

Letters from our readers

17 March 2007

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

On “World Socialist Web Site publishes antiwar statement in Farsi”

I am so glad that you did this. I am an Iranian PhD student and this is my first year in the USA. I have lots of student friends who are social and antiwar activists in Iran who are attracted to socialism. I have managed to distribute this article among them and I am sure this will give them much hope and energy and enlightenment.

AK

8 March 2007

On “An exchange on *Amazing Grace* and the British slave trade”

I liked your reply to AA, MM, and to *Counterpunch* regarding the latter’s review of *Amazing Grace*, but there is another point to be made: By what method does one attempt to understand historic processes, and the role of certain individuals in them? Your review and reply give an example of this, but I think it is worth making it explicit.

It isn’t sufficient to simply paste the class struggle on top of history and then imagine one has done a complete analysis. What is involved is to discover, in the living facts, the complexities and interrelations that caused history to move in this way, not in that way.

Yes, so and so was a bourgeois politician—but that is the beginning of the analysis, not the end. Exactly which sections of bourgeois thought did he represent, and how, and at what stage of history? That is what separates Marxists from radicals. To paraphrase Trotsky, we deduce the class struggle from the facts; we do not impose it on the facts.

SB

9 March 2007

On “Film, history and socialism”

Please excuse this tardy response to the excellent articles from your film talk. They, along with your Academy Awards “review,” were everything I had hoped for (short of a full-length book!).

I believe, too, that great art deals with great issues, and while I don’t advocate a “cookbook” for how to accomplish that goal, intelligent discussion, as you have presented, is crucial in developing an awareness of what’s possible. Furthermore, what I long to see is “models” of people and groups acting with a social conscience—even if (and especially if) they are realistically portrayed as flawed and not entirely successful. What we mostly see is, as you say, people being mindless and cruel. How can we hope for a widespread sense of social conscience to be developed if we never see it?

I was delighted with Joanne Laurier’s recent ~~review~~ *review* of *Grace*. Oftentimes you folks are quite negatively critical of current films, as well you should be, but I thought this one deserved some credit, as she gave it. (Many of the mainstream critics seemed to think it was too moralistic or just boring history and apparently not freaky and violent enough.)

It seems to me that the film took one slice of a whole subject, set of characters, and era, and dealt with it beautifully and intelligently. Of course, Wilberforce and his colleagues didn’t solve all of society’s problems, but they made valiant and worthy efforts.

It shows an example—a model—of a man and a group of people who acquired a social conscience and devoted their lives to ending a terrible scourge. I hope that many other folks will read your review and see the film for themselves—being open to its inspiration. For me, *Amazing Grace* was worth seeing twice!

I hope you talk with producers and independent filmmakers and with actors who might demand better material. Thank you for the important discussions you’ve already started.

JC

8 March 2007

On “Bush mouths support for ‘social justice’ while asserting US interests in Latin America”

Excellent article! All economic and sociopolitical aspects are covered, something that is rare in media coverage today. I am following the South America trip closely. I am fascinated with King George’s use of the word “democracy.” Surely he knows full well that most all the leaders that he opposes in the South American nations were put in their positions through free and fair elections. Does he not also understand that many of their policies are, in making an effort to distribute the wealth of these nations to all of the people, an attempt at economic democracy? I look forward to further coverage from you.

RV

Athens, Georgia, US

9 March 2007

On “Vermont towns vote for Bush-Cheney impeachment”

I have been living in this country for almost 40 years. I am a German citizen, member of the EU. I have never seen so much corruption and lies in any presidential administration of this country, including the so much abhorred President Nixon, who I always considered a great statesman. What is going on right now in the White House is a much bigger disgrace to this country than ever went before under another administration. I cannot understand why the Americans do not want to impeach these hoodlums lingering in the White House.

GF

Lake Orion, Michigan, US

9 March 2007

On “Walter Reed scandal lifts lid on neglect of wounded US troops”

Barry Grey writes, “Last week, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform released an internal hospital memo written last September by Walter Reed’s garrison commander, Col. Peter Garibaldi, warning that the decision to privatize support services was causing an outflow of experienced personnel and putting patient care “at risk of mission failure.”

So, after all of the speculation, it seems obvious that the Bush administration has revealed its true mission behind the false one that it presented to all of us. Its true mission was to make millions of dollars on the misery of his own and other nations. It’s obvious the administration didn’t care near as much about the mission as about the potential and actual rewards.

JB

10 March 2007

On “Detention of three leftists by Sri Lankan government signals new round of state repression”

The detention of the three Leftists and obtaining the kind of confessions in the report are symptomatic of state repression using the all-too-convenient draconian tool—the Prevention of Terrorism Act—itself an ignominy in the twenty-first century. This is the tool borrowed from apartheid South Africa, and worse, because the white Afrikaners did not commit even a fraction of the crimes against fellow humanity as in Sri Lanka from the time of its introduction into this country. It is a blot on democracy and a descent into absolute lawlessness by the state.

First it was the Tamils, then the Christians, and now it is the turn of the Leftists to pay the price for racial and religious hegemony by a government which has bound itself to hegemonists—the JHU, the National Front and the JVP. Why? Because the ethnic, the religious and socialist minorities stand for or represent three basic freedoms—liberté, fraternité, égalité.

Calling others ‘Tigers’ by these mentally perverted ‘Lions’ has heralded a ‘dark age’ for Sri Lanka.

SM

11 March 2007

On “Right-wing furor demanding pardon for convicted Cheney aide”

In my book Libby has committed treason in revealing the identity of an undercover operative. Lying about it afterwards is a relatively minor offence.

LE

12 March 2007

On “New Yorkers speak out about Bronx House Fire: ‘It’s like the devil is running the country.’”

That was some damn good reporting. Photography too.

FWC

Moriarty, New Mexico, US

12 March 2007

On “Bush calls Democrats’ bluff on war funding resolution”

I read that there will be no “requirement for Bush to gain approval from Congress before moving against Iran,” in an article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* as part of the military spending bill

currently in Congress, “Top House Democrats retreated Monday from an attempt to limit President Bush’s authority for taking military action against Iran...”

This gives George Bush the leeway to engage in war in this and any future situations. Where’s the Congressional right to declare war? I may have missed something, but the rhetoric coming from Iran is political. That is, Iran is not declaring an intent to wage war against Israel, let alone the United States. Is this the grounds upon which the United States is going to act militarily?

The alliance between Israel and the United States in war production and war profiteering is disgusting. I read in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and nowhere else, that the US military has purchased millions of dollars of armored vehicles from Israel (March 6, 2007): “An Israeli state-owned corporation has won a contract to supply the US Marine Corps with state of the art armored vehicles for use in Iraq, the latest in a long line of Israeli defense sales for use in the war.”

It’s no wonder Iran and other Arab countries see the United States and Israel as the great satan, but it’s not recognized here, because it’s not published, as this article quotes Defense Analyst Zeev Schiff, “Israel prefers to keep a low profile, but it’s been doing that for years.” The piece on the continuing repression of Palestinians, by Israeli luxury home building on occupied land, was appreciated.

MS

Santa Rosa, California, US

12 March 2007

On “UN rapporteur says Israel’s occupation of Palestine resembles apartheid”

Thank you for reporting this. It seems that this view of Israel’s treatment of its minorities is at last gaining respectability. It is almost 20 years since Uri Davis published his book *Israel: An Apartheid State*. Since then conditions have certainly not improved for Palestinians or for non-Jewish Israelis, or indeed for Israelis in general. How long does this catastrophe, which affects everybody in the region, have to go on?

HR

Munich, Germany

14 March 2007



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