

# Letters from our readers

14 November 2009

*On "The execution of John Muhammad: another gruesome moment in America"*

The sniper was a Gulf War veteran who obviously suffered both organic and psychic damage to his brain and mind. The alleged Fort Hood gunman also suffered severe psychological stress for a prolonged period of time. Numerous other tragedies involving veterans, as reported on your website, have been barely mentioned or ignored by the rest of the media. I have been struck by the rapidity with which the Fort Hood event has been turned into a propaganda tool, with Obama sounding just like Bush.

Today was Remembrance Day in Canada, and it was one of the largest productions on this date in this country in decades, with thousands turning out in the major cities (sunny weather helped). But I almost took off my poppy as it really hit home how much this day has been taken over by the blatant warmongers, our Conservative government in particular, and their propaganda about the Afghan "Mission", in which a sizeable number of Canadians have now died. As the body count increases, we have seen a steady increase in the militarization of our media and general culture. I almost took off my poppy, but couldn't bring myself to. In my job I have spoken to many veterans during their last days, and they are by no means a homogeneous group. Many of them were committed to what may be called generally socialist ideals. I wore my poppy for them, feeling at the same time that maybe "Lest We Forget" should be changed to "Lest We Remember".

Kamilla V  
British Columbia, Canada  
12 November 2009

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Well done with the informative response to US imperialism's execution of John Muhammad. One of the works that impelled me into the socialist movement was an anti-capital punishment book called "Hanged in error". David Walsh's account follows on and builds upon that

civilized tradition.

Don F  
Wellington, New Zealand  
11 November 2009

*On "The Ford vote and the UAW's defenders"*

I enjoyed this brief history lesson. And it is certainly no time for more middle class claptrap about the possibilities of reform in parties or unions. The BBC have just published the results of a survey of 27 seven countries involving 29,000 people. 23 percent of those surveyed agreed that capitalism is fatally flawed. If this is an accurate reflection of the distribution of discontent, the possibilities for a genuinely revolutionary left party are growing. As are the incentives to adopt left phrases by the reformist sects.

Chris  
Ireland  
9 November 2009

*On "The fall of the Berlin Wall"*

Dear Mr. Schwarz:

Thanks so much for the new perspective on the fall of the GDR. As a frequent visitor, I agree with the notion that East German citizens lost a lot with the disappearance of the GDR.

I also appreciate the Trotskyist view. Good to know some are still around!

Chalmers H  
9 November 2009

*On "A letter and reply on Theodor Adorno"*

I was fascinated by the recent correspondence regarding Theodore Adorno. I myself used to think that Adorno was a Marxist—before I had any idea of what Marx actually wrote! I was basically impressed by the air of gloomy anguished defiance exhibited by Adorno. Interestingly the rock critic Greil Marcus has compared Adorno to a punk

rocker(!). This may seem facetious, but I think there is a connection. Adorno's writings, like the typical punk song, rail against everything while supporting nothing—a very conservative position.

I started to have doubts about Adorno when I heard about him dismissing the “idiotism” of protest songs. I started to wonder what Adorno actually advocated.

I then stumbled on a fascinating essay on Adorno by Dave Harker. Harker seems to basically agree with the German New Left writer (Konrad Boehmer) who called Adorno “outspokenly pre-Marxist and totally bourgeois.” Harker also notes how, in their move to America, the Frankfurt school made an effort to tone down any explicitly anti-capitalist commentary and the school's connection with later pseudo-Marxist trends in academia, e.g., post structuralism.

As for your correspondent's comment about Adorno's “famous run-in with leftwing student activists in Frankfurt” which was “caused by his consistent (and finally tragic) opposition to authoritarianism”—well, the story I heard was that these students were fed up with Adorno's quietist politics and were particularly disturbed by Adorno shaking the hand of a burly police officer. I reckon that by the time these same students held a mocking Adorno “love-in” they had accurately figured him out.

George M  
Scotland  
9 November 2009

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Instrumental rationality is only an abominable mode of thinking and doing when it is driven by a predatory economic system that must meet the demands of capital accumulation or confront an economic system that will not hold back from any action to meet the demands of its imperatives.

Richard LB  
Florida, USA  
10 November 2009

*On “Speculative recovery sows seeds of an even greater economic crash”*

In reference to your statement, “This vast wave of hot money...is being pumped into stock markets.”

Money cannot be pumped into a stock market unless new shares are issued. There is a seller for every buyer who ends up with the cash. Hence, money flows through the stock market. A high price/earnings ratio is appropriate when the alternative cash investment returns no yield.

A lower dollar is exactly what is required. It will only fall until exports increase and imports decrease.

Dewald D  
10 November 2009

*On “Obama's attack on abortion rights”*

The recent vote in Maine was the latest successful attack on the civil rights of same-sex couples. The continuing disaster for gays is not unlike the attack on abortion rights. WSWS rightly attacks Obama for his failures to defend the rights of women, but appears to be silent on the president's failures toward gays. Why the disparity?

Bob S  
Illinois, USA  
10 November 2009

*On “US: Experts warn of dementia risks from football injuries”*

The National Hockey League has the same problem and declines to do much about it. It's covered more in Canada (see Brain Injury Association of Canada), although more of the professional games are played in the US.

Joe N  
10 November 2009



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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