

Letters from our readers

25 May 2007

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

On “The US war and occupation of Iraq—the murder of a society”

I wanted to mention another atrocity about this genocidal process you are writing about. One that probably also accounts for many child deaths. The American forces are also using depleted uranium shells. This is low-level atomic warfare and the dust from these shells is deadly. If you have not already planned to mention it in the upcoming parts, investigate it and the effect it has on children, the general population and American troops.

JM

Cobble Hill, British Columbia, Canada

19 May 2007

Again, your analysis and perspective is right on. I, also, have wondered why no attention is paid to the destruction of a society. As with my subscriptions, my friends are very wide ranging in their political views. Often, in the mixed confines of a social gathering, politics will not be a subject, but that's changing. Even among some of my most conservative friends, they see what I'm known for, which is sourced by my reading here, and when I said something to the effect that the United States destroyed that country and it won't recover and it's really questionable whether the cover for big oil can control the imperial intentions, they heard it.

MS

Santa Rosa, California, USA

19 May 2007

“The murder of a society”—yes, but which society? The whole world knows what has happened to Iraq, the sheer scale of the criminality unleashed upon our fellow human beings, yet the people that are responsible for all the murder and mayhem are still in charge of their respective nations with no hope of ever being brought to justice. What does that tell us about our own societies and what the future will bring us? I for one dread to think what the future holds for mankind after all this.

GD

Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, United Kingdom
19 May 2007

On “Democratic Party completes its capitulation on Iraq”

Simply the best assessment ever of this ‘Three Card Monte’ scam that both parties (and the press) of ‘Vichy America’ are playing their respective roles in, to con the American people and serve the global corporate Empire.

Congratulations. But unfortunately, the congratulations are for exactly explaining the victory of this global corporate elitist Empire.

I missed Bob Kerrey's *Wall Street Journal* column, but I will read it.

AM

Sanford, Maine, USA

24 May 2007

On “Leon Trotsky and the post-Soviet school of historical falsification: A review of two Trotsky biographies by Geoffrey Swain and Ian Thatcher”

Congratulations on your devastating review of the Swain and Thatcher biographies of Trotsky, as well as your easy disposal of Swain's mealy-mouthed response.

As an historian, I have familiarity with the research and interpretive methods of the craft. Mr. North, you have conclusively shown that these works are not benign examples of appalling sloppiness or a lapse of professionalism—if only!—but malicious and conscious efforts at falsification in the service of an unstated political agenda.

As you correctly state, there is no prohibition in historical writing against the author having a political position. It is in fact doubtful that a completely neutral position regarding recent history is either possible or desirable. Indeed some of the best historical writing has been authored by participants in crucial historical events—Leon Trotsky's own magisterial *History of the Russian Revolution* springs to mind.

However, the historian has an obligation to not dismiss the parts of the historical record that appear to challenge

his or her working assumptions, and to take into account as much of the accessible record that directly relates to the given subject as possible. A thesis challenged by the record must be rethought; in the process, it will either be strengthened or discarded.

Swain and Thatcher have completely and utterly abrogated their responsibilities in this regard. To cite but one example, I've never heard of serious historians who in writing biographies have simply not familiarized themselves with their subject's own easily accessible—indeed, published—writings! If this were simply a matter of sloppily passing over this or that writing, it would already be an astonishing and inexcusable error which would call into question the historians' credentials and the value of the study. But such errors repeated throughout an entire book can only be seen in a much more sinister light.

Swain and Thatcher reflect badly on their universities, their colleagues, their publishers (one wonders, in particular, which professors Routledge and Longman found to review and endorse these texts?), and on the profession as a whole.

At the same time, their efforts are no doubt harbingers of, and "preemptive strikes" against, as you say, the reemergence of socialist consciousness in the twenty-first century, a development that can be based only on the great lessons and bloody tragedies of the twentieth, and above all else, Trotsky's struggle against Stalinism.

Thank you for undertaking this unpleasant, but important, task.

TDM

21 May 2007

On "Detroit-area hospital shake-up fueled by drive for profit"

Thanks for the article: it is excellent because it is factual. What you described is a tragedy.

Detroit is a precursor of things to come to all cities in America—what happens in Detroit will happen in cities across America.

I believe a major economic event is coming and there will be a shock to the healthcare system and that the "illnesses" that you describe in the health system in Detroit will be symptomatic throughout America.

JA

22 May 2007

On "Mother, three children perish in Detroit house fire"

Thanks for the article ... it's dead on. These deaths are the direct result of the inability of the Detroit City Council and the mayor to put aside their petty differences and take

care of the city's residents.

It may have taken 15 minutes for a fire department to respond to a fire four blocks away, but that is what will continue to happen with only half a crew to respond... These tragic deaths can be blamed on the lack of fire detectors, a slower-than-normal response from a fire department, a barbecue that wasn't extinguished etc., etc., but what this really boils down to in my opinion is the lack of commitment and cooperation on the parts of the council and the mayor. Their infighting has held this city back for a long time and unless both offices commit to helping those in Detroit who really need it, these types of tragedies will continue to occur.

DR

22 May 2007

On "Israel stokes up Hamas-Fatah strife in Gaza, considers ground invasion"

Why do you use the propaganda term "targeted assassinations" when referring to Israeli policy? I always thought assassinations were picking your targets, besides which, no country deserves the giving of the generous label less than Israel since these "targeted assassinations" invariably result in the killing of innocent bystanders.

WK

22 May 2007

On "Behind the World Bank's ouster of Paul Wolfowitz"

Paul Wolfowitz is, and has (for a quarter of a century) been, the devil of US-based economic and military imperialism. Placing him at the head of an organization which, through some twisted bureaucratic dream, is supposed to be the financial aid to world's poor was the darkest of all black humor.

This article helps to expose the truth behind his demonic ways.

RV

Athens, Georgia, USA

23 May 2007



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