

## Letters from our readers

7 November 2009

*On "US Army major kills 12 at Fort Hood, Texas"*

It's worth noting that Obama and Congress have killed many more soldiers than did that Major at Fort Hood.

Lloyd G

South Dakota, USA

6 November 2009

*On "Michigan woman dies after Medicaid dental care is cut"*

There's a "death panel" for you. Imagine living that long and being taken out by a tooth infection in the USA.

DC

6 November 2009

*On "New Feature: This Week in History"*

Dear WSWS,

I love the new week in history section. Thank you for this and other interesting and realistic reporting,

Yours sincerely,

Lindy P

4 November 2009

*On "Jane Campion's Bright Star: The story of John Keats and Fanny Brawne"*

Dear Joanne,

Thank you for calling attention to the political background of Keats's life/art ignored in Jane Campion's focusing on his love-life from a feminist perspective in her recent film. This is all the more remarkable in that the film is based on the poet Andrew Motion's brilliantly written, recently published biography of Keats which emphasizes precisely how a revolutionary wave that swept through England after Waterloo serves as the necessary background for Keats's five brief years of poetic output.

Motion builds on recent Keats scholarship by Andrew Bennet, Nicholas Rae and Jerome McGann to read Keats in the context of remarkable political events including the Luddite risings, the Partridge rebellion and, above all, the massacre of a peaceful gathering of

workers in Manchester in 1819 known as the Peterloo Massacre. Blake, Byron and Shelley were stirred to writing politically charged poems that specifically addressed this massacre, but until recently Keats was considered remote from politics by his illness, sadness and evident desire for transcendence. Motion follows a contrarian line of scholarship, generally from the New Historical school, to demonstrate that while writing that immortal testament to the human spirit, "Ode to Autumn," Keats had in mind the Peterloo Massacre.

I have not seen the film, being no fan of Jane Campion, but if she did not show 30,000 people marching in protest against the massacre in London, William Blake and John Keats adding to their number, she missed the point of Motion's biography, which I invite your readers to sample online. As a side note, I think the political events in Keats's time have less to do with the French and American Revolutions in the past than the first stirrings of the new working class, which the Industrial Revolution was fashioning by its brute force, which Romantic poets noted and passionately protested against.

From Shelley's "Masque of Anarchy":

*Rise like Lions after the Slumber*

*In unvanquishable number*

*Shake your chains to earth like dew*

*Which in sleep had fallen on you*

*Ye are many—they are few.*

AL

Toronto, Canada

5 November 2009

*On "The postwar novelist in regression: Norman Mailer (1923-2007)"*

Subtitle for this article: "All I Have Ever Read or Learned about Norman Mailer." This article is way too bloated. To prove the point that Mailer became grotesque as he grew older, you could do several things: compare Mailer to other artists, use Mailer's own quotes, use quotes from others, use examples in

history or literature. As it is, you have a fact-stuffed article that barely stays on topic.

Rosa

4 November 2009

*On* "Transit workers strike in Philadelphia"

Mr. Van Auken,

I disagree. The Transit Workers did not have to strike. Unions should look after all workers, not just their own. Instead they called a strike at 3 a.m., giving no warning and acting as if their situation is desperate. It is not. At 52K plus benefits, they are paid relatively well. While it is understandable that they would want their wages increased at the rate of inflation. This strike demonstrates a lack of concern for other workers, and it has spent public support for the union. This is unfortunate, because in the future the Transit Workers may actually face a hostile reduction in benefits and pay, but may have lost all support for a legitimate strike.

Adrian A

Pennsylvania, USA

4 November 2009



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