

Letters from our readers

8 January 2008

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

On “Australian Labor government steps up vendetta against former Solomon Islands attorney-general”

I agree with the sentiments discussed in your article; I am a resident of Vanuatu and have studied this case in my law course. I believe the Australian Federal bodies have become too powerful in Australia and have tipped over towards traits similar to the Gestapo. It is a danger and it has to be attacked by the free press.

But is there free press any more? All Federal bodies have publicity machines and professional press relations people to dispense propaganda to the masses, while relying on lazy journalists to lap up the story and repeat it as if were true. No analysis, no criticism. It was bad before under the Liberals, but now the press that tends to be left-wing anyway will believe everything that Saint Kevin [Rudd] says is gospel.

It is a danger. Your article is the first one that I have seen on the Moti affair that has any semblance of the truth. I know the family personally. There is much more to this story at the family level that will mean the case will never get to court when the prosecution hears the defence. They will be just too embarrassed.

RA

Port Vila, Vanuatu

1 January 2008

On “The state of Iraq as it enters 2008”

Thanks for the “roundup” for 2007, of the tragedy and human disaster that Iraq is today. The WSWS was early and quite right in charging that the invasion and subsequent occupation of Iraq amounted to genocide. However, this genocide started a lot earlier, with the US/UK sanctions regime, instituted through the UN, estimated to have caused 1,000,000 Iraqi deaths, half of them children. This was “a price to pay,” according to Madeleine Albright. When we add the numbers killed in the Gulf War and its aftermath, the US regime would be responsible for the biggest genocide in history, save the Holocaust.

What is not touched upon is that, whilst the US casualties are down in the last three months—as the military managed to pay off and secure grubby deals with some insurgent

groups—the air warfare has exploded to four times what it was at the beginning of the year. The US military obviously saw this new strategy as a “winning” one: firstly, it reduces the resistance attacks against the occupiers; and secondly, the air power kills and destroys more, and this hardly gets reported in the media. A stroke of genius, if an evil one!

The net effect of the over four years of violent occupation, penury and destruction of infrastructure, is the growing dysfunction of Iraqi society. Its toxic effects on this and future generations of young Iraqis can only be imagined.

There is a corresponding effect on the occupiers, the young men with the US Army and Marines. *Times Online* of the 15 November 2007, reported that in 2005 alone, at least 6,256 servicemen took their lives, and this is just one year! [See “America suffers an epidemic of suicides among traumatised army veterans”] It dwarfs the number actually killed in combat, and could exceed or equal the number maimed. In early 2004, it was reported that the number of suicides amongst the military dropped, so even that figure for 2005 could be the “tip of the iceberg.” Certainly, the effect on American society could be quite traumatic, as over half a million have served (if that’s the right word) in Iraq.

Lastly, an exposé on Afghanistan for 2007 would be in keeping!

MS

2 January 2008

It is truly a shame that the White House and its cronies have occupied Iraq and destroyed the country completely. And it is even more shameful that all of us in the West are just keeping quiet. I truly believe that Bush and his partners should be convicted for war crimes. I also feel that the US and its cronies should pay to rebuild Iraq. They should also compensate Iraq for all the killing.

NM

Markham, Canada

3 January 2008

On “‘Antiwar’ candidate Kucinich backs leading Democrat in Iowa primary”

Thank you so much for this timely article. This is a big deal. There is nowhere for Dennis to hide anymore! And as you point out, it happened very early this time, and even more crassly (Obama and change, etc.). I am glad you

highlight his filthy history and take bits from his web site such as the national reformist “saving capitalism” garbage. I think this article will be widely read and appreciated. I recall that in response to earlier articles the WSWs ran on Kucinich a reader asked something like “do you honestly believe that Kucinich is an imperialist tool?” We did then, and with this article we are adding one more piece of proof to the mountain of evidence. Thank you so much for this and great job.

EA

3 January 2008

Rep. Kucinich has done us a favor by openly saying that his supporters should support Obama. Kucinich clearly shows that he is a Democrat, not a progressive, by supporting Obama who is a more typical Democrat. You show clearly that while the USA has two parties, the two parties flog the same dead horse of failed policies. We have no choice with either party. That shows that the WSWs points the way to freedom for the USA by advocating a truly multi-party system in the USA. A Socialist Equality Party president and congress would end W’s wars and change other reactionary policies.

LL

Allentown, Pennsylvania, USA

3 January 2008

On “Tim Burton’s Sweeny Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street”

You write, “Too often in the present work, the audience is invited to laugh at the most degrading aspects of murder.” I got that feeling watching the vile, barbaric for the sake of it and violent *Hostel*. That pretty much sums up a large degree of “modern culture.” Why? As I was watching that film for the second time, the Asian character whose eye had been tortured in a sick grotesque manner throws herself onto an oncoming train, splattering everywhere (for the sake of it gore again). My friend, who will remain unnamed, laughed—thus vindicating your statement.

As a developing socialist dialectical-Marxist, I thought to myself and said, “that is not funny, why do you laugh my friend? Too much shooting games, and black metal music?”

CF

Wellington, New Zealand

3 January 2008

I saw *Sweeny Todd* this weekend and read your review today. I hate to agree all the time, but your take—in my humble opinion—was spot on. When I left the film, I thought: What the hell was that all about? I felt completely unmoved, even as I admired the virtuoso performances of Depp, Carter, Rickman & Co. I think they pushed the envelope to the edge, given the material, but to what point? Even on the level of the personal, it did not resonate. Frankly, as you

alluded to in your review, I actually laughed when Depp was slashing their throats. It really did not seem real. Also, to compare to Brecht’s “Three Penny Opera” is fatuous at best. I’m glad I’m not the only one, and that there were other people scratching their heads.

RM

3 January 2008

On “Sri Lankan president marks tsunami anniversary by beating the war drums”

He would beat the war drums, wouldn’t he? With nothing concrete to show by way of good governance, and better living conditions even for the tsunami victims, and with the allegation that \$500 million of tsunami foreign aid has been unaccounted, is it at all surprising that the president has ‘torn up’ the 2002 ceasefire agreement?

There is something seriously flawed about politics and political leaders in SL—that is, they have lost their vocation. In practice, they have displayed a callous disregard for why they were elected at all. It is not about people or their welfare, but about themselves, their lot and their future. The present government with its overloaded number of ministers, several of them being investigated for corruption by their own Committee, is an exhibition of where the priorities lie. No wonder 21,000 tsunami victims are still languishing in camps three years after the tsunami. And what of the 500,000 Tamils in camps in Sri Lanka and India? More internally displaced persons will be created during the rest of 2008, not to mention more killings.

Plainly, it is a national disgrace. The pity is that none have the answer to the national tragedy. Your socialist principles are quite OK, but the means to attain them in our lifetime are slim, very slim indeed.

SM

3 January 2008



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