

# Letters from our readers

29 October 2007

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

On “Wildfires engulf Southern California: As many as 1 million flee as almost 500,000 acres burn”

Thank you, Kevin and Andrea, for providing the crucial context that is to a large extent left out of corporate media coverage of natural and unnatural disasters here in the United States.

Living in Southern California, I can watch hour after hour of fire coverage on many different local television stations and I can also read extensively about the disaster in print media such as the *Los Angeles Times*. But what is consistently suppressed or inexcusably neglected is a serious and ongoing analysis of how greater economic, political and social factors shape the concrete reality of this region (or any other). Whether it's earthquake, fires, mudslides or flooding, we (the general population) need more than just sensationalist coverage of destruction and havoc. We need information that will allow us to effectively channel our resources in such a way that will prevent such calamities.

You provide this type of information. Thank you again and keep up the great work.

DW

24 October 2007

On “US raid on Baghdad’s Sadr City leaves many dead and wounded”

Note the similarity between US air strikes on civilian areas and Israel’s use of air power in Gaza and Lebanon. What goes around will eventually come around. Thank you for the news behind “no news” in the US.

PG

22 October 2007

On “Australian election debate: Howard and Rudd compete as economic conservatives”

I am surprised that some people could still seriously consider the re-election of Howard’s government. John

Howard and his government are fully responsible for the involvement of our country in unlawful war in Iraq. As a result, some people and even some countries view Australia as a country-aggressor being currently governed by war criminals. Don’t you think that John Howard and his “command” should be handed to the International War Crimes Tribunal for investigation instead of being re-elected? I believe that international law is there for every human and every country and double standards are unacceptable. Do you?

AB

Palm Beach, Australia

22 October 2007

On “US government unable to account for \$1.2 billion paid to Iraq contractor”

The bottomless mass of corruption and fraud surrounding the Iraq war is not an aberration, but is the manifestation of certain social processes. No one explains it better than Karl Marx:

“Since the finance aristocracy made the laws, was at the head of the administration of the state, had command of all the organized public authorities, dominated public opinion through the actual state of affairs and through the press, the same prostitution, the same shameless cheating, the same mania to get rich was repeated in every sphere, from the court to the Café Borgne to get rich not by production, but by pocketing the already available wealth of others. Clashing every moment with the bourgeois laws themselves, an unbridled assertion of unhealthy and dissolute appetites manifested itself, particularly at the top of bourgeois society—lusts wherein wealth derived from gambling naturally seeks its satisfaction, where pleasure becomes *crapuleux* [debauched], where money, filth, and blood commingle. The finance aristocracy, in its mode of acquisition as well as in its pleasures, is nothing but the *rebirth of the lumpen proletariat on the heights of bourgeois society*” [Karl Marx, *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850*].

EG

24 October 2007

“When 6,000 machinists struck against DynCorp in 1996, CEO Herbert Lanese was quoted in the press as saying of the strikers, ‘You have to look at them like I do, as your mortal enemy. I wish they were dead. I wish their children would starve to death. I wish they would lose their homes.’”

I often think that WSWS believes that the theory wins the day, but one from-the-heart quote like this from the ruling class links Iraqi civilians with US workers and does more good than any amount of theory.

MG

Los Angeles, California, USA

24 October 2007

On “Canada’s Conservative government outlines agenda of social reaction and war”

I wish to thank you for the clearest report on the throne speech and the parliamentary situation that I have seen.

RR

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

21 October 2007

On “Obituary: Grace Paley and political culture”

Another good look back. It is strange; I recently picked up an anthology I had read in college and re-read Paley’s “A Conversation With My Father,” and I wondered what it was that had drawn me to it before. It didn’t form itself this way in my mind, but the “political culture” registered. Ann Charters, who edited the anthology, wrote that Paley’s “spare dissection of her characters is never performed at the expense of sympathy for the human condition.”

Like the ugly *Nation* obituary, Paley was often criticized during her life for her political involvements because reviewers said she ought to have been more prolific. Paley always said that producing works wasn’t simply a matter of time. Art isn’t mechanical; you can’t clock in and expect the inspiration and the finesse to come automatically. And for most writers, there is a kind of “Faith Darwin” split personality, an oppressive strain put on the artistic sensitivities and urges by the day-to-day problems of existence. Once she defensively said she wrote “from distress,” which I think expresses what is honest but perhaps limited for many fine artists under capitalism. In spite of those limitations, I also think Paley took the cognition, the organic

development of art, very seriously. After all, the day-to-day is also a profound source of inspiration for the writer, and for Paley writing was an attempt at “a history of everyday life.” She wasn’t interested in churning out volumes under deadlines—this simply isn’t how stories are formed. As she once said, “There is a long time in me between knowing and telling.”

NG

19 October 2007

When I read Grace Paley’s obituary, a line quoted from one of Ms. Paley’s critics struck a chord within me. Her critic belittled Ms Paley’s taking time from her writing to participate in demonstrations. Her critic said that he’d like to chain her to her desk to force her to write and keep her from wasting her time on demonstrations. The critic failed to see that participating in leftist demonstrations was essential to both Grace Paley the artist and Grace Paley the human being. Grace Paley would have been a lesser writer and a lesser human who lived as a vital woman if she had not taken time from writing to participate in demonstrations.

LL

19 October 2007



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**