Letters from our readers

28 January 2005

The following is a selection of recent letters received by the World Socialist Web Site.

On "Australia: Labor's crisis deepens as its new leader resigns, and quits politics"

In Terry Cook's excellent coverage of the resignation of the Australian Labour Party's most recent leader, the following paragraph appears:

"Sweeping changes in world economy bound up with vast developments in computer technology and the globalisation of all aspects of production have undermined the very foundations of reformism and transformed the Labor Party into an open agency for the dismantling of all the past gains of the working class."

As a British person, I am sharply aware of how well these words apply to the Labour Party in my own country, as well as to the French Socialist Party and the German SDP under Schröder.

I would welcome an article (or a series) analysing the scandalous history of these parties' decline over the past two decades—the process seems to me to reach at least that far back. In particular, it is the analysis of underlying factors, rather than the recounting of personal power struggles, defeats, victories and betrayals (the "Tony and Gordon" pseudo-saga), that I should like to encounter at more length. I have found this historic collapse personally devastating, and in a sense I struggle every day to comprehend how it could have occurred and what I might do to oppose it.

In closing, let me say how much I appreciate the invaluable work of wsws.org. Access to reporting and analysis of such depth and quality on a daily basis gives me hope that precisely the tools (computers, electronic communications, data-based financial systems) that drive the present phase of capitalist destruction may also be the keys with which to unlock a future of social equity and environmental responsibility, based upon global human solidarity. We saw a hint of this in the massive Western popular response to the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster—the speed and scale of ordinary people's giving left their governments looking mean. That gave leverage to aid agencies and the UN to go public with the fact that government aid pledges are rarely fulfilled, or delivered without strings. Just a couple of days ago, it was widely reported that so far only half of state aid pledges have so far been received.

PV
27 January 2005

London

On "France: strikes reveal lack of programme to fight austerity measures"

The real tragedy for us workers is that the labor bureaucracy seeks to pressure capitalist governments and their politicians only for reforms rather than going after the essential question, which is what class holds or should hold state power.

It is historically instructive that French labor bureaucrats (like their counterparts in every capitalist country) conveniently ignore this question, and this points to the fact that they support capitalism and the permanent subordination of labor to it. Such craven servility just goes to show that they learned nothing from their own history—even thinkers like Rousseau postulated that whenever a government no longer represents the people, the people have the right to overthrow it. In this day and age, it is no longer an issue of whether we have the right to overthrow governments, but that overthrowing those governments, and the capitalist system they represent, is an absolute necessity for the survival of humanity and planet Earth.

GC
25 January 2005

On "South Asia disaster appeal: White House tries to cover up Bush's moment of truth"

The press recently quoted Secretary of State-designate Condoleezza Rice as saying that Asia's tsunami disaster has provided a "wonderful opportunity" for the United States to show compassion with relief efforts that reaped "great dividends" on the diplomatic front.

As you have correctly pointed out, the initial reaction by Bush was one of throwing a few cents, a fraction of what a fighter plane costs, to the tsunami victims, showing his contempt for the lives of the poor and his cruelty as a human being. But the statement by Condoleezza Rice, made during her Senate confirmation hearings, reveals more than the miserliness of the US and its disregard for human life.

Ms. Rice's words are a "Freudian slip" that show how this gang of criminals in Washington perceives a colossal human catastrophe—as something to be taken advantage of. How can one speak in the same sentence about the 200,000-plus killed by the tsunami in Asia and this disaster providing a "wonderful opportunity" yielding "great dividends"?

Even by the moral standards of all Western religions, the right attitude towards the suffering of our fellow man is to "give without expecting anything in return." Rice's statements

© World Socialist Web Site

can't but provoke anger and disbelief among the victims' relatives and the millions who have donated time and money "without expecting anything in return."

Of course, the establishment press and television news programs paid no attention to Rice's stupid and spontaneous remarks. They remain faithful to their job of hiding the true nature of the Bush administration—that they are vultures flying in circles, happily waiting to rip off gains from human misery.

Where does this kind of thinking finds its root? In free market lingo: crisis (the pain of many) means opportunity (the gain of a few). It's all fair game!

CU
26 January 2005
New York, New York

On "The Fort Bragg murders: a grim warning on the use of the military"

These murders are not new at Ft. Bragg. Military men at Ft. Bragg have been murdering and attempting to murder their wives for a very long time. I lived at Ft. Bragg 10 years as a child, and I personally knew two male soldiers who killed their wives and one other who attempted to kill his wife and newborn child. I was trying to research the former murders and came across this article. The military has too long covered up the severity of domestic violence within their communities, and this is not a circumstance where "don't ask, don't tell" should be used.

ATS
27 January 2005

On "Academy fails to nominate *Fahrenheit 9/11*: Hollywood's olive branch to Bush"

Thanks for your article on the snubbing of Michael Moore by the Oscar crowd. You may be the only person in the US who acknowledges the "olive branch" truth of the matter. Coupled with your excellent articles on some of the films that were nominated (for example, *Aviator*), I think we have good insights into the gold-plated trash that is truly Hollywood.

JC
26 January 2005
Orlando, Florida

I am a big fan of WSWS. You guys are not afraid to tell the truth and thank God for you.

I disagree, however, with your statement that "none of the male nominees are particularly deserving." Among them, you have Jamie Fox's name. I beg to differ. Jamie Fox did an incredible portrayal of Ray Charles. You very soon forget that you are even looking at Jamie Fox in that movie. When he went through the scene in which he is withdrawing from heroin, you could almost feel his anguish and pain. Jamie Fox brought his viewers into the ups and downs of Mr. Charles's life, like no other actor that I have recently seen. If he had *not* been nominated, there would have truly been no justice in Hollywood.

I totally agree with you on your comments on *Fahrenheit 9/11*. That movie sent a powerful message all over the world. It left out Israel's part in 9/11 but otherwise, was an excellent piece of work. I am not surprised by Hollywood's lack of nominating this documentary. Hollywood has always been owned, lock, stock and barrel, by "the powers that be." Overall, they are racist and wimps. Hollywood is still the same old Hollywood, biased, controlled and racist. Nothing new.

LC
26 January

On "The absence of democratic sensibility in American filmmaking: *Million Dollar Baby*, directed by Clint Eastwood"

I just read your review of *Million Dollar Baby* and agree with most of what you pointed out. I'd like to add one more point. I did a lot of amateur boxing when I was young. (I'm 58 now.) Based on that, and on having watched many professional fights, I'd argue that the fight where Maggie is paralyzed would have been stopped long before she was sucker punched through disqualification of the champ for dirty fighting. If that were the case, then the whole premise of the second half of the film would be redundant.

Regards,
PJ
25 January 2005

Terrific review. You are about the only honest and sane reviewer out there.

EP
23 January 2005
New York, New York

Another amazing review. I really appreciated your synopsis of the boxing film genre, which I didn't know. You've changed the way I look at films and art generally. That's mostly a good thing in that I'm less easily manipulated by charlatans and misanthropes. However, I don't enjoy films quite as much as I used to. I love to go to the movies, but there is so rarely anything I want to see. There is, as you say, an excess of misanthropy and unseriousness in bourgeois culture at the moment.

MM
22 January 2005

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site