

Letters from our readers

22 June 2004

Below we post a selection of recent letters to the World Socialist Web Site.

It seems politics in the US has crossed a line and now it is really much more a religion where faith in the god of government has replaced rational intellectual thought. The government leaders are really just the priests of the masses exhorting them to have faith and remain steadfast in their beliefs (drink the Kool-Aid and believe). They have elevated Bush to demi-god status where he not only is above the law but his word is law and he rules by divine right. We now have a cult of death and destruction in control of this country who will not let humanity or morality stand in the way of profit or greed. It is really sickening and disgusting.

We need to impeach them all. All the congress critters who authorized Bush to start an illegal war. All the executive branch including (but not limited to) Bush, Cheney, Powell, Rice, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Feith, Ashcroft, and all the neo-cons. All the voodoo witch doctors in black robes who claim to be the Supreme Court who sat on their fat asses as what little was left of the Constitution was shredded before their eyes. After their impeachment we can then convene war crime tribunals for every general in the military service for their crimes against humanity.

G

17 June 2004

On "Enron tapes expose blatant criminality of corporate America"

Dear Mr. Azul,

I must commend you on an excellent article that gave insight into the types of people who were involved in the Enron scandal. This is important as people must see the human face behind these deplorable actions. I find it easy to understand how such individuals, who have no conscience when it comes to the impact these acts of greed have on the working class, are also capable of crimes against the environment that we all live in. The energy that we require and utilize is currently having a devastating impact on the world's climate. It is becoming clearer how members of the US government and its corporate bedfellows can make the decisions not to comply with the urgent ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, a crime that ultimately may be greater than the funds they siphoned from the people of California.

Kind regards,
JB

17 June 2004

On "Quality higher education: members of the working class need not apply?"

Thanks for Charles Bogel's excellent and informative article describing the threat to "quality higher education for the working class." The future for our youth is truly bleak under the present profit system. I would just like to point out one more factor "undermining two-year institutions' mission of providing higher education for all," and that is the lack of jobs. Our youth no longer have the option to go to work right out of high school, which is what many would choose to do. There are no jobs, not here in California anyway. So they are told to go to school and get an education so they can get a good job. It'll never happen under the present system. You're right about that. The Socialist Equality Party isn't just a good idea, it's a necessity.

Warm regards,
GC

16 June 2004

Letters on "Ronald Reagan (1911-2004): An Obituary"

Dear Editor,

In January of 1980, as Ronald Reagan was taking his oath of office, I realized that the release of the hostages in Iran had to be a publicity stunt engineered by the Reaganites. Even though it was inconceivable for any president to prolong the suffering of fellow Americans in order to make himself look good, I knew that a new and disturbing age of propaganda had begun.

At the time, I was employed through the CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) program. I had been unemployed for over 23 weeks and they found me a job, not a great job but a fun one, working as a supervisor for the county parks and recreation department in Brevard County, Florida. The pay was adequate and after so long without work it felt good to be useful again.

Three days after Reagan was sworn in I was notified that Reagan has disbanded the Jimmy Carter CETA program and I was to be laid off at the end of the week. I was young but I was very certain that no president in history had ever been so

cruel as to take federally sponsored employment away from anyone at the onset of their presidency. I felt betrayed and angry. Shortly after that I was to become homeless and feel totally alone.

The government would not allow me back on unemployment because of Reagan's new rules and I lost my apartment. It wasn't much but it was a place to stay. So I was forced to sleep in my Dodge van with a rusty roof that leaked every time it rained. After several months of this I finally got a job and an apartment again, but not before my bitterness toward Reagan and the neo-cons took shape as a swath of hatred to all things conservative.

At that time, people being homeless was unthinkable. Soon it would become a common story about someone else down on their luck being forced into the streets. I considered myself lucky that when I became homeless that I didn't have to seek shelter at the local Christian shelter that was nothing more than a thinly disguised sweat shop where the owner of the shelter used occupants as slave labor, providing only food and a roof in exchange for manual labor 14 hours a day. As the Reagan years pressed on, the shelter owner got rich beyond his wildest dreams and the occupants of the shelter lost hope. Many committed suicide and others did so much slower by drinking themselves to death after becoming upset with the shelter and leaving.

Then when Reagan cakewalked over Fritz Mondale I knew this country was a lost cause. The spirit of humanitarianism was gone from the eyes of most people. It had been replaced by a hard edge that shouted, rather than whispered, "It's my money, hands off!" No one cared any longer as long as it didn't happen to them or someone they cared about. I can remember weeping openly at the stories of hard-line business tactics against their employees (such as the invention of HMOs [health maintenance organizations], which I knew at the time was an obvious attempt at employers trying to screw their employees), the loss of company-backed pension funds (replaced by the stock market dependent IRAs, even though just a few years before the economy was in the toilet and so was the stock market—no one seemed to care) and the closeout of the American labor union to the negotiating table.

In 1985, during the Ollie North Iran-contra hearings, I expressed a loathing out loud to fellow employees for Reagan, Ollie North and all the neo-cons who lied to the Congress, the American people and the world over selling arms and illegally backing the fascist contras in Nicaragua against the orders of Congress. I was called into my boss's office and warned, "If you want to get ahead in this firm you better change your politics and do it quickly!" I quit after slapping him across the face for being a fascist.

Just after Reagan left office it was announced that he had

been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. I had just lost my maternal grandfather to Alzheimer's and it was a miserable illness that robs a person of their dignity and leaves them a mindless vegetable at the end of their life. I considered feeling compassion for Reagan, but I could not shake the feeling that it was karma for all the horrible things he had done to the people of the world.

Now as the thousands upon thousands line up to see the dead president, I wonder how many have come to pay tribute or how many have come to spit on his lifeless corpse. Unfortunately, I think that the majority came to pay tribute and that saddens me that there can be so many who had their lives and rights spit upon by a president who couldn't care less about them, come to say, "Thank you for treating me like a piece of feces."

Once again, the omnipresence of Reagan after his absence for so many years causes me another epiphany: Because of all this postmortem adoration, are the people of this nation worth saving? For the first time I'm beginning to think that they aren't worth anything tangible let alone salvation from the tyranny of capitalism and that makes me weep once more for the presence of Reagan in our lives.

SD

Port St. Lucie, Florida

11 June 2004

On "Gillo Pontecorvo, director of The Battle of Algiers, speaks to WSWs: 'Stay close to reality'" and "Viola Liuzzo: martyr in the struggle for social equality"

Dear Editor,

Special thanks to Maria Esposito and Joanne Laurier for the informative articles and interviews about the filmmaker Gillo Pontecorvo and the new documentary about the slain civil rights activist from the Teamsters family. These articles demonstrate the necessity for documentary and realism in film. Without these there cannot be social progress or even historical interest and knowledge. Much appreciation and encouragement to all artists who struggle for realism and/or documentary in their media.

JB

11 June 2004



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