

## Letters from our readers

5 June 2012

*On “Obama uses Memorial Day speech to rehabilitate Vietnam War”*

And so, it seems, we’ve finally come full circle. The erstwhile antiwar protesters of yesteryear, having been carried to the right for some 40-odd years by prevailing political currents, now find themselves in the (admittedly uncomfortable, for them) position of supporting a president who excoriates them for their lack of loyalty in opposing the Vietnam War!

Go where you belong from now on—into the dustbin of history!

Tom A  
30 May 2012

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Very well-written piece. The “stabbed in the back” myth of the Vietnam War has always been a pet interest of mine. The servicemen’s resistance to the war is incredibly powerful, and I can scarcely recall another time in history when it would have been quite so exciting to do politics in the bourgeois army.

Of course, the whole hippies spitting on veterans doesn’t even pass the smell test. I get that hippies in 1969 were made of sterner stuff than today’s crop, but as Frank Zappa points out in his autobiography: Can anyone take seriously for 10 seconds the idea that hippies were going around spitting on battle-hardened marines? Not bloody likely.

Nicholas  
USA  
30 May 2012

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Dear Bill—Perhaps you’ve noticed the bumper stickers that have adorned cars and trucks for

decades—there’s two versions I can think of: one reads, “If you value your freedom, thank a vet” and another, more reactionary version reads, “If you can read this, thank a teacher. If you can read this in English, thank a vet.” Obama’s speech feeds these distortions of the Vietnam War, as you pointed out, to “prepare public opinion” for even worse crimes by his administration and the Pentagon. The men and woman who are sent to fight in these wars are not responsible for the crimes of the Democratic and Republican Party leadership and their billionaire sponsors.

Who knows? Obama’s speech may have included a reference to the myth that soldiers returning from Vietnam were “spat upon” by anti-war protesters—but was deleted as too inflammatory. Sociologist Jerry Lembcke has discredited that canard, and good riddance: it was a filthy lie worthy of the Nazi propagandists of the 1930s.

If Obama is elected to a second term, we may find it officially sanctioned.  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Spitting\\_Image](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Spitting_Image)

Randy R  
Oregon  
31 May 2012

*On “Remembering the Ludlow Massacre”*

Thank you, Jack Hood, for this wrenching labor history lesson. The workers’ struggle is indeed a civil war—in a permanent cycle.

Ray K  
31 May 2012

*On “Jerry White speaks at Quad Cities election meeting”*

This is just speculation on my part, but I think that possibly the ruling class here in the US has become

aware that all of the financial manipulations of the banks and Wall Street are a dead end in terms of providing them with a stable return on their investment. The Wall Street crash of 2008 proved that. So now they are of a mind that they must make an assault on the working class to improve their bottom line. That is, they are pursuing the old-fashioned way of profit-making by banishing workers from the workplace as much as possible, while at the same time seeing to it that those remaining with a job are entitled to receive the bare minimum for their labor. This has always been the recourse of the bourgeoisie, and to their mind, this is in all places and for all time effective.

There are two problems with this strategy. First of all, the ranks of the working class have considerably swelled since the last time that the ruling class in the US refused to accept a higher standard of living for the working class. Secondly, with the current high levels of productivity in the US, reducing the wages of the working class and reducing the number actively employed is only going to have a scant effect on profitmaking.

So the scenario being developed is a disaster. The present bourgeois ruling class will never throw up their hands in despair, admit that traditional profit-making is no longer viable and financial manipulations risky at best. In the past, those who were the ruling class have never willingly relinquished their being in power.

Socialism or barbarism means that the barbarism is the only recourse for the survival of capitalism. That is, there must be sufficient destruction returning the level of productivity to that of an earlier era. Is that how the majority of the people of the world want to resolve the crisis of capitalism? Most certainly not.

Peter L  
Maine, USA  
31 May 2012

*On "Muskegon Heights, Michigan to convert entire school district to charters"*

"Most charter schools were started for the wrong reason—to make money—and most of them are mediocre," said Ron Caya, founder of the New School for the Arts in Scottsdale, Arizona. "Now we've got all

these problem charters".

Charter schools are not accountable to state and federal guidelines, which the public demanded decades ago. Class size is not smaller at 22 to 24 students. The teachers hired are young, without credentials, and inexperienced. Sixty percent of these teachers are operating with an emergency, provisional, or probationary certificate. Even the private companies that run these charters are without proper credentials, and are inexperienced in the field of education. Charters are raiding the federal and state monies earmarked for education, and they simply have not proved themselves in any state. They do not have to adhere to any federal mandates. They do not have to honor the same school hours, provide any before or after daycare, enforce policies on bullying, or hire specialists such as nurses, counselors, and psychologists. There is no special education provided, and sports programs are also nonexistent. Charter schools do not make the grade.

LH  
2 June 2012



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