Letters from our readers

13 March 2008

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

On "Impact of American Axle strike spreads"

The UAW Company Union will call off the strike when GM tells them that they have sold most of their over-production. The *Detroit Free Press/News* scab papers are being used to control the workers' expectations of how low their wages are going to be cut. So when the UAW brings in wages not as low as the newspapers said, it will look like the union actually did something compared to having no union at all.

Older workers thinking of retiring should beware that they have no cost of living on their pensions. Once they sign the paperwork, that is it—they are now locked into a monthly paycheck even though gas, food and daily living can go up. Older workers should also have saved money while working so if an emergency happens while they are retired, they will not have to depend entirely on their monthly check.

DS
Perry, Michigan, USA
10 March 2008

On "William F. Buckley, longtime propagandist for US ultra-right, dies at 82"

After reading several disgustingly gushy tributes to William F. Buckley from the "left" as well as the right, I was gratified to read this article on the true character of this quintessential representative of reaction. How his snobbish attitude and pretentious, polysyllabic rationalizations for backward, even fascistic politics could be considered charming, profound or anything other than despicable is beyond my comprehension. But such is the state of decay in the media. Thanks for the cold water and the fresh air.

LM
Long Beach, California, USA
5 March 2008

I should say that I am quite confused as to the point of your strange obituary of William F. Buckley Jr. Of course, I think we all know based upon the publisher and the title of the article that it is far less of a true obituary and more of a political statement about a man not yet cold, but even so it came across as a long-winded whine in response to fact that Buckley was so influential despite all the things you did not like about him. It reminded me of the several articles published about Reagan in the months after his death in which journalists and those who referred to themselves as such attempted to stymie the public outpouring of emotion that took place based simply because they didn't understand the phenomenon. In essence, your article assumes the reader's fondness of Buckley then tries to debunk it by summarizing his entire life to emphasize the attributes that you find less-than-appealing.

Sincerely,
MR
5 March 2008

Pithy, terse, well argued. Great writing. I agree with all of your points, but you have reduced Mr. Buckley to a heap of ideological talking points. It does violence to the man and to his positions. His positions I mostly oppose, often strongly; so I see your mistreatment of them as being only modestly important. But Buckley was a human being, too. And his views, if we are to believe long-time adversary Mr. Schlessinger, moderated in his ripe old age. I believe your credibility might be increased if you were able to connect the man with his views. Perhaps your site would seem less cold and a little more sanguine if you treated Buckley more like a person and less like a heap of wretched ideas.

SZ
5 March 2008

On "America's 'Fortunate 400' control vast wealth"

Thanks for yet another update of the obscenity of wealth garnered not from producing goods, but from buying, selling and generally speculating on the world markets. These parasites don't even pay taxes in the United States, and yet they depend upon—even demand—that working Americans' tax dollars go to pay for mercenary soldiers to fight their imperialist wars for them! When they declare

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that the expenses of war are vital to preserving "our way of life," you know that they are not talking about freedom for all. They are talking about the maintenance of their ill-gotten fortunes. The many working people (particularly middle class people) who fell for the promises that they, too, could get rich in America are having revealed to them for perhaps the first time how little they count in the "great game" being played by the ruling class. If they need a constant reminder of this fact, they can look to no better place than the *World Socialist Web Site*.

CZ
San Francisco, California, USA
7 March 2008

On "Latin American crisis triggered by an assassination 'Made in the USA'"

It looks as though there is/were some division within the FARC regarding tactics rather than ideology. It appears that Reyes and his supporters have been trying to use education and diplomacy to expand the group's popular appeal, which is a *huge* task considering they have to take the corporate media head on. Leftist groups usually do not win popularity when they kidnap and kill innocent civilians the way right-wing groups do because they are not covered by the same corporate media justification for their actions.

The Columbian government does not want the moderates (again referring to tactics, not ideology) within FARC to gain the real power within the organization. They do not want Reyes and his ilk to go about releasing hostages and banning kidnapping because they do not want to lose the $50 million in military aid coming from the US. And you are spot on that the US does not want the likes of France or the EU gaining any influence or access to resources in America's imperial "backyard." Loved your articles!

RC
7 March 2008

On "Democratic politicians rage against US Air Force contract with Airbus"

I am writing this from Brookley Field in Mobile, Alabama where I work and where assembly of the new tanker will take place. Of course, we here are delighted with the outcome, naturally. However, as you so clearly point out, all of this noise in defense of Boeing is completely cynical, tied up with the money. Besides whatever reasons the Air Force had for choosing the winning bid, I'm sure the assembly here in Mobile has something to do with the cheap cost of labor here. As for the talk about "losing American jobs," for the record, we people here in Mobile, Alabama do actually consider ourselves to be Americans these days. This contract is going to provide plenty of American jobs, they just won't be in Illinois or Washington state.

RM
Mobile, Alabama, USA
8 March 2008

On "A scholar's upside down pyramid scheme: Peter Gay's Modernism"

I thought your article was wonderful. I've been pursuing a similar trajectory but much more in the field of literature. At last someone who understands these things! My special interest is the novel from Cervantes onward. Most especially, I have concentrated on the periods of the Ragged Trousered Philanthropist to Emily Bronte and from then on to Dostoevsky to Steinbeck.

I feel your insights into the period of 1880-1940 are much the same as mine. This was a period in which a serious artist could either retreat into the 'inner world' or try—against the stream—to make sense of the outer world. In the former camp we can place all those artists beginning I think with Henry James and ending with Virginia Woolf, as those who saw the 'interior world' as somehow being the key to the understanding of life.

In the latter camp we find those poor, confused—though nonetheless honest as can be (within their parameters of socio-historical understanding) and most willing to lend a hand—writers such as Don Passos, Steinbeck, Sinclair, and here in Australia Ruth Park and Darcy Niland. These are writers who through no fault of their own found themselves bereft of an overarching principle of life and how it was to be lived in the period of the 'death agony of capitalism.'

So it was with much enthusiasm I read your article with the feeling of having found a common voyager on the journey of disentanglement of 20th Century Art and the reknitting of the present period into the weft and warp of the previous high period from 1880-1930 of artistic criticism.

TC
10 March 2008

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