

Letters from our readers

1 October 2007

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

On “The New York Times and Ahmadinejad’s appearance at Columbia University”

Bravo! You have this exactly right, in my opinion. Thank you for writing it and, especially, for printing it. Free speech in the US is a dying ember, and, as usual, the *New York Times* is on the losing (I hope it is not winning) side.

CD

Erongaricuarro, Mexico

27 September 2007

Lee Bollinger’s comments at least equally apply to the US president as they do to Iran’s. That says it all.

JO

27 September 2007

There is one other more glaring example of the establishment’s “commitment” to free speech. I would defy anyone to find an article in any major newspaper about the ORB press release on the number of Iraqi civilians killed during the occupation. The ORB estimate of Iraqi civilians killed, for those readers who missed the article posted on WWSWS, was 1.2 million.

That is no small detail! If more US citizens knew how many Iraqis have been killed during the war, there would be mass demonstrations. The elite know this and that is why they have to suppress certain types of speech.

KK

27 September 2007

On “Iranian president speaks at Columbia University amidst media frenzy”

This was disgusting. I am hugely embarrassed by this display, but it is in the nature of those who are guilty of many crimes to demonize others to take notice away from themselves.

MM

25 September 2007

Yes, to the article. And would Bollinger say anything

critical of the Israeli president, a country where Arab residents are denied the ability to buy land, where the Israeli flag is planted on confiscated land, where thousands of prisoners are held without trial, where at least one Israeli citizen is a prisoner for publicizing Israel’s possession of nuclear weapons? Would Bollinger call to task the president of the United States for the criminal war on Iraq? Would he condemn the presidents of both the US and Israel for the war profiteering of each country and the favors given to associated business companies?

If he were to do so, then there would be some semblance of open speech, free from coercion.

MS

Santa Rosa, California, USA

25 September 2007

On “New York Times public editor repudiates MoveOn.org ad on General Petraeus”

One would hope that this display—the Democrats backing and promoting the condemnation of the free political speech of a group very much involved in getting many of them into office—would finally wake a few people up to the fact that no amount of “help” or “loyalty” offered to the party will ever stand for anything when placed against the interests of the class which that party represents. Indeed, it is almost a textbook case proving that there is no validity to the revisionist idea of “pushing them to the Left”.

That the idea of questioning the patriotism of anyone who questions the military has become so prevalent is deeply disturbing. That Congress’ time is spent to condemn free political speech gives the lie to the idea that this war is being fought to bring freedom to anyone.

CMS

Portland, Oregon, USA

25 September 2007

In your article you write: “What next? Will criticism of the military be outlawed as treasonous and

detrimental to national security?” and you follow up with the murders of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in Germany.

But there is an example of this type of intimidation in the United States at the same time as Luxemburg and Liebknecht’s murders. In the state of Montana at the beginning of WWI and continuing afterwards, a sedition law was passed that made any criticism of the military, the war, or soldiers punishable by imprisonment and even death. In Missoula, Montana, the townspeople burned German books, and challenged the “loyalty” of German-Americans and others, including teachers. They were made to kiss the American flag and declare that the war was good, etc. Townspeople were encouraged to spy on their fellow citizens and report any “seditious” conversation or remarks, which remarks were punishable by arrest and imprisonment. In the cases of immigrant workers, the punishment was deportation.

The right wing of the day liked the Montana sedition law so much that the United States passed a national sedition law based on the Montana statute. An excellent book on the subject is *Darkest Before Dawn: Sedition and Free Speech in the American West* by Clemens P. Work. The book also discusses the persecution of the IWW.

What I see happening around me is the same kind of war hysteria that existed at the time of the First World War.

CZ

San Francisco, California, USA

25 September 2007

This splendid article is simply splendid.

VS

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA

25 September 2007

On “Britain: Unions responsible for harsh conditions facing temporary agency workers”

French trade unions headed by the Communist Party-controlled CGT union were at the forefront in encouraging temporary agency workers, as in Britain. Instead of organising the fight for permanent jobs, the CGT union was the first to sign a deal with the Manpower agency in recognition of temporary workers in 1969, three years before temporary work was legally recognised in France. Such work had been banned by a 1945 law.

There were officially 706,500 temporary workers in 2007, a growth of 6.9 percent over 2006. Four out of 5 temporary workers are manual employees. A new law on ‘Social Cohesion’ seeks to “facilitate employment of temporary workers handicapped by social or professional difficulties” or when the company “undertakes to provide additional training for the worker.”

The reformist trade unions have a lot to answer for in undermining conditions and job opportunities by doing opportunist deals with the likes of Manpower, just in order to boost union recruitment.

MP

Amiens, France

27 September 2007

Excellent article. Exposing those who cover up for Labour is the number one priority of progressive politics in Britain today.

FG

29 September 2007



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