Letters from our readers

27 August 2003

Below we post a selection of recent letters to the World Socialist Web Site.

On "How "entertaining" is the American entertainment industry? Charlie's Angels; Hulk; Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl; Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines", *25 August 2003*

Dear WSWS,

David Walsh is one of those rare film critics (and I'm talking about Peter Travers of *Rolling Stone* and Sir Roger Ebert here) who, though I don't always agree, I enjoy how he thinks, and always enjoy reading his opinion of flicks. But when I read the title of his summer review lumping *Pirates of the Caribbean* with *Charlie's Angels 2*, *Hulk*, and *T3*, I was quite offended at first.

After all, Angels 2 was so ineptly made I walked out within the first 45 minutes: I saw it for free and was still cheated. (That quote from McG is a gem. While he's not on the level of cinematic hell as the loathsome Michael Bay, at least Bay wouldn't kid us with references to Truffaut to justify his schlock). And Hulk was so painfully serious and T3 so harmlessly uninspired that to call them mediocre would be flattering. But Pirates was a different ballpark altogether, even if it was another $100 million extravaganza. Johnny Depp (who again and again proves he's got the best tastes of any actor since Harrison Ford in the 80's) was a man on a mission, and the rest of the cast (including Rush, the lovely Keira Knightley, and Orlando Bloom) were top notch. Bloom in particular proves what I already suspected, that he's the real deal with an extraordinary gravity, as compared to empty cutouts like Collin Farrell. Add to that some badass fight and action scenes, and I was glad there was one movie this summer unashamed to be pure fun and actually was fun to watch.

So, needless to say, when I read the full reviews, I was happy to see Walsh steal these words from my mouth and say it even better than I could have. Keep it up, Walsh. It's nice to see a socialist writer who isn't too wrapped up in his politics he can't enjoy real entertainment for what it is. And keep it up, WSWS, as it perhaps is a great testament for your viewpoint that your news analysis is refreshingly and overwhelmingly right on.

RS

25 August 2003

Dear David Walsh:

I found your article—as always—to be quite enlightening. I do, however, have a question about the introduction to your piece, which touched on a subject which seems to come up time and again. In this specific instance, the Frankfurt school. I have read other critical, and favorable reviews of their work, and, each time I have been left wondering why this "school" is always referred to as Marxist.

To me, being a Marxist means that I hold a few propositions as being true. First and foremost, that dialectical materialism is valid and accurate: true. Marxists believe that there are two great opposing camps that are battling it out on the world-historical stage, and that these are the capitalist and proletarian classes. Either both classes will mutually destroy one another, and thereby extinguish humanity, or send us back to barbarism or savagery—or the proletarian camp will eventually triumph.

Secondly, as Marxists, we are duty bound to do whatever we can to hasten the ascendancy of the proletarian class, and, in a way which will guarantee that all of humanity will one day see the slogan, "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs," realized.

One of the quotes that you cited, "Films, radio and magazines make up a system which is uniform as a whole and in every part...Under monopoly all mass culture is identical," is something that, to me makes absolutely no sense, from any standpoint, but, at the same time, demonstrates that these are not Marxists, but, rather, traitors, or Hegelians, in either case, serving the ruling class. For the media to be completely uniform in its whole and in every part would signify that it was perfect. Were this the case, then, no matter what, nothing could penetrate the ideological grip that the bourgeoisie has over the masses of humanity, and therefore negate the need for a proletarian party. For them not to see that this claim of theirs is false, signifies that they have either abandoned Marxism, or weren't Marxists to begin with.

I have read essays, though not anything in book form from this group before, and I have retained little if anything from them, because, I do remember that I had always found them to use the most obfuscatory language possible to develop nonsensical, inane ideas. To me, anyone who claims to be Marxist and does not even make an attempt to write clearly, so that as many people as possible can read their works, is an act of deception in itself, and, as Marxists, we work to raise consciousness of the class antagonisms in society, not to lower it and leave it in a cloud of confusion.

Which, brings me to the reason for this email...from my

© World Socialist Web Site

readings, the *WSWS* and ICFI is the only organization that does not refer to the Frankfurt school as Marxists, but rather, critically designates them as lefts, or petty bourgeois radicals. I believe this in itself says volumes about your organization, that of other "Marxist" parties, as well as the past and current objective situation.

Thank you,

HR

25 August 2003

I have been reading your site sporadically for a number of months, and I just wanted to write to give my thanks and congratulations to your team for consistently putting out a much more reasonable viewpoint on current events than can be found in the mainstream media. Most everyone to whom I've shown one of your articles has been completely blown away by them. They've just never heard the other side of the story, I guess. I'll keep doing my part by being informed and helping others find out the truth about the world today, as long as you keep putting it out there. Thanks a lot guys, and keep up the good work.

JN

25 August 2003

On "California's Governor Davis denounces 'right-wing power grab'"

This speech was pretty amazing in that Davis was actually correct in his accusations, despite the fact that he seemed bemused by the words coming out of his own mouth. When I read what he'd said, I concluded that he's been reading the *World Socialist Web Site* (or someone on his staff has). But it's the same as with the Al Gore speech at New York University. He's cribbed the list of malfeasance elucidated by opponents of the Republican right wing and the two-party system in general and is using it to deceive the alienated amongst the electorate into thinking that he's finally calling a spade and spade and that he will therefore work in the interests of working people. Of course, he has no such intention, but it sounds good.

CZ

San Francisco

25 August 2003

On "The US blackout and 'homeland security'"

A couple of observations from someone who survived the North American blackout (metro Detroit area). The Iraq electrical infrastructure being destroyed is just another war crime of the coalition of warmongers. A modern society cannot function without electricity. There are probably many heat-related deaths occurring in Iraq that are not being reported. Also this shows how weak the American Empire is and how close it is to total collapse. Without any outside influence America is ready to crumble. Also it shows how the US government has done nothing to provide security and protection to America. "Homeland Security" is just another massive government boondoggle that wastes taxpayers' money and allows a police state to be implemented. It has not made America any more safe (actually less) but does generate terror to keep the "sheeple" in line. While we have serious problems that are being ignored (electrical infrastructure, computer viruses, oil/gas infrastructure, telecommunication/internet infrastructure) that do impact America's ability to function as a society, we spend billions on illegal police activity. If a terrorist group were to attack the electrical/oil/gas infrastructure they could wreak massive havoc on America. Of course why should terrorists even bother? The US government and its corporate bullies are doing a great job of destroying these infrastructures on their own.

G

25 August 2003

A well-reasoned, logical and truthful disquisition. What can prevent this calamity from recurring? Why, nothing, of course, given that the political system that permitted it to happen is irremovably entrenched.

Most Americans, I believe, are unaware of the underlying causes of the massive power failure, a disaster unthinkable in any other industrially-advanced nation. Minor twiddling and tweaking of legislation and regulation will occur to pacify the more damaged of your citizenry, but no more.

As you so succinctly point out, the major organs of mass information are in the hands of the very class of power-holders whose inattention to their social responsibilities and immense regard to the maximisation of profit led directly to this affair.

State governments here in Australia are 'privatising' major public utilities: gas and water reticulation, electricity production and supply, Qantas the national airline, etc. etc.

I have no doubt that when important newly-privatised undertakings in Australia begin to collapse, the general consensus will be act of God, inexperience of management, or any reason which precludes the systemic inability of the capitalist ethic to recognise and deal with obligations to the wider community.

Still, you over there get ten out of ten for even daring to make statements adversely critical of your appalling political circumstances. Mazeltov!

Fraternal regards,

E

19 August 2003

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site