even an election forthcoming because there is simply nothing around that reminded me. For example, on a 1.5-mile daily commute through entirely working class areas, there was only one sign for the Senate race of Jim Webb. It lasted about a week, and was removed. Otherwise around these areas, I heard of no events, saw no campaigning, and saw few other signs. By contrast, in wealthier areas to the west, numerous signs were on lawns of houses and placed on public property, and of course, fundraising was held. What could be more revealing about the class orientation of either party?

Five days before the election, a flyer was pinned on every doorknob

of my neighborhood, the first and only action of either campaign there. The content was minuscule, especially considering that it was all platitudes: "Now is the time for change. Change the disastrous war in Iraq. Change the moral corruption in Washington. Change our underfunded schools. Change our healthcare system." I was revolted to read that deceitful comment on the war in Iraq, which implies opposition but really is in full agreement with continuation of the imperialist occupation. The next day, I heard the very same thing from Jim Webb himself, at an election rally held at Virginia Commonwealth University.

The Democratic Rally displayed contempt towards ordinary people that is almost incomprehensible. The event was advertised to start at 2 p.m., but the first speaker did not come on stage until 2:31. In the midst of the half-hour delay, no one bothered to explain what was going on, and the crowd, half staying, half passing through, had no idea why they were being so rudely subjected to delay. When the first members did come on, they waltzed in as if nothing had happened, and offered no explanation!

The speakers who did come out offered, again, platitudes about family values, change and corruption. The Iraq war was brought up frequently, and got the most widespread and passionate response from the audience. The Democratic coterie on stage exploited this war opposition by implying that they represented it, and disgustingly added a few token sentences about "working people." The most astonishing issues of the last month—the abolition of habeas corpus by the Military Commissions Act and the Johns Hopkins study estimating 655,000 deaths in Iraq—were left unmentioned.

JL

Virginia, US

7 November 2006

For the latest on the reactionary Democrats, see the November 5 *San Francisco Chronicle* article, "Democrats Get Religion" by Vicki Haddock.

Choice morsels you should highlight in your next article on the twin party of capitalism, the Democrats, and their violation of the Constitution's mandated separation of church and state (not to mention the fact that science means knowledge and religion is superstition): Rep. Harold Ford of Tennessee: "The 10 Commandments are printed on the back of his business cards. And he talks about his Christian beliefs every chance he gets"; Rep. Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco: "House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi of San Francisco established a 42-member Democratic Faith Working Group headed by South Carolina Rep. James Clyburn, son of a fundamentalist minister"; "The Michigan Democratic Party met with religious leaders and then revised its platform to address the role of faith"; "Several Democrats are running ads on Christian radio stations for the first time"; "the chief of staff of the Democratic National Committee, Leah Daughtry, also happens to be a Pentecostal pastor."

An atheist and a socialist

5 November 2006

On "The Kerry apology: Democrats cower before Bush and military"

I appreciated your article. In addition to your observation that none of the outrage over Kerry's perceived slighting of the troops addresses the real economic and social issues which quite nearly force some young people to join the military, no members of the mass media and the two major parties address the second part of the statement about being "stuck in Iraq" for obvious reasons.

It is also obvious that whatever Kerry's personal views of military personnel, there are significant sections of the ruling elite who hold them in true contempt. How else can one explain their hawkish support for all American wars of imperialism while they themselves refused to serve (I wouldn't wish these wars on anyone, rich or otherwise, but an important psychological point to be made nonetheless) and their refusal to hold any government officials to account for this criminal war based on lies, while the troops they "support with all their hearts" take their last breaths in a land thousands of miles and half a world away from that which they know to be home?

It is clear that there are deeper issues here than the scoring of cheap political points before an election, and members of both parties recognize this. They wish to keep pulling the wool over the eyes of the electorate, and thank you and the WWSWS for tirelessly exposing that.

DC

Northridge, California, US

3 November 2006

Dear Patrick,

I would like to thank you and SEP members for the daily news on the working class situation, the real state of the union. Please note that the military working class bounty hunters are also in Virginia's prison system. My son has served nine years and six months of a 10-year sentence and was offered a six-month pardon if he joins the US occupation forces. He is very anxious to get a "new start" and is vulnerable, but I think I have convinced him with such little-known realities such as—1 percent of the population owns 80 percent of all the real estate in the US. Not one of the 1 percenters or their children are dying to protect their own interests.

MV

Newport News, Virginia, US

3 November 2006

I'm sure that there's some amount of patriotism motivating our troops. But generally, most of these young people have enlisted because they view this service as the best of very limited opportunities. And for our Guardsmen and reservists, it is a much-needed second income. To the Bush administration, these young men and women represent the "expendable" class. Their only concern is that there be a continuing supply of such people. And to ensure this, the Bush administration promulgates a social and economic agenda designed to increase the numbers of people who feel hopeless about their futures. And John Kerry and most other democrats in Congress have willingly gone along with this program. Kerry had his chance to speak up and challenge this system in 2004 but instead, and may I add predictably, waged a bland campaign little more than a slight degree to the left of Bush. Now that the people are beginning to see more and more the folly of the Iraq war, politicians like Kerry feel free to speak more but still remain behind the public. He failed to show any propensity to actually lead the people in a new course and once again is showing that we can expect very little in the way of change from the

Democrats.

MZ

Maryland, US

3 November 2006

I agree with your arguments completely, but wish to add another. The political establishment is separated by a huge social and cultural chasm from the masses of people, including the masses of military recruits. It is because of this alienation that the right-wing attacks on Kerry's remarks carry so much weight. John Kerry 30 years ago used to represent the rebellion of the young soldiers and officers against the imperialist war of that day, Vietnam. Long ago, he made his peace with the establishment, became a millionaire himself and billionaire by marriage and stopped speaking for the guys in the trenches.

Among themselves, away from TV and journalists, the rich politicians blame the poor for being poor, for having no options but the military. But they sanctimoniously deny that they are forcing the children of poor and educationally deprived families into this war for oil.

FK

Cambridge, Massachusetts, US

3 November 2006

On "SEP candidate Bill van Auken rejects appearance on CNN's Glenn Beck Program"

Your letter declining to appear on CNN was excellent. From only two or three brief (unpleasant) instances of watching his show, I immediately concluded that he was hardly a serious journalist, but rather more a right-wing propaganda huckster who combined this with a mocking and frivolous (almost clown-like) tone. I am certain your expectations regarding an appearance on his show were correct.

P.S.: WWSWS is one of the very few places I find a serious and sophisticated analysis of our political and social realities. And my ideological background is libertarian! Things do change....

RR

Wailuku, Hawaii, US

4 November 2006



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