

Recent letters from WSWs readers

6 August 2004

Below we publish recent letters from readers on a variety of topics.

On "Bill Cosby blames parents for US society's ills"

Dear Editor:

This article only confirms that the elite, under whatever disguise of race or religion, basically all think alike (with perhaps a few exceptions). Perhaps he should also read "It Takes a Village to Make a Millionaire" at United for a Fair Economy, but I rather think he is comfortable with the idea that through his own grand personal decisions, he became rich while the low-lifers, having made bad ones, deserve their special hell. It takes away any sense of personal responsibility in feeling outrage at suffering, the same way that leaving decisions to God does. Capitalism, by necessity, must do this in order to establish and support inequality because Capitalism is inequality. For those to enjoy the "good life" there must be those who "suffer the bad life," and a larger number in the latter position I must add. In order for Capitalism to survive, it must perpetuate the myth of "personal responsibility" over "social responsibility," and throwing in a bit of religious fundamentalism with the same attitudes is always a good idea for complete mind control.

It may be impossible to remove blinders from the likes of Cosby, but I suggest that the working masses of the world do not put the same ones on in the first place.

SN

Powell River, British Columbia

14 July 2004

Dear Mr. Lawrence,

I was happy to read your comments on the remarks of Bill Cosby and the controversy he has caused.

When I first read some of his comments, I was outraged and continue to be outraged because he will not shut up. Every week, he is somewhere talking more nonsense. Maybe he is becoming senile. At least I hope that is his excuse.

I cannot understand how he can blame the parents for every wrong act that a child commits. I do know that some black families live as the Huxtables do. But the majority of us are just trying to get by and do the best we can for our children.

I suppose Mr. Cosby wishes that we not reproduce if we are not doctors or lawyers. We have rights, too, and we want children.

The real culprit is this capitalistic system that breeds this hatred of the have-nots from the haves after they take and take what belongs to everyone. It is really sad when we want our children to have equal opportunity and it "ain't" happening. Mr. Cosby needs to look backward at history, since he is having such a hard time seeing the present conditions.

Truly, the comment that offended me the most was when he said, "We all are crying over this black man shot in the head for stealing a piece of a cake." He had the nerve to ask, "What was he doing with the cake in his hand?" It is a very sad day indeed when anyone can condone this behavior, but especially for someone who should know better.

Thanks for writing on Mr. Cosby and allowing me to respond.

Sincerely,

ZG

Texas

14 July 2004

On: "The death of "TJ" Hickey—the social and economic circumstances"

An article like this would never be published in Australia.

Australian aboriginal people live in conditions worse than so-called third-world countries, while we praise and fete our sporting stars, indulge in our wine and seafood, and go boating on our beautiful harbour.

Genocide is happening here, today, everyday, and is supported by the media and the puppets that call themselves politicians.

Shame on Australia.

TF

Community Development Officer, Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre
Sydney, Australia.

29 July 2004

On "Britain: Blair's claims on Iraqi mass graves refuted" 30 July 2004

Dear editor,

While Blair lies shamelessly about the number of bodies found in mass graves, there is complete silence on the numbers of Iraqis, both soldiers and civilians, that were slaughtered during the US-led invasion of Iraq.

During the 1990 Gulf War, many thousands of soldiers and civilians were butchered by US warplanes as they retreated along the Basra road. Of course, we hear nothing from Blair about the mass graves in which the victims of this massacre were interred.

Regards,

EG

30 June 2004

On: "Indian budget: pro-business agenda dressed up in a pro-poor disguise"

Dear Editor,

In the article of 24 July 2004 on the above subject, the author stated, "Significantly the Left Front has raised no major objections to the budget. A statement issued by the CPI-M Political Bureau criticised the decision to allow greater foreign investment in the telecom, insurance and airline sectors. Their criticism, however, was not on the basis that the decision would effect workers, but rather that it would impact on Indian companies.

The CPI-M leaders have been at pains to reassure big business. Political Bureau member Sitaram Yechury declared that the party had no plans to oppose or amend the budget in parliament.

But still, the Indian mainstream journals keep ridiculing the CPI-M and its spokesperson Yechury even for the nominal opposition to the enhancement of the Foreign Direct Investment ceilings in insurance, telecommunication and civil aviation. They have carefully avoided any serious debate on the economic issues. Rather, the journalists treated this as an issue of inter-party rivalry and ridicule and pass trivial joking remarks on "left politicians" in general.

Sincerely,

JP

Hyderabad, India

30 July 2004

On volunteering for the SEP election campaign

Last week I did some volunteer work for the Socialist Equality Party

presidential candidates. More than anything else, I found this to be an antidote to the lying, cynical demagoguery that the Democratic Party convention forced us to suffer through this week.

While any antiwar message has been hacked up at the convention, I encountered people such as the student at Sinclair College in Dayton, Ohio, who declared a strong wish for the war against Iraq to end immediately as her boyfriend was just finishing boot camp and expected to ship out to Iraq. While Bush declares the economy on an upswing and Kerry announces that he could save American jobs by subsidizing the profits of the corporate parasites, people we encountered urgently agreed with SEP ideas for massive funding of job programs, as they explained how they were afraid they could not make ends meet. Even at a rural county fair where it seemed that half the people were registered Republicans, we found no hostility to our accusation that the two parties were tools of the 1 percent of super-rich.

The immense hatred for Bush that we encountered in working-class areas was unfortunately often accompanied by support funneled to Kerry. Yet that support was usually proposed with an almost religious faith, as its proponents never had arguments to meet our exposure of Kerry's positions for the war and defense of the profit system. That people seemed to fall into support for the four multi-millionaire candidates out of the absence of the knowledge of history and class in our society served to make campaigning to educate for a real socialist alternative all the more interesting and gratifying. In opposition to the election hypocrisy we are faced with on the media, campaigning for Bill Van Auken and Jim Lawrence makes a person feel honestly like they are contributing to a positive future for humanity. I heartily recommend it to all the readers of the World Socialist Web Site.

HL

30 July 2004

On the far-right-wing bias of the *New York Times*

They really need to rename the paper something along the lines of "The New York/Pentagon Times." Better still, they might ask the administration for additional funding so they might further support the half-baked lies that are generated by the current administration and by the Bush-Kerry ticket (this assumes no ideological distinction to identify either major political party). It has become impossible to read most daily newspapers in the US in the hope of becoming better informed. They do little more than parrot whatever the Pentagon or the administration would like to see published. They engaged in the mindless, ritualistic flag-waving hysteria in the run-up to the invasion of both Afghanistan and Iraq, and they undoubtedly will provide nothing more than the usual jingoistic nonsense in future mindless invasions in the next several years. No, you cannot hope to see any restraint exercised by the press against the power grabbing, mindless leaders of either major political party—and 3rd-party candidates? The Democrats and Republicans have determined the rules under which debates will be held. Can you think for a moment that any publications in this increasingly fascist-oriented state will provide a platform for a 3rd-party candidate?

LZ

3 August 2004

On: "An honorable effort, but it lacks fire": *Review of The Manchurian Candidate*, directed by Jonathan Demme

Thanks to David Walsh for another clear-headed film analysis! I have long considered Jonathan Demme an example of an artistically and morally compromised Hollywood artist. *Melvin and Howard* and *Stop Making Sense* were true gems, but could not have been very profitable. What is profitable is perverse violence (*Silence of the Lambs*, from a "best-seller"), sensation and "marketability," and Mr. Demme's later works reflect this tendency. I concur with Mr. Walsh's estimation of *Something Wild* as strangely schizophrenic and rather disturbing. It has always bothered me that its humorous, wacked-out premise climaxed in a terribly

violent confrontation between privilege and perversity.

What is the director saying here? *Something Wild* could be considered a model of recent propagandizing Hollywood films. It taps into discontent with the wealthy and powerful and the status quo, giving a taste of social critique, but gradually leads the viewer down the primrose path of acceptance and ultimate acquiescence.

Manchurian Candidate is a similarly self-sabotaging Hollywood production. With the consolidation of the huge media outlets, and the pervasive influence of the Pentagon and FBI in recent films, it doesn't surprise me in the least that the current remake of the *Manchurian Candidate* ends the way it does. It would never have been made by a major studio unless it contained a deus ex machina ending absolving the federal government (hence, corporate America) of their manifold crimes.

But the first tip-off is the fact that it was made at all. Remaking a film blunts the effect of the original. Many non-discerning moviegoers want to see only recent films, and this remake helps to prevent their contact with the real item. And it is easy. No need to sift through those endless scripts with their difficult, dangerous and original ideas...

RR

5 August 2004

On "New York: Sotheby's workers locked out for more than a week" 27 July 2004

Hi,

I have just read the article concerning Sotheby's local 814 lockout. Thank you so much for reporting the union's side of the story. My husband is on that picket line. As of this week, Sotheby's is offering a proposal today. Hopefully, there will be an agreement on the proposal. We also just got notices from unemployment. We are denied. These men have been loyal to Sotheby's for many years and stand that line everyday because they want their jobs back. They chant, "We want our jobs back."

The men are getting tired, no money to support their families as of now. My husband commutes into NYC from PA everyday to stand on that line to fight for his job back. In my eyes, that's loyalty! I want to thank you for this article so readers can really understand what is really going on here.

Thank you,

Stacey



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