

Letters from our readers

22 November 2007

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

On “One year since the 2006 election: The Democratic Congress and the war in Iraq”

Did anyone congratulate you on the clairvoyance of your article reporting the Democratic Party “takeover” of Congress exactly one year ago, and what it would (or would not) mean in its effect on Bush/Cheney’s execution of the war in Iraq? If anyone doubts that the WSWS is one of the best sources for comprehensive and truthful news on the Internet, and scathingly surgical analysis, let them deny that the pathetic Democrats in Congress have performed exactly as worthlessly as you predicted they would on November 8, 2006.

TH

10 November 2007

On “Bernard Kerik indicted on federal fraud, conspiracy charges”

Thank you Bill Van Auken for yet another terrific article on the WSWS. It is almost unbelievable the depth of corruption that permeates everything about the existing regime and politicians of both parties in Washington.

JW

10 November 2007

On “Exposé of Gap’s use of child labor part of a broader social phenomenon”

Congratulations on a political exposure in the best sense. It becomes clearer that rather than just a moral issue, child labor is more profoundly a class question. Despite UN resolutions, etc., capitalist governments respond from the standpoint of their national interests, that is, from that of the ruling elite of any given country. Rather than criminalizing the perpetrators, they turn on those who expose them with lies, threats and worse.

The nationalist politics of the labor bureaucracies in the more developed countries, especially the US, plays

an invaluable role for capitalism by promoting the lie that protectionism and jingoism will insulate workers from the devastating social consequences of the global economic crisis. The truth is, they accept those conditions and actively work to divide the international working class.

Child labor is a fundamental attack on each and every worker’s rights. One of the primary tasks of a truly class-conscious (i.e., socialist) leadership is to unite workers in every country in a struggle to eradicate every vestige of this barbaric practice.

JB

10 November 2007

On “Majority of Southern US public school students are poor”

Awesome article. It gives me something to work with. I always post these arguments with anyone that looks like they can “carry some weight” in my area.

MH

12 November 2007

On “Police and thieves: Ridley Scott’s American Gangster”

Thank you for the discussion here of the main themes of this film. As I understand you, the film was focused on the stories of the two main characters and the conflict that involved police and organized crime organizations. Your main complaint seemed to be that the film didn’t tell us enough about the community in which the drug dealing and corruption took root and flourished. You thought that this was an important part of the story that should not have been shirked.

I have not seen the film. I don’t know if I will. Your review made it interesting. I might offer the thought that if the film had spent some more time on trying to tell the story of Harlem, then the focus on the character’s stories would have been blurred. Or, maybe Scott is trying to suggest by not making the character of Harlem so clear and distinct that the same kind of corruption could go on in any American city, not just

Harlem.

I am concerned about the number of times that police in my city have shot and killed unarmed sick or minority people in the last few years. The Portland police seem more brutal, or just plain stupid about the reasons that people resist or fail to do exactly what they say to do.

I suspect that the police are undereducated. It's expensive to require officer candidates to have degrees. So, Portland does not require them. There is the question of corruption. As for that issue in Portland, our local news media has not offered us any insight.

Therefore, it would not surprise me if a story about the police and the crime in Portland would be similar to what is going on in many other cities in the country. All you'd need to do is blur the specifics about the city's character and make that suggestion. So, I'm not sure that making only a few gestures at specifying the character of Harlem is such a bad thing. It's a statement maybe.

Anyway, thank you again.

SA

Portland, Oregon, USA

12 November 2007

I see your point—you can like a lot of a film, but feel disappointed that an opportunity was lost to “probe historical and sociological” contexts for the events depicted. Ken Burns's *War* is another example. He depicted events of WWII, but he, along with military historians, failed to “probe” the origins of WWII in the breakdown of capitalism, with military expenditures a solution for dealing with the depression. I am sure that *Gangster* is hardly as tedious to watch as Burns's *War*. What a waste of an opportunity to show the forces that led to a military solution for socially controlling the people in the contending nations.

RLB

Bradenton, Florida, USA

12 November 2007

On “Increasing bitterness in film and television writers strike”

Thank you for the coverage of the WGA and Broadway stagehands' strikes. It is interesting, in my daily life, to see the reactions of people to these strikes. While the WGA has been largely supported, the most common comment I have heard about the Broadway stagehands' strike is, “They better get it settled before I

get to NYC. I've got tickets.” Often, this comment issues from the same mouth that was just a moment before expressing sympathy with the writers! How shortsighted!

Though the immediate concerns of the two groups might be different, it is clear that the long-term rights of workers are very much what is at issue. I wish people would see that. In both cases, the people on strike are the very makers of the magical experience viewers expect—the writers through their stories, and the stagehands through the physical application of their skills to build sets, maintain safety for the actors, and keep the show going.

Your analysis of the situation—especially of the futility of appealing to the Democratic Party or any other government official for redress of grievances—is as usual spot on.

In view of the larger picture (considering issues such as the Jena 6 and the war in Iraq), it is clear that these entities and their mouthpieces represent nothing less than a total abdication of the interests of the workers and students of this country. On an even larger scale, it is made very clear through the actions of their counterparts in other countries that there is no true solution to the plight of the working classes outside of building an international party. *We* must represent ourselves. To leave our lives and livelihoods in the hands of those such as the Bushes, Merkels, Howards, Pelosis, Blancos, UAWs, et al is suicide.

I am again impressed with the consistency of your coverage, and your ability and willingness to show the larger picture.

CMS

Portland, Oregon, USA

13 November 2007



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