

Letters from our readers

27 September 2007

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

On "US Senate censure of MoveOn.org: An attack on free speech in the service of militarism"

Your recent column regarding the deeply disturbing Senate response to the MoveOn.org ad in the *New York Times* is excellent. It led me to read further, following the links included at the bottom of the article. The WSWs articles written in the months after the 2000 election concern the overwhelming evidence of vote fraud by the Republican Party, together with the almost complete complicity of the Democratic Party as well. Those articles, which to some extent also reflected pieces then appearing in the mainstream media, strongly suggest, at least to me, that the 9/11 events were engineered either directly or indirectly in order to divert popular attention from what would have become a concerted investigation into the fraudulent aspects of that election.

In this respect, the powers that be were, tragically, entirely successful, as almost no attention is now paid to these underlying issues. The more one considers this, the more deeply distraught one becomes about the state of the country, entirely aside from the question whether one agrees with all of your statements on every issue. Your writing and your insight are excellent and deeply needed, and I hope you will keep these up. Thank you.

FC

22 September 2007

I don't recognize the America I used to live in. The freedoms that are supposedly being protected by invading and occupying a defenseless country and destroying it and its culture are being eradicated by those who would achieve world domination by any means available to them.

The attack on MoveOn.org reminds me of the sedition laws enacted at the time of World War I, which were originally used to attack the Industrial Workers of the World and socialists who were against the US

becoming involved in what was an imperialist war. The sedition laws were eventually used to cause citizens to spy on one another and sent many innocent people, who even so much as hinted that the war was a bad idea, to prison. In particular, the sedition laws made it a crime to in any way speak against the military, just as this new Senate censure does.

How long will it be before the Bush (and the following) administration start throwing Americans in prison for criticisms such as those made by MoveOn.org against General Petraeus in the *New York Times*? Who really "hates our freedoms"?

CZ

San Francisco, California, USA

22 September 2007

On "Thousands demonstrate in support of 'Jena Six'"

Thank you, Joe Kay, for a brilliant article. In summer 2004, I reviewed for *Mystery Scene* magazine and wrote a piece on Jeff Stetson's powerful debut novel, which takes its title from the lyrics of a haunting song: "Southern trees bear strange fruit, Blood on the leaves and blood at the root..." I have never forgotten this vivid book. This morning, reading of racial injustice in Jena, Louisiana, I thought again of *Blood on the Leaves*. If only those schoolboys sitting under their "whites' only" tree, its branches hung with empty nooses, would take the time to read Stetson's novel, to think things through and put themselves in another's place.

Too bad the conflicts he wrote about are not a thing of the past. I wish we could all forget to hate.

RPC

21 September 2007

On "Charges dismissed against another officer in Haditha war crimes case"

The hideous torture of innocent Iraqis being carried out by US military troops is a rerun of Vietnam and the Nazi occupation of the Soviet Union. It represents a

return to the worst of the Middle Ages, when legal rights were nonexistent and ordinary people were mere chattel. It is a laboratory experiment to determine the most effective way to destroy civil society and replace it with a totalitarian hellhole giving ultimate power to the military and police. This experiment is the cutting edge of the new world order designed by and for the US imperialists in their drive to regain preeminence in the world market.

As could be predicted, the military will not punish its troops for committing deeds they were trained to do before they even entered Iraq. To do so would be even more unjust than jailing the whole army and marines and their command structures. The real blame persists at the top, but of course no one can punish the generals, colonels, etc. They run the military legal system, and a civilian court would be stonewalled. So evil will persist and set a precedent for future wars and also act as a corrosive on civil society here and elsewhere. A revolution could erase the damage done, but it would have to garner support within a clear majority of the American people.

SH

Boston, Massachusetts, USA

21 September 2007

On “Northern Rock: British government attempts to stem banking crisis”

Fine article, except the reference to Northern Rock as a “building society”! Northern Rock converted to bank and plc status on 1 October 1997. It has not been a building society since that date. The key problem with Northern Rock is that it obtained 75 percent of its funding from the wholesale money markets. This would not have been possible had it still been a building society. There is a limit in the Building Societies Act that prevents a building society from obtaining more than 50 percent of its funds from the wholesale markets. More information on the difference between a building society and a bank can be found on the home page of our web site: www.bsa.org.uk

Adrian Coles

Director General, The Building Societies Association
Britain

21 September 2007

On “The US war and occupation of Iraq—the murder of a society”

I think you succeeded in this article in making the

case that the war in Iraq amounts to sociocide. In addition to the crimes mentioned in your article, I would also add the use of depleted uranium (DU) munitions.

In October 2007, a study about the health effects of exposure to depleted uranium munitions, commissioned by the 2006 Department of Defense Authorization legislation that was signed by the president in October 2006, is supposed to be released. This report may well yet turn out to be a whitewash, and the House and Senate amendments commissioning the DU study were probably just election year posturing.

However, a report by scientists at the University of Southern Maine earlier this year says: “DU is now becoming a major international concern as a possible health hazard and carcinogen. Little is currently known about DU mechanisms of effect, but reported data indicate that it may cause lung cancer, embryotoxicity and teratogenicity, reproductive and developmental damage, genomic instability, and single strand DNA breaks. Given the widespread use of uranium for military application and the present worldwide deployment of the United States military, it is imperative that we investigate the carcinogenicity and genotoxicity of DU.”

TG

25 September 2007

On “Use, exchange, literary values and an American classic: Jack Kerouac’s *On the Road* turns fifty”

May I compliment you with this beautiful memorial to Kerouac. I studied in Europe in the second half of the fifties. *On the Road* had a profound impact on my life.

EZ

Curacao, Netherlands Antilles

24 September 2007



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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