

Letters from our readers

15 November 2005

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

On “France: ‘far-left’ LCR refuses to take a stand on police repression”

Engels referred to the police as “armed bodies of men” whose purpose is to defend the status quo of the capitalist system. The LCR and other leftist groupings’ support for the continued presence of the police in the working class suburbs of Paris reveals the extent to which these forces have been incorporated into the capitalist establishment. By isolating the rebelling youth, they are performing a vital service for the ruling elite of France. In the midst of a massive crisis, they are issuing assurances that no trouble can be expected from their quarter.

Spineless lackeys, they are.

EG

8 November 2005

Hear! Hear! The outbursts of anger in the poorer French neighborhoods cannot be condoned and will not be politically effective. On the contrary, they will ultimately only serve to bring more repression and racism down on the heads of immigrants and Muslims living in France. But they are also a justifiable human reaction to the second-class treatment immigrants and laborers receive at the hands of a capitalist society in crisis. Parallels between these riots and the Watts riots of the ’60s and the US civil rights movement are readily apparent. But as in the ’60s there is no attempt to unite such a movement with the unions and the demands of the broader working class, as seen in the refusal of the French unions to defend the oppressed Muslim minorities from state repression.

Therefore, a voice must be raised in condemnation of the increased, reactionary repression (the only response of which a reactionary, repressive ruling class is capable) with which these social explosions are being met, thus making a social problem only worse and contributing to a cycle of violence, hatred and resentment. For the sake of opportunistic expediency, political parties such as the LCR are abdicating their responsibility to oppose an oppressive political regime and to reveal it for what it really is—racist, anti-immigrant, and anti-worker.

RR

Mexico

8 November 2005

On “‘Steel curtain’ in Iraq—another US war crime”

Clearly the US political establishment has no interest in ending the criminal enterprises of the administration in Iraq and Afghanistan. There are many among all of us who hate these crimes and criminals, but cannot do anything about it. Have you thought of organizing dissenters to do something beside marching

in the street—a noble, but useless act in view of the overwhelming police power to control any act which even remotely may cause concern to the elite?

Some action possible would be to have children boycott schools, and possibly teachers, from elementary to college. A small step, I know, but I can think of no other alternative. So-called ‘civil disobedience’ is a laugh and the Bush criminals are the first to laugh at it as they believe they have the country (and the world) under control.

Best regards,

JM

8 November 2005

Thanks for yet another insightful and informative analysis of the debacle in Iraq. I eagerly read your essays on the massacre in Iraq, the follies of the Bush administration, and the so-called “war on terror.” Your straightforward declarations of US war crimes and atrocities in this murderous and illegal war continue to be profound and important, especially considering the propagandistic nonsense spewed out by the corporate media. Keep it coming, comrade!

PF

Columbus, Ohio

9 November 2005

How does the US Marines discriminate insurgents from other Iraqis? I find nothing in the reports from Husaybah about particular groups attacking the Marines which would identify the group as insurgents. All the military activity appears to be on the part of the Marines. As for insurgents from other countries, the reports I’ve read said they constitute about 10 percent of the insurgent forces. All this makes me sick. My native land, the United States, bloodily murdering defenseless Iraqis. I am ashamed. It is time for everybody in Iraq—even all around the world—to stop killing one another.

AH

Aurora, Illinois

8 November 2005

On “Rosa Parks and the lessons of the civil rights movement”

This is to say thank you for writing this article, which I read with great interest. Your article is extremely important because it helps dispel the official perception that the “fruits” of the Civil Rights Movement, i.e., the anti-discriminatory laws passed in the mid-1960s, brought an end to social injustice in the US. Laws in and of themselves mean nothing. Marx illustrated this very well when he wrote in 1875 that “Law can never be higher than the economic structure and the cultural development of society conditioned by that structure.” Given the current “economic structure” and “cultural development” in the US today I think we

can safely say that the Civil Rights laws are not worth the paper they are written on.

The other important aspect of your article is the correct lessons it draws, in that the civil rights movement was and is part of the wider class struggle and that no progress can be made until it sheds the shackles of the narrow perspective of race politics. Racism is, after all, a mere form that class hatred takes. From a biological standpoint race is as trivial as one's shoe size. It doesn't in and of itself create discrimination.

Again, thanks for a fine effort.

Regards,

JR

8 November 2005

On "Ceasing to be the voice of a generation"

I liked your thoughtful review. I've always felt that Dylan conceived of himself as a prophet and that his movement away from overtly political songs reflected his perception that the politics of the '60s would not lead to "the promised land." Perhaps Dylan's trajectory should be seen as different from, but maybe motivated by the same political forces, that led to Phil Ochs's suicide. Putting aside the particularities, they were both manifesting very different reactions to the same phenomenon: the long-drawn-out death of the New Left.

In my opinion, Dylan's decision to electrify, in the context of the then seemingly-burgeoning folk revival, was indeed a betrayal of the tradition he had received from Woody Guthrie, who shunned commercialism. The electric instruments did stand for commercial music in a way that acoustic instruments didn't.

One final point: Dylan, in all his interviews, comes across as a man who looks down upon the questioner. And his reaction was not only to shallow mainstream journalist critics. I remember hearing him on Bob Fass's after-midnight radio program on WBAI-Pacifica during the '60s. He was just as supercilious to the listeners who called in with comments and questions as he was to professional journalists. I felt then, and I feel now, that he saw himself as one of the anointed ones who was a cut above everyone else. This lack of an egalitarian ethos stood him in good stead as the '60s youth movement's prophet, but it did not equip him to deal with the ups and downs of political struggle.

EG

Brooklyn, New York

9 November 2005

You are quite right. Martin Scorsese's valuable film material of Bob Dylan's glory years placed too much stress on the unevenly received British tour and subsequent motorcycle accident. Dylan overlooked a very interesting historical period, and produced drivel afterwards.

I will never forget, though, on a very cold winter night in Montreal when, quite unexpectedly in 1965, the newly built Place des Arts hosted Dylan of the "Bringing It All Back Home" era. He already had the famous hairdo featured on the album cover rising in the air. Not since Wilhelm Reich had anyone seen the like, and it is never to be found afterwards. In the first half of the concert, Dylan played the old repertoire straight through, expecting the mixed response he had received in England when the electric session followed. Then, after the intermission, the curtain parted

and The Band appeared. The applause grew louder and louder. My friend Zaez left bruises on me punching me in ecstasy as "Maggie's Farm" was followed by the "Leopard Skin Pill Box Hat."

Wordsworth had that moment after the French revolution and, like Dylan, walked away from it ... Still, "Sweet in that hour to be alive/ But to be young, very heaven."

AL

Toronto, Ontario

11 November 2005

On Ethiopia

I would like to comment on the current situation in Ethiopia. Since the ruling party EPRDF (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front) lost the election of May 15, 2005, Ethiopians have been subjected to killings, imprisonment and harassment. The situation started to get worse on October 31, when the opposition party CUD [Coalition for Unity and Democracy] called for peaceful mass disobedience. All the CUD leaders were imprisoned and most of their supporters were rounded up and an unknown number of people were killed by the government security forces.

Today the uprising is spreading to all parts of the country to resist the regime of Prime Minister Melese Zenawi. The Western governments are ignoring the plight of the Ethiopians. I do believe the country is going to be like another Rwanda. I want to remind readers of WSWS and the editors of WSWS to follow the situation in Ethiopia closely. If Ethiopia is going to become another Rwanda, the US government and the EU are responsible. Since both these governments are supporting Prime Minister Zenawi, they are part of the problem in Ethiopia.

JJ

7 November 2005

On the World Socialist Web Site

I stumbled across your web site today. It is refreshing to see a different take on the world news than your normal everyday CNN BS. I am very much a socialist at heart and fully support the cause of "for the good of the people." Living in a country that once had great socialist programs (Canada) it is a shame to watch our government throw it away. More and more we move away from the "good of the people" to the good of a few. Thank you for your refreshing look on news. It is appreciated and I will visit often

TG

8 November 2005



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