

Letters from our readers

18 August 2011

On “The stench of a police state”

“The stench of a police state”—this is certainly no exaggeration, Julie. It is brought about by engaging all the levers of the state: the police, ad hoc courts, government exhortations and threats, punitive administrative measures and unrelenting propaganda by government, political parties and most importantly, the media. It appears that in this organised official hysteria, the state succeeded in engaging nearly all sections of community in demonising its most marginalised and depressed part. Whilst there were recent cases of workers being “militarised” to force them back to work, in Spain, for instance, with the accompanying media offensive, the present outbreak of vicious and punitive state violence is a qualitative leap to a true police state that Orwell would have envisaged. This should be a clear warning not only to the working class, but to the whole community in Britain and beyond.

Mirek
NSW, Australia
17 August 2011

Julie Hyland’s piece on the ditching of democracy, “The stench of a police state,” came on the day that a youth in Cumbria was killed by police after being tasered. I suspect there will be no outcry by the liberal establishment about this death. It’s pointless calling for police accountability. Actions such as that in Cumbria will become more commonplace as capitalism stumbles from crisis to crisis.

Dave
UK
17 August 2011

On “Government strike-breaking against Verizon

workers”

Since they are limiting the scope of picketers at Verizon sites, the union membership should picket other locations.

Perhaps the top 100 executives at Verizon should have a picket at their homes and scab strike-breakers should have pickets at their homes. The union picketers must take it to the next level, and local news organizations should have Verizon strikers at their doorstep if they propose breaking the Verizon union.

Kim H
16 August 2011

To Verizon workers:

Verizon has called you criminals and saboteurs. Roughly \$20,000 per employee is now required from you, but this is just a starting point. What happens when Wall Street is still not satisfied?

The battle lines have been drawn against you. The unions hide behind court injunctions to hide this betrayal of the working class. The unions have been an integral part in the economic decline of the working class for over the last 30 years with the isolation of all strikes and then the concessions handed to management on a silver platter.

The entire political establishment and their union lackeys are against you. Independent rank-and-file committees of action need to be initiated to organize ourselves against the endless onslaught being waged by the private sector and led by the Obama administration.... An irrevocable break with the unions and the Democratic party and the forming of independent rank and file committees have to be part of a bigger picture, that is the establishment of building a

workers party committed to socialism, to end the tyranny of the private profit system.

Julian H
Queensland, Australia
15 August 2011

The Verizon strikers were out picketing this weekend at the two Verizon locations in Nutley, New Jersey. Judging from the cars passing by and honking their support, I think the sentiment of the population is very supportive. I brought the strikers some bottled water on Saturday because it was hot and some coffee on Sunday because it was raining. Let's hope the strikers prevail!

Paul R
New Jersey, USA
15 August 2011

On "*Captain America returns to battle*"
Dear WWSWS,

I would like to make a brief comment in supplement to Hiram Lee's review of *Captain America*. Captain America, who first appeared in 1941, was conceived by writer Joe Simon and illustrator Jack Kirby not only for political reasons, but also to make money off wartime American nationalism. Kirby said the following at the Pure Imagination Fun Fair in Michigan in 1988:

"We [Simon and Kirby] were in a period when we had to get a job.... Everybody was patriotic, and it was ridiculous not to do Captain America because there was an idea that would have been *bought* by everybody, so Joe and I did that. Our job was to *sell* comic books, and we did."
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m576-P7b3G8>;
emphasis added)

The top-selling action thriller comic (also a serial film in 1944) began to struggle when World War II ended in 1945. Captain America and his sidekick Bucky had no more Nazis and "Japs" to beat up and returned home to deal their fists on crooks and gangsters. The comic soon devolved into the "weird tales" genre and to smashing "Commies" in 1954, when it was canceled.

The "living legend of World War II" returned in

1968, the superhero genre now experiencing a resurgence in the United States. While the blatant racism of the 1940s series was avoided and an attempt made to humanize the Captain, old themes remained. He, for example, was still fighting his Nazi nemesis the Red Skull and, in at least one case, Chinese Maoists.

That said, I do not think the final paragraph of Lee's review is accurate. The film *is* stirring feelings of nationalism in some viewers. An amateur reviewer on YouTube says, "Captain America is basically about a guy who dresses like the American flag and goes to kick some ass.... I felt a little bit more patriotic after watching it." Sometimes flag idolatry is all it takes.

Captain America has been around for seventy years, his embodied nationalism commercially adapted to the times. Kirby said in 1988 that Marvel had the "prerogative" to do what it needed to with Captain America in order to make money, and if sales were not strong, that had to be fixed. The *Captain America* film serves to renew idolatrous nationalism with financial returns.

Sincerely yours,
Adam H
15 August 2011



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