

Letters from our readers

22 April 2008

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

On “The pope’s US visit: Media, White House, Congress embrace spokesman for religious obscurantism”

I wholeheartedly agreed with this article. Every emerging dictatorial power is going to need an equivalent monolithic religious authority to give it the stamp of the Divine Right To Rule. The lack of tolerance shown by the Pope is much the same as Western leaders’ disregard for Democracy.

SG

Australia

21 April 2008

Tell it to Giordano Bruno. (Your excellent article is why I know of him). Raised (reared) as a Southern Baptist, I no longer accept Christianity as real. My readings and thought have led me to believe that the historical Jesus never existed, and the fantastic story of his divinity is even more ludicrous. The history of the church—led by Catholic vanguard—has been a travesty against humanity—at every turn, whenever progress or a new thought has presented itself, they have greeted it with the stake. (These days they’ve had to back off from physical intimidation.)

The almost total conflation of religion and politics in America is perhaps the most disturbing part, that this strutting popinjay of obscurantism can be allowed to prance about and be greeted with open arms by politicians and media would be too much, actually, to send the founding fathers spinning in their graves.

RM

21 April 2008

On “Despite UAW wage-cut offers, no agreement yet in American Axle strike”

Who says you need the UAW’s blessing to hold a rally. Get the word out any way you can because if the working people of the US and Canada are not behind you and your struggle, American Axle workers are in

real danger of joining the poverty club. Never mind media and blogs to get the word out. Get a young labour lawyer who can dig up the real crap on these negotiations or lack of and make it *public knowledge*! Just to spite the UAW for the mushroom act they have pulled on AAM workers, the first tentative agreement should be *turned down flat*! Have your rally no matter what it takes.

CM

Ontario, Canada

21 April 2008

On “UAW calls off rally, prepares sellout of American Axle strike”

I am in the transportation business and service all of the assembly plants in Canada, US, and Mexico for GM. We are down 500,000 pounds per day in weight. I have five out of 23 employees laid off at this time and there is no overtime available. This strike has truly affected my people. They are also involved in a new contract here, and I have told them to be very wary of the outcome of the American Axle strike. This is due to the fact that my guys make \$14.50 per hour. I have warned them that if they think that they can get away with making more than a UAW worker, they are sadly mistaken! My guys are very “awake” to what is going on with the strike and the economy. We are all worried about the issues facing us today. I can see that the same dirty tactics that ruined what the union once stood for are hard at work at AAM. This is a controlled demolition of America as we know it!

These people all know exactly what they are doing by cutting wages and benefits. They all know that by shipping jobs south and overseas, they are slowly killing this country. If I were a union worker at AAM, I would still go on with the rally. This rally, as well as many others is exactly what we need to take back this country!

If the AAM workers lay down like the GM workers

have done, the company wins!

We need to have real solidarity and show support for these workers. We as Americans, Union or not, need to stand up now and show our discontent with the CEOs and the Government!

Sadly enough, the people that are not involved in the strike are brainwashed and sit on their hands as the government eats them alive. This is true tyranny at its best and the AAM CEOs are nothing other than Nazis in America.

HS

Lowell, Indiana, USA

18 April 2008

On "Charlton Heston and postwar American filmmaking"

You are to be commended for your insightful article about the career of Charlton Heston. I was hoping you would comment about Heston's portrayal of Marc Antony and compare it to Brando's portrayal of the same character in an earlier movie. Brando was excellent, and in my opinion, Heston's performance was excellent, too, but in a very weak (almost laughable) production.

CC

Metuchen, New Jersey, USA

18 April 2008

I have a couple of questions arising from your excellent article. I feel it is kind without being condescending, critical without being malicious. My two questions are not central to the article but I am asking them mainly because I am on the look-out for some good films to watch. The two authors should be reviewing movies with a far larger audience.

1. Which of CH's films show he was against anti-Jewish prejudice? 2. You list several directors who you say did their best work in the 1950s. Can you mention a few titles by the likes of Howard Hawks, Anthony Mann, Raoul Walsh with whose work I am not as familiar as with the others? Thanks again for a grand article.

EP

New York City, New York, USA

21 April 2008

David Walsh and Joanne Laurier reply: In both The Ten Commandments and Ben-Hur, Heston played Jewish characters who suffer from persecution and resist it. The appearance of such films in the 1950s can

hardly be considered coincidental.

Significant films by Howard Hawks in the 1950s include Gentlemen Prefer Blondes (1953) and Rio Bravo (1959); by Anthony Mann: The Naked Spur (1953), The Far Country (1954), The Man from Laramie (1955) and Man of the West (1958); by Raoul Walsh: Captain Horatio Hornblower (1951), A Lion is in the Streets (1953), Gun Fury (1953), The Tall Men (1955) and Band of Angels (1957).

On "Arthur Miller, an American playwright"

You write, "The notion that Biff's adult life has been derailed by the discovery that his father had a girlfriend in Boston is simply puerile. How is this discovery connected to the play's principal theme, that Loman has imbibed and made his own a false view of success and failure in life?"

It is connected through the fact that Biff is desperate for his father's affection. Miller is not making a reductive Marxist argument. He is arguing that Americanculture—not simply its capitalistelements—has failed to recognize that success can occur in the private sphere as well as the public.

"If, as the play suggests, Loman has deluded himself and his family about every aspect of life, including marital fidelity, then this one lesson in reality should have set Biff on the right course, not sent him off the deep end. His son should have thanked him for at least one honest experience! Something of Miller's own rather conventional, petty bourgeois outlook comes across here."

Biff is not simply disillusioned at Willy's treatment of his mother. Biff himself has been betrayed by his father's infidelity. Though Willy has withheld attention and approval from his own son, he squanders it on a woman who neither deserves it nor cares about him. The element lacking in Willy Loman—compassionate humanity at the level of the particular—is precisely the element your own critique seems to lack.

JR

State College, Pennsylvania, USA

19 April 2008



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