

Letters from our readers

23 June 2007

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

On "Why the Nation remains silent on Cindy Sheehan's departure from the Democratic Party" Part One, Part Two, Part Three

Since I live in Madison, Wisconsin, home of the newspaper the *Capital Times*, a self-titled "progressive newspaper" edited by one John Nichols, I am quite familiar with the scribblings of John Nichols, a liberal gossip columnist.

The newspaper he works for, to show pretense in caring about the loss of life in Iraq, regularly publishes the Iraq body count. When the story broke last October about the Johns Hopkins Study, published in the British medical Journal the *Lancet*, showing that the number of Iraqi dead was far greater than previously reported, the paper chose to downplay the story, printing a small article about the study at the bottom of its front page.

Weeks later, when they thought their "progressive" readers had forgotten the *Lancet* study, up popped the Iraq body count numbers, appearing again on the front page.

Lately, John Nichols published a book entitled "The Genius of Impeachment," and he has used it to push for the impeachment of George Bush. He is, once again, standing in the way of genuine questions about the viability of the capitalist economic system.

KK

Madison, Wisconsin, USA

19 June 2007

On "Spate of antidemocratic rulings by US Supreme Court"

I thought this article was thorough and very readable too. I am a law student and as such I appreciate that you have pinpointed a few classic judicial magic tricks.

First, courts very often seem to decide who wins and cobble together the legal rationale afterwards. A professor of mine, a Florida 1st District Court of Appeals judge, flatly told us in class that is what he generally does. His clerks do all the research for him (as with any judge) and basically give him rationales for going either way, one of which he selects, or rather adapts to his subjective moral preference.

Secondly, your paragraph about Thomas's suggestion that Congress can change the rules if it wants to is sublime. That statement is just the converse of an equally valid proposition: Thomas and the court could change the rule if they wanted to. Indeed, if they did, they wouldn't have any qualms about trampling over established law by carving out another exception, as you accurately and sarcastically label them.

Finally, in the last part of the article you touch on another example of this "deference" for lower authority such as an administrative agency (or as mentioned earlier, the trial court). It is so duplicitous when courts defer to these institutions knowing full well that they plainly do not have to and can make new law.

Anyway, I was very impressed with your article. I just thought that the legal analysis was outstanding. Great job.

EA

19 June 2007

On "Letters and a reply on the Kucinich presidential campaign"

Having served as Dennis Kucinich's Florida press secretary in 2003-2004, I find that I'm very torn on the man but understand to a certain extent why he still remains with a Democratic Party that will not support him because he is the reminder of Roosevelt's "New Deal" political agenda that they would like to forget ever happened at the hands of the Democratic Party.

The mainstream Democratic leadership in 2004 referred to Kucinich as "Frodo Baggins" because of his small stature and unusual look. If you watch the tapes of the 2004 Florida Democratic Convention you can clearly see the National and Florida Chairs of the DNC making distracting gestures and comments that could be seen behind Kucinich as he spoke, which clearly sent the message to the delegates that Kucinich was not worthy of standing among the centrists of the Party and, of course, everyone should be a centrist.

I quit the campaign shortly after the Florida primary because I had a conversation with Dennis over the fact that I believed he should leave the Democratic Party and represent people who would back him without reservation. He looked puzzled and asked, "Who would that be?" I told him the Socialists. After all, almost all of his policies were taken directly from Marxist and Socialist theory. Dennis smiled at me and told me that yes, he was a Socialist leaning person but there are only two decks of cards in the United States: the Democrats and the Republicans. The majority of the population only gets to decide who deals the cards for small periods of time. He assured me that he wanted desperately to change this nation back into its once great stature as a nation of innovators who took care of every person within its border and gave everyone an equal chance at the original American Dream but he could only do that through changing the Democratic Party and that the word "Socialist" has become poison to most Americans.

While he was technically right I pointed out to him that it would be just as easy to change the American attitude about Socialism as it would be to try and move the Democratic Party back to left-of-center and that I could no longer support his candidacy as long as he viewed socialism as poison when he embraced socialist ideals. He said, "It is what it is and I'm sorry you can't support me." I still remain perplexed to this day about Dennis. Do I believe he's honest and believes in the change he espouses? Yes, I most definitely do. But his views are still tainted with that flair for capitalism that haunts a true socialist rebirth. Do I think he's better than all the other candidates? Absolutely, but we will not achieve any real headway in changing the minds of Americans about socialism under Dennis because he will espouse socialist programs while calling it something else and leave the fruit of the poison on socialism in general.

My decisions about Dennis are still up for debate because "a rose by any other name is still a rose" but the vilification of socialism and its superb ideals of true democracy, freedom, peace and prosperity for all

people leaves me feeling like an orphan and divided on the subject of Congressman Dennis Kucinich. I thought that an insider's view of Dennis might shed some light on the debate, but after writing this I still feel very ambivalent on the issue of whether Dennis is best for socialism under whatever name the people can swallow and whether we should endorse a candidate that clearly will never embrace us in name or actual purpose.

SD

Lake City, Florida, USA

19 June 2007

On "Bush, Democrats resurrect anticommunism in service of US 'war on terror'"

This article said it all! Thank you so much for articulating what we are feeling each time the powers that be prop themselves up a little more and try to convince us that their lies are true. They are becoming even more thinly veiled each time.

LS

14 June 2007

The WWS article about this cheap stunt is very good in most respects. However, it misses an important point: it doesn't challenge the clearly hyper-inflated number of 100 million itself.

Are we seriously to swallow the number thrown out by these reactionary bourgeois ideologues at face value, without question? It is a known fact that bourgeois politicians lie constantly. Adam Smith even wrote that the businessmen, whom Bush, Lantos, and the AEI represent, "have generally an interest to deceive and even to oppress the public."

During the first Gulf war, the US public was treated to stories of babies in incubators, which turned out later to be a completely discredited hoax, circulated by the Kuwaiti government and the PR firm Hill and Knowlton. Should we have believed Bush when he claimed that Iraq had stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction pointed at the US, and links with Al Qaeda, simply because Hussein was a bad dictator?

War criminal and former Italian President Silvio Berlusconi claimed that in China under Mao, babies were boiled alive and used as fertilizer. Are we supposed say, "Well, Mao was a Stalinist, so Berlusconi must be telling the absolute truth"?

Attempting to point out that these corporate ideologues are inflating the number of people killed is not the same as denying the actual crimes of Stalinism.

PG

Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

14 June 2007

On "US: Education no escape from stagnant wages"

Andre Damon's article on the report of Temin and Levy, pointing out that social inequality has a much deeper cause in the capitalist system than just a lack of education, is also an important reply against the central argument of the education "reform" movement and President Bush's "No Child Left Behind" Act. NCLB supporters argue that those sections of the population suffering poverty can be lifted by including them in higher educational standards to be achieved through standardized tests and penalties that make schools and school districts "accountable" for results.

Jean Anyon, a professor of education and social policy at the City University of New York, has pointed out, like Damon, that "NCLB stands in the place of policies like job creation and significant raises in the minimum wage which—although considerably more expensive than standardized testing—would significantly decrease poverty in the

United States.... Education did not create the problem of widespread poverty wages, and education will not solve the problem" (Anyon, Jean and Keirsten Greene, "No Child Left Behind as an Anti-Poverty Measure," *Teachers Education Quarterly*, spring 2007).

In other words, it is widespread poverty-wage jobs that create poverty, including for the significant numbers of college graduates who find themselves in "McJobs." Rather than employers and the government raising wages, the corporate elite avoid paying the social costs of their profit system, with cuts to their taxes and to social programs. Rather than attacking the poverty that creates the schools struggling with populations of students coming from low-income and disadvantaged families, the schools and the teachers themselves are held accountable for correcting the consequences of social inequality, usually without even being given the conditions to minimally deal with the educational side of the students' problems.

The capitalists and the two parties that serve them see public education as a cash cow to be milked by privatization of school management and services as well as the testing industry, now added to with profits from businesses providing tutoring and writing curriculum to the tests. Corporate funding is directing the reorganization of education into tiers, tied directly to the needs of businesses under the dictates of global competition, to provide low and high-skilled workers, both increasingly low-wage.

Unlike most educational reformers and radicals, who propose only alternative reforms and politics limited within the existing profit system, it is welcome to have the analysis of the *World Socialist Web Site* and the Socialist Equality Party pointing out, as Damon does, that the working class will end poverty only by resolving the "basic antagonism ... between capital and labor."

HL

New York, USA

17 June 2007

On "Deadly fire kills five children in Pittsburgh home"

Your article on the Pittsburgh fire has offered the best coverage of this sad event that I've have seen in any media. Thanks for your attention to detail and statements of truth that uncover the underlying causes of all such tragedies.

PB

20 June 2007

On "Religious backwardness trumps science as Bush vetoes stem cell bill"

"Sickening" is of course the right word. I saw the photo-op on the Internet where Bush has a family with a girl with spina bifida as his side show, and this certainly couldn't have been any more sickeningly hypocritical. I have a niece with this birth defect, and stem cell research is exactly the sort of thing that can offer hope. I don't understand how these horrible people can look at themselves in the mirror.

RM

21 June 2007



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