

Letters from our readers

6 March 2008

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

On “US: Student loan costs to rise from credit crisis”

First of all, thanks for the excellent work you all do in opposition to the criminal, capitalist oligarchy. It’s a shame you don’t have a channel on the public’s cable TV.

Regarding student loans, I’ve gone from being a “dead-end kid” to being on the verge of having a PhD in history. I once lived in my car and associated with society’s criminal elements (the street-level, garden variety). For the last 10 years, I’ve made my living teaching college-level history. This happened in large part because of student loan and grant programs. However, my debt is now such that the prospect of me paying this back, unless I have a best-selling book or win the lottery, is nil.

Interest rates alone have added more than 50 percent to the debt, which is roughly the equivalent of a decent house. I am in no way in this boat alone; there are tens of thousands of people in this situation. While I appreciate the opportunity this sharing of wealth has afforded me, I have no illusions of the motivations of some at the creditor end—this was designed to enslave a large number of people into producing wealth for creditors their entire lives, very similar to the housing industry.

The developments of the last few decades, and especially of the last seven years, have illustrated an increasingly predominant criminal element in the halls of power. All one needs to do is ponder the numbers at www.costofwar.org to realize that not only has the public treasury been looted, but our grandchildren’s treasury *and* the good faith and credit of the American people have been looted.

When we begin to reconstruct what’s left from the aftermath of this crime spree, free education through the college level needs to be established. Also, retaining the wealth produced by the people, for the

people, would assure that everyone has not only a good education but a decent place to live, food, and healthcare. The persistence of a feudal power structure, fluid though it might be, has insured a large population of disenfranchised, homeless, and imprisoned citizens who deserve better.

The student loan debacle is the tip of the iceberg, as you know, but reparations from the recent fascist crime spree (to say nothing of reparations from earlier fascist crime sprees) could go a long way toward eliminating de facto economic slavery in the world.

Thanks again for your article and best regards,

DH

Lawrence, Kansas, USA

4 March 2008

As a US graduate student studying in the UK, I live with the fear of not being able to find a decent-paying job, even with a PhD. This is not an isolated incident but a calculated effort by the capitalists to deprive the working class of decent education and living standards, as it would take away the very power they seek to retain control of, even if it means making the rest of us totally bankrupt. Given the financial crises on both sides of the Atlantic divide, it comes as no surprise that so many companies will no longer guarantee student loans. Education is no longer “profitable.” However, they seem to forget that these loans may never be paid back because there are not any jobs that would allow us to repay our debts.

It is time we take control of all education and declare it to be free for all students from pre-nursery to postgraduate and end this morass capitalists have placed us in. It is a rather interesting Catch-22. Good article at a very important juncture.

CC

Glasgow, Scotland

4 March 2008

On “A superficial analysis of global capitalism” parts one and two

Thanks for your enlightening article on Naomi Klein's recent book. I would like to add some observations with reference to South Africa.

Klein's assertion that the ANC was hoodwinked by the Apartheid government has no bearing on reality. In the mid to late 1980s, various South African intellectuals and representatives of big business began engaging the ANC with meetings taking place in Zambia and Dakar. They returned to South Africa with the message that the ANC did not intend to overthrow capitalism, and that, indeed, they were a party with which they could do business. Thus, before the ANC took power in South Africa, they had already knowingly committed themselves to a capitalist future.

To believe that they were "hoodwinked" or "outmaneuvered," as Klein asserts, stretches one's credulity. It must be recalled that in the 1994 election, the ANC obtained a two-thirds parliamentary majority, a majority that allowed it to change the Constitution that was formulated during negotiations with the former Apartheid government and do away with fundamentally capitalist elements such as the property clause. However, the ANC did no such thing and continued to pursue its neo-liberal agenda with vigor. Thabo Mbeki and other prominent ANC members excoriated those whom they branded as "ultra-leftist" and distanced themselves from any socialist-type ideas they may have held in the past.

As you correctly point out, the South African Communist Party (SACP) played a particularly insidious role in this affair, presenting a socialist face to the masses whilst holding to the two-stage theory, which accepted the notion that after the demise of Apartheid, South Africa would have to go through a stage of capitalist development before socialism could be realized. Today, many of the current and former leaders of the SACP, the trade union movement and the ANC have entered business and acquired great wealth. This is not an aberration but is a reflection of the true nature of the tripartite alliance.

Klein lumps Marxists together with religious fundamentalists, awaiting a socialist "rapture." However, I think that this description applies more accurately to Klein and her fellow Keynesians, who believe that it is somehow possible to turn back the clock of history by several decades and return to a capitalist golden age. This would take a miracle.

EG

3 March 2008

On "Lust, Caution: political intrigue in Japanese-occupied China"

I was totally disappointed with this movie. I live in Taiwan and feel that the intelligence of public debate has really taken a nosedive since election season began. I was hoping that *Lust, Caution* would take up some hard political issues and ignite some public discussion. It didn't do that. The story line is cliché, extremely cliché. Political enemies become entangled in a sexual relationship. It leaves us thinking about what was in the hero's and heroine's minds, because it leaves that up to us, the audience, but it doesn't push the audience to think about any important political questions.

AG

2 March 2008



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