

Letters on the SEP/WSWS Summer School

22 September 2005

The following are a selection of letters sent to the World Socialist Web Site on the series of lectures given at the Summer School of the Socialist Equality Party and WSWS.

On “The Russian Revolution and the unresolved historical problems of the 20th century”

I have been keenly following this series of lectures as posted on the WSWS. It is not the first time I have been impressed by the depth of clear-headed opposition to postmodernist thought, as so well articulated in your second part of the first lecture. It seems that this bizarre philosophical trend of postmodernism has a stranglehold over the entire bourgeois academia. I am a student in Australia, and the universities are just choking with this nonsense. It is sad to see so much cynicism and demoralization being passed on to our generation, who (ironically, perhaps) largely trust in what they are taught in the schools. I have no doubt that the remaining lectures in this series shall prove as enlightening and pleasurable to read as the first two have been. Keep up the extremely high standard.

Fraternally,
NP

31 August 2005

I express my deepest gratitude to David North for demonstrating yet again a point he made earlier: “The Twentieth Century is still with us ... and ticking.” I only add to his critique of postmodernism that this tendency is more insidious than he realizes. The version assailed in the second part of his lecture, today’s Sophists, the Deconstructionists, is in full retreat.

I think you should pay some attention to the most recent version, the “framing argument.” According to a theory Dr. Goebbels would fully approve, changing the framework which connects ideas transforms the meta-narrative, hence reality. Put simply, the way you express ideas evokes unconscious associations (the frame) allowing people who are shaped by dark, unconscious forces to identify with ideas and like

automatons carry them out. Hitler studied American advertisement, and used it to good effect. One problem: Stalingrad. No matter how the good Spinsmeister Goebbels tried, the heroic defense of the Soviet Union could not be explained away. Facts are stubborn, Trotsky insisted, and Hitler did not dare appear on German media for the last two years of his miserable life. Then he claimed he wanted only peace and shot himself, leaving Brother Goering to try the framing defense very unsuccessfully at Nuremberg.

The Democratic Party radicals now call upon the framing argument as a way to get out of the trap history has placed them in. It’s all a matter of language and slogan-making, it is argued along a postmodernist path. Nonsense.

AL

Toronto, Canada

31 August 2005

Thanks you for making available presentations at your summer symposium. It is a real service.

RLB

Bradenton, Florida

29 August 2005

Thank you for publishing this series of articles. Postmodernism has been under attack long before, most notably by Andrew Britton in “The Myth of Postmodernism: The Bourgeois Intelligentsia in the Age of Reagan.” This devastating critique remains unanswered to this day by the academic establishment, who prefer to ignore its arguments.

I’ve found in my experience that postmodernist faculty tend to be characterized by despicable behavior, more often than not illustrated by back-stabbing faculty they oppose, bullying tenure-track faculty, and often shafting students who dare to speak out. These people often distort facts, ignore history, and indulge in their own elitist fantasies. This also occurs in so-called learned academic societies, as well as by anonymous reviewers, used by academic and mainstream presses

who immediately trash any radical historical work that offends their neo-conservative sensibilities.

Didn't the "good book" once say, "By their works, you shall know them"?

Please continue your excellent educative work since you have now inherited the intellectual tradition of what a university should be. The most progressive work will, and always, remain outside any establishment.

P.S. An anonymous in-house reviewer of one of my books once objected to my historical reference to the blacklist era by stating that "there was no anti-Semitism in HUAC." He had obviously never heard of Rankin & Co! But, maybe, he had!

TW

31 August 2005



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