Letters from our readers

3 June 2006

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

On "The Enron verdicts: corruption and American capitalism"

Superb article/analysis (as always), which delves into the underlying forces leading to this scandal. As you mention, the only reason it was prosecuted at all was not because it was so egregious (that was part of it), but because of the outcry—something had to be done to divert public opinion, and the prosecution was in a large sense an exercise in damage control. (Caveat: as you mention, the punishment of the players is much open to question as these people are powerful members of the financial oligarchy who certainly have some Ozian levers yet to pull.)

Living here in McJesusland, I found it especially offensive that these felons—Lay and Skilling—started caterwauling Jesus upon their convictions. If there is any evidence of the great prophet's teachings in these criminals' actions, please show it to me. Upon hearing the verdict, I called the local newpaper's "Sound Off" column—the paper's a yellow GOP rag—and I said: "Great! Now let's go get the real criminals—Bush and Cheney." They didn't print that one. Also, while the trial had an inset box on front page, the actual article was buried on page 16.

Bush—clearly he's the puppet drum major in the idiot parade, but those with their hand up his sock know what they're doing and are very dangerous and getting bolder daily. Gradualism and incrementalism is not the way to get rid of these folks and the system they represent—something revolutionary must take place, and soon.

RM

30 May 2006

Your overview of the Enron scandal and its role in the machinery of American capitalism should be mandatory reading for everyone, in particular the many individuals that have suffered either directly or indirectly at the hands of the Enron board of directors.

I too am suspicious that Lay's relationship with the Bush Administration will permit a sentence that will be inadequate for the crime. I became more suspicious when it was announced that September 11 will be the date of Lay and Skilling's sentencing. Why so far away? I suspect it is an ideal time to deliver a controversial reduced sentence for a Bush loyalist and allow the impact of the recent guilty verdict to be diluted in the public consciousness.

The news of the sentencing will also be diluted in the annual patriotic orgy, which amounts to a disgusting and now ritual abuse of the memory of those that died that day in 2001. We will be yet again bombarded with the fictitious reasons for the "war on terror" and the implied link with the events of September 11. Nothing else will matter to the media if we remember what has taken place over the past September 11 anniversaries.

I will be looking for the news of the sentencing on that day somewhere after the daily sport roundup and the weather report as no doubt on September 12th the mainstream press will be treating it as "old news."

JB Ontario, Canada

31 May 2006

On "Britain's 'Euston Manifesto': Ex-liberals for imperialism and war"

Your article on the Euston Manifesto expressed exactly how any left-leaning person would feel at such a mealy-mouthed document. Clearly the Euston Manifesto is about the last gasp of New Labour ideology, the last defence of Blairism before it all comes crashing down (and we endure at least two terms of Tory government as a result). As a means of capturing the national mood, I don't think any document has ever been as wide of the mark as the Euston Manifesto. Recently Tony Benn said in an interview he "can't remember a time when the general public was to the left of a Labour government," and the

© World Socialist Web Site

Euston Manifesto demonstrates just how cynically jaded these New Labour followers actually are.

The Euston Manifesto fails on many counts, not least the feeling that it doesn't really believe in anything but the status quo, has no radical proposals and is astonishingly unoriginal. What is clearly evident in the document and is something we must immediately guard against is the Euston Manifesto aspires to introduce neo-liberalism; it's trying to infect the left to become apologists for everything we know to be wrong; from the illegal war on Iraq, the war on terror to suffocating corporate imperialism.

So what is the Euston Manifesto? What does it tell us? Firstly it has no serious gravitas underlining it, which as you rightly describe, is a document of "platitudes and truisms." It is another movement attempting to dictate from the top instead of growing from the grassroots. I wrestle with the fear that the Euston Manifesto is the brainchild of opinion-makers who know they're living on borrowed time, especially as the "New Labour" sham has been exposed for what it is. So in the column on what the Euston Manifesto actually stands for I think we can tick the box noting some vague beliefs in democracy whereas most other things have a hopeless compromise, be it Palestine or Iraq it insists we must come to terms to with the way the powers that be have done things. I don't think anyone is going to find accommodation for actions we know are wrong.

As you stated, "[the] manifesto's authors clearly feel themselves to be an embattled minority," which they clearly are, but this doesn't mean we in the left should relax our guard for a second. The Euston Manifesto is a rotten ideology that we must expose to the fullest—there can be no middle ground in apologising for the disasters of Bush and Blair. There must be an urgent rooting out of these windbags before leftwing belief is tainted with it. There is a need for a resurgence of the left and as Tony Benn has pointed out about, it's already happening. What the Euston Manifesto doesn't want to talk about is we need a step-change in making our society a better place to live from having genuine accountability to a fair distribution of a nation's wealth to putting the brakes on hyper-capitalism. A new manifesto is needed, but this dog's breakfast, which serves up old imperialism as new thinking, is definitely not the way to do it.

KH
United Kingdom
24 May 2006

On "The Da Vinci Code*, novel and film, and 'countercultural' myth"*

Another good review! The citation of Edgar Wallace evokes memories of that really bad Edgar Wallace Mystery series which plagued British cinema screens during the 1960s. For those of us critiquing the myth that the British can not make cinema, seeing an episode of this series inspired by a dreadful writer shows us what we are up against, something now affecting Hollywood as David's review clearly shows.

Did not Trotsky describe Molotov once as "mediocrity incarnate"? The same description can be applied to both Dan Brown and the former Ron Howard, who has never directed any worthwhile film in his entire career and is best remembered for playing callow youths in "The Andy Griffith Show" and "Happy Days."

Anyway, this is a very astute review, valuable for those of us trying to direct students towards the most valuable aspects of their cinematic cultural heritage now rejected as being antiquated, black-and-white disposal productions. *The Da Vinci Code* is the really disposable type of production for the reasons you have eloquently stated.

TW
25 May 2006

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site