

# Letters from our readers

15 November 2012

*On "The Petraeus affair"*

This was an excellent article. It stuck to the known facts, it didn't put words in anyone's mouth, it didn't attempt to project motivations.

What it did do was approach the subject rationally, with Marxist insight into the workings of US politics and the mixed, sometimes contradictory, pressures on US capital.

Good job!

Gene G  
New York, USA  
12 November 2012

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Maybe this would be a good time to revisit the concept of "state within the state".

One of the most trusted architects and executioners of American imperialism's machinations in one of the most important and volatile regions of the world, with deep ties to both the military and intelligence highest circles, working under both Republican and Democratic administrations, is removed based on a purely personal matter? Doesn't pass the smell test.

What is the thought on the timing as well? The most "benign" explanation is that the Obama administration did not want to deal with the hawks using his getting rid of Petraeus during the run up to the election to portray him as "soft" on foreign policy.

If we saw a high military or secret police chief removed in any other country around the time of an election the first thought would be to entertain the

possibility of a coup being headed off.

Whether a "cold coup" using voter fraud or something more sinister in the works would be something we would at least consider. Removed on election day, not shortly after; timing here is what has me considering what the nature of this thing is.

If indeed there was no elected representatives with any clue as to the machinations of all that was going on for months (although this has to be seriously questioned as well), it would bring me back to the question of the "state within the state" and the real destruction of any democratic control over the state and specifically its organs of repression.

CO  
13 November 2012

*On "Belgium: 20,000 protest against closure of Ford plant in Genk"*

This report shows the necessity of militant workers coming together, outside of the union structures, to form committees of struggle. These committees need to be able to attract all workers regardless of being union or non-union and be able to push out from their particular workplaces to attempt to draw in all workers.

These organisations while not being strike committees or assemblies may provide a nucleus, a pole of attraction for workers such as those mentioned in the report to begin to develop a means to fight back free from union handicaps or sabotage.

Dave T  
UK  
13 November 2012

*On "Philippine 'left' quarrels over election"*

This situation is very common in many countries now. Many CPs and left movements work close with ruling capitalist parties... the international leftist movement should understand this situation first before everything. Many leftists depend on capitalists for the survival. This is a tragic situation all over the world.

Gamini

13 November 2012

*On "Steven Spielberg's Lincoln and the historical drama of the Civil War"*

That was a brilliant and very necessary background to a movie which had some battering from critics, or at least loud reservations. I will see it on your recommendation to see if it wipes from my mouth the foul taste that the many novels that the Stalinist novelist Howard Fast produced under the tutelage of the Stalinist historian Herbert Aptheker which had been turned into rabid right wing movies in the last number of years, a nauseating list of prostration and groveling I witnessed from my youth when such gents lived and served the ruling class mythology, turning historical facts into silly-putty. Mind you, after Hungary 1956, Howard Fast became Zen Buddhist, very chic at the time, and Aptheker a leading expert on the American Revolution and Civil War, a "scholar" I came near to barf on hearing lecture, too many times.

So it is with no disrespect that I add additional suggestions to your wise advice to read Bruce Catton's *Never Call Retreat*. This work looks wonderfully and shrewdly over Abraham Lincoln's giant shoulders when only principle could have sustained the man, as Marx noted in your citation.

It is worth checking out the address Karl Marx penned and addressed to Abraham Lincoln in 1864 at that crucial turning point in our history. At the head of a large number of working man, each adding his occupation to his signature in case you thought Marx hung out only in libraries, the Executive Committee of the International Workingmen's Association (the First International): "From the commencement of the titanic strife, the workingmen felt instinctively that the star-spangled banner carried the destiny of their class."

May I also recommend reading Bruce Catton's *Lincoln's Army* together with Joseph T. Glatheer's *General Lee's Army* to see how it looked from the ground up, using the soldiers' account of what happened at Antietam when it dawned on both armies precisely what they were fighting for. Lee vainly pleaded after to free slaves willing to fight for slavery, but that was not possible when under all the rhetoric, it was an army fighting for slavery. Meanwhile, under indifferent and vain generals before Grant took over with not a few mistakes in his first ventures, the Army of the Potomac rallied, fought and won, but only with clearly stated and principled goals and resolute leadership by Abraham Lincoln.

Good review.

AL

Toronto, Canada

12 November 2012



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