

Letters from our readers

18 July 2007

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

On “Democrats, White House agree: Iraq war will rage on regardless of Senate debate”

Once again, Bush forgets that the whole idea of the Founders making the President the commander-in-chief of the armed forces was to ensure civilian control over the military. Yet Bush continues to assert that military operations in Iraq should be “decided by our commanders on the ground, not by political figures in Washington, DC.” There is a kind of doublethink going on here as well since, while asserting that the military commanders should make the decisions, Bush also ultimately picks commanders that obey his wishes, thereby arrogating the responsibility to himself. In an effort to conceal his (or Cheney’s) ultimate control over military activity, he pretends to depend on the decisions of the commanders in the field, in reality absolving himself of responsibility for the disastrous situation in Iraq because he can blame the military for whatever disaster ensues. It is a real mind-twister for many Americans.

In the meantime, the Congress flounders around helpless and ineffectual, terrified of taking action that only the legislature can take, namely cutting off the money for the war. It is obvious to anyone who knows that Congress has “the power of the purse,” that the Democrats, no less than the Republicans, have no desire to end the war since they support its goals in the Middle East. All this diddling around is an embarrassment, and one moreover that has fatal consequences both for the cannon fodder soldiers and the Iraqi people—not to mention the waste of trillions of dollars that are so very much needed in this country for social programs that have withered due to lack of funding.

People are being dumped in the gutter by hospitals, thousands of people lie homeless on the streets, the public schools are rotting away, corporations are moving their manufacturing plants to other countries where they can exploit foreign workers and leaving the US without well-paying jobs, unions are squeezing their membership to accept pay and pension cuts for which they declare there is “no money,” and yet billions of dollars of taxpayer money are poured into the endless meat grinder of the occupation of Iraq and plans are made for attacking Iran.

This madness must end before not only the United States, but the entire planet, is destroyed utterly. The corporatocracy that is benefiting from war and destruction must be removed and the power of industry turned to the fulfillment of social needs here and around the world.

CZ

San Francisco, California, USA

12 July 2007

On “The New York Times and the crisis of American imperialism in Iraq”

Why do the *Times* and the Bush administration continue to pour money, lives, and resources into a lost cause? Why do they fail to learn what has been documented, studied, and proven a thousand times over in the Soviet-Afghanistan War, the Vietnam War, and in French-occupied Algeria? The answer lies in the fact that they’re caught in a candy/monkey trap. A monkey trap is designed around a hole large enough for a hand to pass, but small enough to restrict a fist. The fist must release the candy in order for the monkey to escape, but greed overpowers logic and the fate of the monkey is sealed. Humans are still far too close to gibbons on the evolutionary scale to avoid such traps. Logically, we know we cannot win, but there is all that oil we’d be losing. If you were to ask historians they would tell you the exact same scenario is played out each and every time, whether it be in the Kremlin, or the Johnson Whitehouse or in Paris. The monkey always ends up wearing barbeque sauce.

PK

9 July 2007

On “Young Sri Lankan maid faces execution in Saudi Arabia”

Thank you for your eye-opening article about the Sri Lankan maid sentenced to death in Saudi Arabia. I am a Sri Lankan working in Abu Dhabi, and when I read articles like yours, I feel ashamed to work in this region. In fact, I feel more shame that our government and specifically the welfare minister in cohorts with the Sri Lankan Foreign Employment Bureau is exhibiting signs of emasculation.

The exploitation of women as domestics is rampant here, and more people should highlight their plight rather than turn a blind eye by saying “female workers in the Middle East are our national treasure for bringing in much needed foreign exchange.” I have forwarded this article to all and sundry with the hope that it circulates. Thank you once again.

IF

Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

13 July 2007

On “As Congress reconvenes: Democrats unveil new plan to ‘shift mission’ in Iraq”

Your article regarding the latest consensus from the White House and Congress is possibly moot in light of Jeremy Scahill’s information in his book, *Blackwater*. If it is true that 40,000 militant contractors are now employed in Iraq, it makes additional US ground troops negligible or unnecessary. This means keeping a military presence in Iraq is because ... Why? How Blackwater mercenaries are being used in the Middle East should be of more concern to the public.

CC

Markleeville, California, USA

10 July 2007

On "A not-so-quiet American: New York Times reporter writes on Central Asia"

Many thanks for a very illuminating and extremely sensitive analysis.

MG

Los Angeles, California, USA

11 July 2007

On "Michael Moore's *Sicko*: very limited conceptions, very limited results"

Your review of the film *Sicko* reflected a seriousness and honesty that the film was lacking. I believe your class-consciousness is the key ingredient that elevates your work above that of the producers and directors. Perhaps Michael Moore is struggling to grasp the historical process. After all, it is something learned, and in our learning it can seem as you described—a disjointed and uneven process.

The context of my response to you is class-consciousness. It liberates us like no religion or classical philosophy can. Any Google search of the subject "healthcare" could provide an honest adult more material than the film did. Georg Lukacs described this dishonesty as a "false consciousness" that impedes those who do not realize or experience the working class phenomenon.

MV

Newport News, Virginia, USA

11 July 2007

On "An exchange on Michael Moore's *Sicko*"

I did not see the film *Sicko*, but I see the point David Walsh is trying to make. The problem I think is that Moore's films are works of political agitation first and works of art second, and Moore's agitation is focused on rather short sighted immediate results within the confines of the political and economic establishment. In *Fahrenheit 9/11*, a major focus, especially in Moore's promotion afterwards, was on Bush and his removal from the White House.

In other words, Moore, at least with his current perspective, is prevented from an honest exploration of the health system that would communicate to working people the underlying processes affecting their daily lives and cause them to draw conclusions that would question the capitalist system as a whole. Moore is adapting himself to the present level of conscious rather than being completely honest with people. If he was completely honest the result would be a more challenging film. To grasp the content, people would have to learn something. If he was completely honest, that would require him to explain processes that don't necessarily have a simple explanations, or simple solutions. I don't think that is beyond his capability, but it certainly goes beyond his current political perspective.

MS

14 July 2007

Your response to reader criticisms of your review of *Sicko* was superb. Very well written, and I read it three times to make sure I grasped all your points. A job very well done in articulating my own feelings while watching.

BS

16 July 2007

On "Two summer movies: Live Free or Die Hard and Evan Almighty"

Thanks for your reviews of *Live Free or Die Hard* and *Evan Almighty*. Also for your consideration, I suggest the summer blockbuster *Transformers*. My friend took me to this movie, which I thought would be harmless enough as it apparently is derived from a cartoon series. But it is fraught with racism, sexual stereotypes, and, most troubling, the military-to-the-rescue ideology. Its simplistic battle between good and evil reinforces the us-versus-them paradigm so vigorously perpetuated by the Bush regime. Far from being mere entertainment, such films subtly, or not so subtly, reinforce conservative, xenophobic, and militaristic values, and prop up the myths of Americanism.

PF

Columbus, Ohio, USA

11 July 2007

On "Prisons as the new mental asylums: the example of Michigan"

Abuse and neglect is nothing new at Jackson Prison in Michigan. Michael Batey has been waiting days to see medical assistance since his back went out and he collapsed Saturday, July 7, 2007. As of today (Monday), the doctors are "too busy" to see him, a "chronic care patient" who called me at home from a wheelchair this evening. After repeated attempts to dispense Ibuprofen to him (to which he is highly allergic, as listed in his medical "jacket") he has up to this time received no treatment. His medical follow-ups have been denied, results of MRIs and other tests withheld, and no follow-up has been given in months, based on the assessment and transfer out of other prisoners in an effort to close the facility.

Abysmal treatment in the Michigan Department of Corrections is nothing new. It is only now that any attention is being paid to the ridiculous treatment that people are given within the system.

JE

9 July 2007



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