

Letters from our readers

5 June 2008

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

On “As gas and oil profits soar, Bush promotes giveaways to corporations”

I have long said that politicians should be forbidden from owning stock in industries that they have the ability to influence. I have been told that it would not be possible to infringe on their rights in such a way. Being a politician is supposed to be a public service and people should enter into such a career in order to do what is best for our country as a whole, not in order to promote the power and wealth of themselves and their family and friends.

The US government regularly infringes on the rights of Americans supposedly in the best interest of our nation, so why not do the same with vital resources. It is in the best interest of our nation to take all services that are considered mandatory out of the private sector and make them publicly owned. When you take profitability out of the equation, along with outrageous compensation packages for executives, suddenly things like fuel, electricity, natural gas, trash, water and sewer services, phone service, television and Internet become affordable.

I know some people might argue that phone, TV and the Internet are not necessary services—try to enroll your child in a school without those services. The Internet is mandatory to complete many homework assignments, and in our district it is the only way to check your child’s grades and homework assignments. Every employer and school I know of requires phones. Would you hire someone that you could not call?

In reading your article just now it was interesting because just two nights ago I was thinking of ways to take all the utilities out of the private sector and turn them into public companies. Then I read the last paragraph of the article I just read which said, “Instead, the giant productive forces that control the lives of billions—including the energy and food infrastructure of

the globe—must be transferred into public utilities, socially owned and democratically controlled.”

I have never known anyone who thinks anything similar to that but me. Many would argue that it is unconstitutional, but as stated the government has the right to do what is best for our nation. I also believe that it could be an amazing opportunity for economic growth and prosperity for our nation.

RC

29 May 2008

On “German dairy farmers strike against low milk prices and high energy costs”

Protests by the European Union dairy farmers and fisherman have been met with a deaf ear by their leaders. The rising costs that are ruining these producers are largely a result of higher fuel costs. The higher fuel costs are a result of the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan by the United States. You would think that the EU member’s governments could join together and put sanctions on all trade with the United States until they withdraw from Iraq.

The continued instability due to the occupation is driving up fuel prices worldwide, yet nobody is pointing to the elephant in the room. Economic sanctions should have been put in place the day that the US invaded Iraq.

TJ

Bentonville, Arkansas, USA

3 June 2008

On “The slaying of Mark Saunders: An escalation of Britain’s ‘shoot to kill’ policy”

This just another case of the accelerating trend amongst the parliamentary “democracies” to adopt autocratic means to suppress civil liberties, as the pauperisation of the working class proceeds inexorably. The trend is, of course, toward a police state and fascism, as the ruling classes perceive a rising need to defend their interests and privileges. In tandem, there is the politic to bring fear and anxiety to the masses;

people afraid and insecure are easier to control, and might even turn to the authorities for protection, a reversal of the fable about Little Red Riding Hood! The authorities hope also that this social insecurity will cause atomisation of society (Thatcher's infamous dictum that there is no society), and alienation amongst the working class. Frequently, the reverse is the case.

Saunders' murder is no aberration: it goes in a straight line from the Waco massacre, the NYPD killings, and increasingly, as Paul shows, in the UK. There can be no doubt that other governments, including Australia's, are considering/planning similar measures, whose "mode d'emploi" are secrecy, impunity, collusion of all the organs of government, including the judiciary and the media. A perfect mix for a police/fascist state, an end product of the capitalist system, the only socioeconomic system that destroys what it creates, and, ultimately, self-destructs. The only problem is, that it threatens to take everything with it, like in *Dr. Strangelove*.

MS

Queanbeyan, Australia

29 May 2008

On "Iron Man: Just what sort of hero is this?"

I think that some of the oddities in this film can be better understood by going back over the original comic series and how it developed against contemporary events. I first began reading Marvel Comics in the early 1970s and for several years collected a lot of back issues. When reading over the issues from different periods I noticed a trend which I didn't really understand until I read some of Noam Chomsky years later.

The early Marvel Comics clearly was steered towards the Cold War, with Iron Man and Captain America being perhaps the two characters that best epitomized this. However as antiwar protests grew during the 1960s, the company was forced to adjust its product to fit with a changed market. Several long-running shifts which occurred in Marvel Comics during this period are impossible to grasp apart from this.

In the Iron Man series, the original Tony Stark was featured as building weapons to use in Vietnam, and this was cast as a good thing. Reading through some of the issues of Iron Man from the early 1970s was, however, my first confused exposure to the concept of antiwar protests. Tony Stark develops a romantic

interest in Roxanne Simpson who accuses him of murdering babies in Vietnam. At the time it was a real shock to read words of this type, for me at least.

As it happens Roxanne Simpson has a brother who adopts the identity of Firebrand and in retrospect it's easy to see that this was a subtle (or perhaps not-so-subtle) attempt to taint antiwar protesters. Firebrand attacks Roxanne for responding to Tony Stark's romantic interest and characterizes Stark as "the man who practically invented the Vietnam War" (if I recall the words correctly), but it's clear that they were meant to come away seeing Firebrand as among the villains in some sense.

Tony Stark himself also shifts now from running Stark Industries (which produced weapons) to operating Stark International (which is now supposed to be dedicated to environmentally friendly industry that serves domestic needs). So now we're told that the issues which had first created the conflict between Tony Stark and Roxanne Simpson are being resolved because of Tony giving up weapons production and so this may be allowed to slide as an issue.

Still, there was a clear shift in the tone not only of Iron Man, but of all the series published by Marvel Comics in the early 1970s. If you compare what was published when Marvel first began in the early 1960s to what was produced by the mid-1970s it's clear that in some fashion the antiwar protests of the time had forced an adjustment in style to occur. Although I haven't followed the comic books for the last 25 years, I would bet that a slow methodical analysis of them over a long period would show further shifts occurring in response to social and political developments.

PN

31 May 2008



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