

Letters from our readers

31 October 2007

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

On “Rep. Pete Stark apologizes to Bush: Another abject climbdown by the Democrats”

Good article. I *never* thought Stark would apologize. I cannot find a reason why someone like him would do this, and so meekly. And, Boehner seems to have “forgotten” who really dishonored the dead. He forgets about Bush and that disgusting performance at the Correspondence Dinner in 2004. Bush’s performance and laughing about *not* finding the WMD was revolting to say the least and horrific in that you can see Lieberman laughing along with the reporters—who should have gotten up and left. But, alas, that would have taken away their “power” to have access to the White House. Power above dignity and respect. Bush and all of them *truly* dishonored the dead, their families, and the dead to come, which have been many since then.

LK

Elk Grove, California, USA

25 October 2007

On “The quagmire deepens in Afghanistan”

I would just like to say that I came across your story online and could really feel myself actually being there while the situation was happening. You really make true life seem real. I only wish the British Government would also seek to believe what is true.

This may not have anything to do with the subject, but I wish to speak freely. I am a 24-year-old female British citizen. I have been here in Kabul, Afghanistan, since May 4, 2006, along with my daughter, who is now two years and eight months old. We have come here to be with my husband, who was deported from the UK when our daughter was 10 weeks old. My then fiancé was later refused a visitor’s visa on two occasions to coincide with our daughter’s first Christmas and then again on her first birthday. I needed to keep my family together. I wanted my daughter and her father to make their bond while she was young. I believed that if we left it too late then my daughter would never have taken to her father.

However, life in Afghanistan is terrible. We are constantly on edge. We have nearly been caught up in a few suicide bombings, and we were also caught up in the middle of the demonstration that happened on May 29, 2006, due to US soldiers killing four Afghan citizens as they veered off the road while under the influence. At least that is what the news led us to believe. We are honestly grateful that our father in Heaven has been watching over us.

However, we are still awaiting the outcome of my husband’s visa application, The British consulate in Pakistan has refused my husband entry clearance to the UK to live with me on a permanent basis there. So we have lodged an appeal, but there is still no news on the appeal hearing date. To this day we are still unclear about our future.

Yes, it is simple for my daughter and I to go back to the UK, as everyone is telling us to do. However, no one can seem to understand what it will do to myself and my husband and our daughter to be split up again. It would totally tear us apart. We just want to go back home all together and live our lives free from fear.

ALGA

Kabul, Afghanistan

22 October 2007

On “Canberra weighs up ‘regime change’ in Papua New Guinea”

I was led to your article by Google, quite unexpectedly and unintentionally. I am both pleased and amazed to find that someone in Australian politics is actually interested in PNG affairs! Whilst not a socialist, I have for long felt bad about the heavily patronising and sometimes downright offensive tactics of our current Foreign Affairs regime in its work in the Pacific. The classic example of big-time, “big-brother” talk followed by not even a whimper is the disaster that was the ECP program in PNG in 2004/2005. Not a word of explanation for the disastrously bad planning and the costly and embarrassing outcome has ever been said. I am surprised that the press both here and in PNG has not made any outcry about it.

JF

25 October 2007

On “An Evening with Brian Wilson”

While I understand your correspondent’s pleasure in Brian Wilson’s performance and past works, his piece is another that is imposing a retrospective conservatism on the popular music of the 1960s. “Pet Sounds” is an album whose reputation is entirely posthumous. It came far too early to be a “great album” as there was no such thing in 1966. Most record-buyers could not afford albums, except for a very select number of favourite acts. The concept meant nothing at the time. The Beach Boys were completely out of touch with the zeitgeist, refusing to appear at the crucial festivals of the period, for example. A look at the album’s cover shows it was marketed in the most hackneyed and conventional way. I liked what I heard of it, on a 4-track EP, but nobody I knew would buy a Beach Boys album until the early 1970s.

Quoting Paul McCartney has its pitfalls. He has always struck me as one who will say anything to gain a favourable impression, even that he spotted great albums way back when. He must be the only guy in the world who is still talking in ever greater detail about what he was doing 40 years ago, unable to acknowledge that his very last spurt of creativity and inspiration ended with “Band on the Run” back in 1976.

Readers of this site should appreciate late Billboard editor Timothy White’s *The Nearest Faraway Place: Brian Wilson, the Beach Boys, and the Southern California Experience*, which connects the story of the composer and the history of the area in a most thoughtful way. It is one of the best books on popular music: a model work in the way White deftly relates individuals to their economic and cultural context.

“Pet Sounds” is a great album, but only one of scores, even hundreds, produced in the culturally effervescent period bounded by American interference on the ground in Vietnam, ending in 1973. Even The Beach Boys matched it, with albums containing only a few or no Brian Wilson compositions. Any one year in that period beats the entire output of popular music since the Long Counteroffensive which began with the Chilean reactionary coup of September 11, 1973, I contend.

FS

Okehampton, England

24 October 2007

On “Landmark study records visionary architecture from the early years of the Soviet Union”

A most informative piece of writing. I am forwarding it

to my older daughter who will be spending the weekend in New York City and plans to go to MoMA. I was struck by the author’s comparison of the Soviet Union’s workers’ cultural centers with the casinos going up in Detroit and elsewhere in the US to jerk around the poor even more than they do already.

RLB

Bradenton, Florida, USA

25 October 2007

On “World War Z: *Monsters of this society’s own making*”

I appreciated your description and commentary on this book. I haven’t read it, but by what you say I would consider it. I wonder whether the author speculated about why the response to the zombies proved to be so poor. I would suggest that the most likely human response, to consider violent solutions, to have no concern except for oneself, to deny there are any real problems, to expect that others will do the job...that these kinds of responses would make them similar to, if not exactly like, how the zombies themselves behaved.

The problem with zombies is supposed to be that they are unreasoning. They will kill you or turn you into one of them. They are frightening because they can’t be dissuaded. But, isn’t this how the weak experience the powerful? Don’t the Iraqis or before them the Vietnamese experience the American soldier as something that behaves unreasonably?

So, the interesting thing would have been to see how the zombies behaved just like the powerful in the world behave to their subjects—the weak and poor. Another interesting thing would have been to see some discussion of how anyone might cure the zombies, or turn them back into something reasonable, or back into reasonable people. If they are a metaphor for all of us, this discussion would have been classic science fiction if not helpful political criticism.

SA

Portland, Oregon, USA

25 October 2007



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