

Letters from our readers

6 February 2008

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

On “Bush’s last State of the Union speech overshadowed by deepening crisis”

I agree with the second paragraph in today’s article: Bush should be standing trial, and that they applaud him is incredible. Okay, understandable that the Republicans applaud him, but the Democrats? Is it cynical to conclude that the two parties are interchangeable? Perhaps they both share responsibility for the recent—how recent, how far back?—history of the United States, and this is the reason both applaud. I can’t imagine applauding if I was a congressman. It’s not that they’re gutless, it’s that they’re complicit.

Thanks for having the guts to put forth the SEP thinking on the web site.

MS

Santa Rosa, California, USA

29 January 2008

On “Government leaders pay tribute to Indonesia’s former dictator Suharto”

FYI, DemocracyNow! had a pretty decent account of Suharto’s history last night after his death. They also had footage of a reporter challenging Bill Clinton in 2002 when he was visiting Indonesia, asking him why he approved sending arms to Suharto, which contributed to the slaughter of thousands of citizens in Timor and Indonesia. Clinton uncharacteristically flared and stepped in his face and insisted that the reporter “get to the point.” He was extremely impatient and peeved (and rude and impertinent to the reporter). The reporter had a detailed account of dates, places and events implicating Clinton along with Carter and others, but Clinton just responded that one of the US generals at that time could answer some of the charges against him, and then went on to deny the charges.

JC

Sacramento, California, USA

30 January 2008

Good true stuff! I’m a resident in Tasmania, and when I found out about what was going on in Timor (1992) I became an instant pro-Timor activist. In 10 years of fundraising, letter writing, etc., I found out that Australia is a

colony. In any fight between colonizers and colonized, Australia will support the former unless the latter happen to have something that they, or their big-time allies, want. Both sides of the house not only ignored activists—they actively tried to stifle them. Only mavericks supported the Timorese.

IS

Smithton, Tasmania, Australia

31 January 2008

On “US: Fed rate cut fails to stem recession fears”

I have been following your articles/reports on the US/world economy and its inevitable fall into recession and all the consequences of outright class struggle and battle that follow. Your articles on the economic crisis have helped a lot in my understanding the nature of this crisis. The breakdown of capitalism is here and now.

CF

Porirua, New Zealand

31 January 2008

On “Study documents nearly 1,000 lies from Iraq war propaganda campaign”

Thank you so much for discussing this study about the lies that were told and continue to be told to justify the war in Iraq. I am appalled that the world community is just standing by, and that good lawyers are not pursuing the penalties for these lies. The millions who have been permanently affected by this, including the trillions of dollars wasted and the billions stolen and missing compound the problem even more. How dare these people go on living in society as they commit these atrocities against innocent people!?! Bush and Cheney, along with their pals in the business community like Exxon, which continues to make record profits, should be brought up on charges.

MNP

Eugene, Oregon, USA

1 February 2008

On “Why the writers’ strike never came up in the Democrats’ Los Angeles debate”

For weeks I have been wondering when leading Hollywood liberals such as Clooney, DiCaprio and Spielberg would come out in open support of the writers. Now we know why they haven’t and won’t.

RH

Paris, France
2 February 2008

I thought you made some good and accurate points in your recent article, but you seemed to have missed another very important point. While politicians speak of solidarity with the writers but obviously seem to show more solidarity with the producers and corporate heads who pay for their campaigns, at the same time many big, well-known actors also speak of solidarity but really have more solidarity with the producers and corporate heads as well. The difference here is that these politicians are burning through cash fast in the heat of the campaign season, while highly paid actors and actresses can hold their peace longer if they cut back a little and live somewhat more within their means until the strike is over.

Personally for this reason, I side with the writers. I'm tired of big-name actors and actresses saying one thing while in their hearts they know a writer's success may affect productivity of Hollywood productions and will likely affect their future payouts as well. It's easy to be in support when times are good. It's only a question of time before more and more actors back away from any solidarity with writers. If not verbally, it will be by lack of speaking out, which has already been happening.

GS
2 February 2008

On "As layoffs and prices rise, Big Oil posts record profits"

By comparison, Americans should consider themselves fortunate. We in the UK are paying the extortionate sum of £1.10 per litre, which equates to approximately \$9.90 per gallon! I believe that the obscenely high gasoline/petrol prices are not only feathering the nests of the oil barons but also funding the imperialists' illegal wars across the globe. Keep up the good work.

BW
United Kingdom
2 February 2008

On "South Africa hit by power cuts"

Thanks for the article on South Africa's electricity crisis. I would like to point out that while the South African working class is now expected to pay substantially more for electricity and faces the possibility of power rationing, it has been revealed that Eskom's top management received a total salary package of R143 million (\$18.5 million), including R57 million (\$7.35 million) in bonuses in the previous financial year. The former CEO of Eskom, Thulani Gcabashe took home R4.6 million (\$600,000) in salary plus a R1.5 million (\$194,000) bonus. In addition, he received 4 million bonus shares and a R 689,000 (\$89,000) housing loan. According to the *Daily News*, Gcabashe earned R13

million (\$1.67 million) in 2005. The average Eskom worker earns about R46,000 (\$5,935) per annum.

In contrast to the massive increases and bonuses awarded to management each year, Eskom workers have been subjected to a ruthless attack on their wage packages. While workers protesting Eskom's offer of a meager 6 percent raise in their salaries were tear-gassed by security guards and police last year, Eskom management awarded themselves a 300 percent raise.

A further grievance of Eskom workers relates to a new job grading program introduced last year. This system could see the salaries of about 90 percent of Eskom's employees frozen over the coming years. Thus the cost of South Africa's electricity crisis is effectively being borne by Eskom workers and the broader South African working class.

EG
South Africa
29 January 2008

On "Heath Ledger dead at 28: a life tragically cut short"

Thank you for your very informative, insightful article on the life and passing of Heath Ledger. It stands in stark contrast to the superficial sensationalized treatment his death has received by mainstream media, which is only interested in scandals and innuendo to generate profits.

You revealed a complex, talented, principled and yet often troubled character whose unfortunate demise is bound up in no small degree to the treatment of human life as an exploitable commodity. The treatment of the erstwhile sweetheart of American youth in Brittany Spears is yet another tragic example.

DD
Melbourne, Australia
2 February 2008



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