

Letters from our readers

2 June 2008

The following is a selection of recent letters sent to the WSWS.

On “New York construction workers killed and injured in another high-rise accident”

My daughter’s husband is a crane operator at a steel plant in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, where he just went to a class on crane safety, operations, physics, etc. He cited a figure from that class, that one in five crane operators die in their line of work.

RM

31 May 2008

Friday brought us another fatal crane accident in Manhattan. Mike Bloomberg’s people ordered a halt to the use of cranes for the weekend of 5/31-6/1/08. The crane was being used to build another high-rise condo. Maybe the fact that the housing bubble has broken will end the orgy of “redeveloping” by building more high-rise buildings on Manhattan, will end the present epidemic of crane accidents without finding out what really caused the accidents. It would be wise to find out what caused the accidents and to take measures to prevent recurrences of this plague of crane accidents. Drafting and enforcing regulations on the use of cranes is needed now to prevent more deaths, injuries and damages all over the USA. It’s probable that criminal negligence by profit-hungry firms operating the cranes caused elementary safety measures to be ignored. The death of two more construction workers and the maiming of other workers is the cost of neglecting safety. The cost is too high when it involves the lives of workers and citizens.

LL

31 May 2008

On “Fallout from McClellan book: The Iraq war’s ‘complicit enablers,’ then and now”

Agreed. Any first-year journalism student would scoff at Couric’s and Gibson’s “what were we to do?” protestations. Do? Your job as a journalist, for Christ’s sakes. Yes, there was pressure from editors above and pressure from the White House, but as Dick Cheney would say, “So?” If you can’t take the heat, get out of the

kitchen.

Maybe that’s asking too much of celebrity anchors who get there by not rocking the boat for a decade, and as such is one more indictment of the system.

On a personal note, I was in Baghdad on February 15, 2003, the day of the global peace demonstrations. No one felt more encouraged by that day than the people of Baghdad. A couple hundred “internationals” conducted our own march in Baghdad and were available for statements at the end of it.

I don’t recall a single US television outlet being there. When asked by Portuguese and Greek TV reporters “How can you oppose a war when your own president says there are WMD and terrorists in Iraq?” I looked into their cameras and said, “Because. George. Bush. Lies!”

Anyone with a grain of sense came to that same conclusion even with “all that pressure” coming from the administration and the news media. Anyone with a grain of sense knew Iraqis would fight the invaders tooth and nail, and that the invaders would ultimately fail.

But then anyone with a grain of sense in their head had not gone through the system’s brainwash operation in order to get a high-status job. We were just stupid mice far from the halls of power. One of these days maybe we’ll quit electing a government made up of cats.

FM

31 May 2008

Again, as usual, I can count on WSWS to clarify what is going on inside the fog of disinformation/misinformation our corporate government shrouds us in.

TJW

Sparta, North Carolina, USA

31 May 2008

I had to laugh to keep from crying when I heard the way some of Bush’s supporters were attacking McClellan’s book. Both Ron Christie (DC Navigators, former Bush aide) and Laura Ingram (Clear Channel radio loudmouth) were accusing him of “trying to make a quick buck.” It was hilarious to hear Christie (a lobbyist helping

corporate interests to commodify democracy) and Ingram (essentially a carnival barker for ruthless marketeering) trying to give us all a lesson in the (im)morality of cutthroat capitalism. To read in your article that Francis Townsend came down on McClellan as “self-serving” was also a yuk. Honestly, I would have thought that this lot would have given someone a medal for being “self-serving” and “trying to make a quick buck.” Is this not the essence of the game?

In the end, I’m sure that McClellan *is* doing what is purely in his own best interest. But it’s fun to see the rest of them panic in their (philosophically based) lack of camaraderie when push comes to shove.

RV

Athens, Georgia, USA

30 May 2008

On “The politics of provocation: Clinton, Obama and the American media”

I believe this article sheds some light on certain aspects of this latest controversy and the way the media acts to debase the level of political discussion. At the same time, I must agree with another commentator who characterized Clinton’s remarks as a “window into a dark soul” (paraphrasing). In fact, one might easily speculate that Hillary’s mangled recollection of past Democratic primary timelines was not merely a “bad example” chosen to bolster her argument for staying in the race. Fantasies need not be grounded in facts, and as Hillary contemplates her rationale, I have no doubt that she wistfully entertains all sorts of scenarios. Keith Olbermann can certainly be “histrionic” at times, but I must agree with him that Clinton’s “assassination” remarks were highly offensive in the context of American political history, the persistent death threats received by the Obama campaign, and the sensitivities of black voters. Further, I feel these remarks were a calculated (albeit badly received) message to the superdelegates: “Things happen—don’t count me out.” The political environment is clearly “diseased,” as you state. Liz Trotta’s sick comment on Fox—and the even sicker comment by a Pittsburgh sportscaster who recently wished out loud on the air that Ted Kennedy would “live long enough to be assassinated”—are really just the tip of the lunatic right iceberg. Hillary is no doubt aware of this environment, and her remarks truly underscore her recklessness, opportunism, and dynastic sense of entitlement.

AR

29 May 2008

On “What are the real interests behind the creation of

the Union of South American Nations?”

I agree entirely, Carlos: there is nothing there in UNASUR for the working class, nor indeed can there be, recognising that this is a classic bourgeois action of self-interest. The working class must organise and fight for its own interests regionally, it has “nothing to lose except its own chains.” However, that an organisation such as UNASUR is being actively pursued has a geopolitical meaning to it: it shows up the economic and increasingly political weakness of the US empire. No longer is Latin America regarded as the backyard of the US, and surely this is a positive development. It also weakens the position of the long-suffering Colombia, a staunch, and the only ally of Washington in the region. Worryingly though, Brazil is showing imperialist ambitions, which could scupper the whole project.

The result of all this could be a greater space for revolutionary action and development, and this adds hope to the working class. Hasta la revolution!

MS

Queanbeyan, NSW, Australia

29 May 2009

On “Rising number of dowry deaths in India”

I found your article very interesting but I beg to differ when you say that dowry-related harassment occurs predominantly in lower middle class families. The dowry demands and harassment just take the form of mental torture instead of physical and neglect and cruelty from the husband and in-laws. Poor women either commit suicide or are killed. Educated women try to fight injustice but do not get any justice or respite because if evidence of bride burning can be ignored, what chance is there to prove mental torture and harassment?

The number of divorce cases is on the rise because women refuse to die—slowly or brutally. They fight for their rights, they fight against injustice, they fight for dignity, but they don’t get any.

NS

31 May 2008



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