

# Letters from our readers

1 May 2008

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

*On “Amid mounting food crisis, governments fear revolution of the hungry”*

I am a Haitian-American living in Florida. I thank you for writing about Haiti, and I would like to contribute a few comments: (1) Haiti historically was an agricultural country. She used to produce food for her population; (2) USAID and World Bank policies have discouraged food production in Haiti; (3) US corporations, Dominican companies and other multinationals have been making money in Haiti with food exports; (4) Currently Haiti imports more than 90 percent of the food consumed in the country, mainly from Miami and the Dominican Republic; (5) In the early 1980s Haiti was importing about 50,000 metric tons of rice, now it's more than 400,000 a year, mostly from Miami; (6) The local elite in Haiti and the so-called international community have not and are not about to make any significant investment in local agriculture.

What Haiti needs is a *revolution!*

FP

Riviera Beach, Florida, USA

28 April 2008

*On “Sri Lankan army suffers a debacle as a northern offensive collapses”*

War in the North is ugly and unwinnable. The poor are dying trying to feed their families. The rich are talking politics. The monks are preaching the Sinhalese killing of Tamils and getting killed themselves in a war.

Be they Sinhalese or Tamils, most of those who are maimed or die are under the age of 30, having barely begun their adult lives. Some have their legs amputated while others lose their hands or become totally deaf.

Soldiers are mainly from remote villages and very poor. Most soldiers are economic conscripts from poor rural backgrounds, forced to join the military by poverty and the lack of employment.

Is this not exploitation of the poor to spill blood whilst JVP racists and the government emotionalise them with “patriotism?” Patriotism is not the killing of some citizens by others. Why are Wimal, Weerawansa, Amerasinghe and other leaders not sent to the front line to die? Why is it always the poor?

MA

29 April 2008

Apart from the details of this offensive, what's of real interest is the human dimension of the debacle—both to the warring parties but, more importantly, with relation to the colossal loss of civilian lives and property. There is not a word as usual from the government on this score. So what is government all about?

Is it any wonder that ordinary people are beginning to ask serious questions when their sons and daughters get killed or hurt? It is well known that the pay is good, presumably in the wake of previous mass desertions, and is a sufficient incentive to join the military. The crunch really comes when losses have to be accounted for, because money may momentarily seem attractive but is no substitute for lives. The fact that it is ordinary people, not sons and daughters of politicians, who pay the ultimate price means that real, serious questions have to be asked about the motives for the war.

As for Tamils, they have been discounted anyway because it is a Sinhala Buddhist war fought by an ethnic military, with the warriors on both sides terrorising the other, civilians and all. It is a war with no winners to suit political welfare and fortunes of parties seeking the good life when in power. The ordinary people pay the ultimate price for unaccountable politics!

Is this what is called democracy?

SM

29 April 2008

*On “Obama vows to back Bush's war commander”*

You wrote, “House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (Democrat

of California) is reportedly planning to sweeten the deal by tacking onto the war spending measure proposals to extend unemployment benefits for 13 weeks and provide additional GI Bill benefits for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. The Democratic leadership is expected to end up splitting the vote, allowing a section of congressional Democrats to cast an entirely symbolic vote against funding the war, while voting for the domestic spending measures.”

If the domestic and war spending measures are included in one bill, how would it be possible for some congressional Democrats to vote for the domestic measures and not also be voting for the war spending measures? Perhaps you mean that not enough Democrats will vote to pass the bill lacking the domestic spending measures and then voting in favor of the bill including the domestic spending measures. In that way, the Democrats could claim that they were supporting the domestic spending measures while being “forced” to vote in favor of continued war spending? My guess is that the amount of funding for extended unemployment and veterans’ benefits will be dwarfed by the war funding, making such posturing ludicrous.

It is beyond me how attacking Iran could result in pacification of opposition to US imperialism in the Middle East. Rather, I would say that such an attack would magnify the disaster for US governmental policy in the region. If the invasion and occupation of Iraq alienated many if not most of the US working population, what result would a US attack on Iran produce? Any thinking person with feelings at all for humanity at large and not having anything to gain from US hegemony in the Middle East couldn’t be anything but completely appalled at a widening of US militarism.

PL

29 April 2008

*On the American Axle and Conn-Selmer strikes*

We workers at Conn-Selmer in Elkhart, Indiana would like to thank the American Axle workers who showed up Wednesday at our rally in support of our cause. We apologize for the police being called by the company breaking up the demonstration. Our company has seen fit to have a court injunction against us severely limiting any kind of peaceful protest against our company. It is my understanding that the city of Three Rivers, Michigan, has shown good support in

your cause, where in our case our city Elkhart has been a burden and hindrance to our cause. Fighting for justice and equality is never easy. When people realize that they can’t depend on unions or anyone else for that matter, but only like-minded people like themselves, then real change can be brought about from the bottom up, to send *evil corporate America* a message that it is slowly and methodically destroying this great nation.

Conned by Selmer

Elkhart, Indiana, USA

25 April 2008



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