

Letters from our readers

8 November 2007

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

On “New terror scare from the White House: Bush invokes 9/11 to justify torture, domestic spying and war”

I recall my own SERE [US Navy Survival, Evasion, Resistance and Escape School] training 30 years ago. Of course the instructors, when simulating the enemy, could render physical abuse—slapping in the face, etc.—but underneath you knew those rendering the abuse were medical corpsmen/professionals who knew the limits of what they could do.

The waterboard, however, was something else. Watching the procedure itself is truly terrifying and I was next in line for the board, but for some reason the exercise was cancelled before I had to do it. This I have never regretted. I agree with Malcom Nance that as a training tool for our soldiers/sailors—the elite forces—it should be retained when used in a very controlled academic environment. To watch someone on the board is to instantly know that there is nothing “simulated” about it. For those doubters and those who think this is a good tool and something we as Americans we should subscribe to, I suggest a round on the board for some attitude readjustment.

RM

5 November 2007

On “Democrats cave in on torture: Key senators back attorney general nominee”

Senators Schumer and Feinstein have greased the skids for Bush’s choice for attorney general to be approved by the US Senate. The mainstream media has reported that Judge Mukasey has assured unnamed Senators that he would advise W not to tolerate the use of waterboarding at Gitmo and other sites where alleged terrorists are questioned—if the Congress passes a law making the use of waterboarding illegal. The “if” is a short word but it is very important. What if the Congress doesn’t make waterboarding illegal? What if

Bush issues a signing statement implicitly saying he won’t obey the law? The craven acts of Schumer and Feinstein highlight the flaws of the American two-party but one policy system. It’s past time for voters to end the two-party system by voting in people from third, fourth parties. The article and analysis gives further facts on the repeated failures of the two-party system to properly serve the American people.

LL

3 November 2007

On “SEP candidate Alex Safari speaks at election forum in Maroubra: Labor’s Peter Garrett presents his pro-war credentials”

You write, “The only genuine antiwar constituency is the international working class.” Very well articulated—but then, we should expect nothing less from the representatives of the socialist movement. Outside of the arrogant defence of social reaction, coupled with outright hostility to voices of rational criticism, Labor and its fringe parties have no answers whatsoever. This promises to be a very interesting election.

AA

Sydney, Australia

5 November 2007

Thanks for the article on Peter Garrett’s war credentials. The last time I saw Mr. Garrett in America he was singing about giving land back to those native to Australia. I know it’s been a while, but what a change in policy! War supporter? Bush ally? Wow. In Mr. Garrett’s own words, how will he sleep while Iran’s beds are burning?

DA

5 November 2007

On “Terry Hicks, father of Australian Guantánamo prisoner, speaks with the WSWS”

We all thank you for this truthful article, regarding David Hicks. We have lost the faith in any Australian government, Liberals or Labor. They don’t speak the

truth. They manipulate the media and the public. This resembles the rise of dictators in the past. This is a secretive gang. We are being slowly lured into a total dictatorship. The tragedy is, there is nothing we can do about it. We don't see any future for the coming generations.

KH

Brisbane, Australia

5 November 2007

On "US film and televisions writers will walk out Monday"

History would seem to be repeating itself. I refer to the Warner Bros. strikes of 1945-46 where the IATSE (International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees) acted as a "scab" union, but with the support of the Screen Actors Guild, already increasingly right-wing and anti-Communist. Even the Screen Writers Guild used the argument that those with contracts should cross the picket lines, unless they had a clause allowing them to work at home. The SAG crossed the picket lines and those actors who refused and denounced the attitude of Reagan (such as Alexander Knox) had problems in the '50s. Roy Brewer told Knox that he would run him out of town, and he succeeded in forcing him to work in Europe.

I'm afraid the state of the unions has been rotten for a long time. Your report indicates that "solidarity" is no more a thing of the present than it was in the '40s. However, the actors may be more militant than 60 years ago, and there's no Red bogey to trot out of the closet today. What will the producers come up with to smear the writers? Or will they just hang on until the writers have no funds left?

RH

Paris, France

3 November 2007

Sadly, the reality is that the writers' union will probably cave—although one sincerely hopes not. There is a potential here for a brave struggle that can have significance for all American workers—and more broadly workers in general, as it would provide an example of what might be done through collective action. We know there is no hope for change through the putative "political system," a corporately-owned conglomerate in itself.

Have your sage words been put in front of the eyeballs of leaders of the writers' union? They need to

read them and know of the workers who are rooting for their success. They will need courage and may have to hold out for a long time—but when push comes to shove, it's the writers with the talent, not the suits. Can one imagine an MBA type writing script? Howlingly ludicrous. Parasites? That's a kind word for their ilk.

RM

3 November 2007

On "Vote 'no' on UAW betrayal at Ford! Elect rank-and-file committees for contract fight!"

If it were not for groups like the Heritage Foundation and their judicial agenda, the recent agreements between the UAW and US-based automakers would be struck down by any reasonable Federal court as violation of anti-trust laws. The UAW is now entrenched as the company union at these automakers.

Your articles have touched on this issue but never specifically spelled out that the UAW is now permanently entrenched and "un-decertifiable" by holding the medical and pension benefits of its members. Remember that the first "anti-trust" decision in American jurisprudence was a decision against the formation of a workers' guild in Pennsylvania and for the companies it worked for.

What I would welcome from the WSWS is an article on the effects of the Heritage Foundation and its roots in the Powell Memorandum. The fact that the mainstream media has been both infamous and successful in concealing this agenda from the American people for over 30 years speaks tomes. How the Friedman school's "Chicago Boys" and the adoption of free-market principles, reactionary politics, and courts of law have led to tragedies like the recent UAW/Big Three deals and so many others needs to be exposed.

And it would sure beat ever being called "scab" again by any other company union.

BR

St Louis, Missouri, USA

5 November 2007



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