

Letters from our readers

19 March 2013

On “The New York Times’ Bill Keller smears Bradley Manning”

I am a retired member of the US Air Force having served actively from 1970 to 1990. As I look back on my career I can say I have two heroes (and one definitely isn't Oliver North). These heroes are Smedley Butler and Bradley Manning.

Smedley Butler, of “War is a Racket” fame, is my hero for what he said and did after his career to bring to light what the imperialist military is really about.

However, Bradley Manning laid his whole life on the line by bringing to light war crimes. Some would say because he helped to reveal classified documents, by the letter of the law he should go to prison. I say in the spirit of justice and love of humanity, he should get a ticker tape parade in New York City.

In my military career, I never came close to doing what he did. However, unlike Oliver North (who said he was just obeying orders), in a few circumstances I did refuse to obey orders from officers appointed over me as these orders were just wrong. I was fortunate that these officers saw the errors they were about to make and did not press charges against me.

The real duty of a military member is to refuse orders that are unjust and that hide immoral and unjust actions.

Those who exposed Watergate in the Nixon era are heroes. So is Bradley Manning.

Ken S
Wisconsin, USA
18 March 2013

On “A financial dictator for Detroit”

The Bing administration very timidly suggested last year that major corporations were not paying taxes to the city, including DTE Energy. Bing said it was possible DTE owed \$2.5 million. The Ilitch family—which owns not only Little Caesars but also the Detroit Red Wings, the Detroit Tigers, and the Fox Theatre—was also found to owe over \$2.5 million. All

the accused corporations have denied it, and who is Bing to point a finger at his masters?

Many of the real estate speculators and private equity firms that have snapped up properties in bulk over the past few years have not paid taxes and have simply left the properties to deteriorate. According to a recent report by the *Detroit News*, landlords are also milking the status of tax delinquency as a legal loophole: “Property owners increasingly are re-buying their land in tax-foreclosure auctions and legally erasing their debts. Last year, 600 properties were re-purchased by their owners, triple the number in 2010. That cost the city nearly \$6 million in unpaid taxes.”

EG
Michigan, USA
15 March 2013

On “One hundred years since the birth of John Garfield—charismatic, working class figure of postwar Hollywood films”

Thank you for this. Garfield was before my time, but I have enjoyed the few films I've seen and now I have a list of his pictures to educate myself.

His role as Wolf in *Destination Tokyo* is, of course, so silly in so many ways, but he manages to bring the part alive with charisma and humor. His strut, his bravado—he seems to embody his working class origins—sensibilities, perhaps unintended for this bit of fluff movie. (I enjoyed it, only because I tend to love all movies about submarines.)

That he died so young and in such tragic circumstances, I did not know. What a shame, what a waste. Yet, he accomplished much...

Rob M
15 March 2013

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When I read articles like this one, I'm reminded of what American culture—and especially films—missed out on because of the devastating anticommunist witch-hunts of the 1950s. Talented actors, writers, directors,

and producers were rendered unemployable, sent into exile, hounded to death (like Garfield), or brought to heel. The impact can still be seen in the disproportionate amount of puerile nonsense that shows up on movie screens and on DVD.

We were deprived of Garfield, Joseph Losey, Sam Wanamaker, Zero Mostel, Paul Robeson, and given what in return?—Cinemascope biblical spectacles.

Marty J

Massachusetts, USA

17 March 2013



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