

Letters from our readers

31 May 2008

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

On “True to form, the Goodmans provide a fig leaf for the Democrats in Standing Up to the Madness”

Thanks for the much-needed critique of the Goodmans’ *Standing Up to the Madness*. My experience with their project—in the form of Democracy Now!—has led to my concluding that, as you point out, they limit their outrage to the Bush administration, and therefore offer no real alternative. They see Bush as the cause of all the ills of capitalism, rather than simply the logical product of an inherently corrupt system.

I actually used to volunteer for Democracy Now! as an archivist for the web site, which I was happy to do at the time as I learned a lot from their resources and felt they were disseminating important information. Over time, though, I saw a pattern emerging whereby they continually “critique” the ills of capitalism while deliberately ignoring contemporary socialist voices. If they cover “socialism” at all, it is generally in regards to Kucinich, Chavez, Slavoj Zizek (who recently apologized on their show for calling himself socialist), etc.

So I optimistically began sending them stories about SEP candidates and issues, and suggesting possible guests who could provide truly informed and unapologetic alternatives. Of course, my e-mails were ignored, which I thought was possibly quite reasonable as I imagine they receive a lot of story suggestions. Eventually, though, I sent an e-mail to my contact there for my volunteer work where I expressed my concerns with the trajectory of the show, concluding that I was beginning to feel like a volunteer for the Democrats, which was very far from my intentions. This was a couple years ago. I never heard back from them, and have clearly been removed from their list of volunteers. Lesson learned—never suggest a true alternative to the “alternative” news source Democracy Now!

The ongoing efforts of the SEP and WSWs to

provide thorough and incisive information, analysis, and critique are hugely appreciated.

Many thanks,

KR

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

27 May 2008

An excellent review of the Goodmans’ latest book. I haven’t read it yet, but I have read their last one, *Static*. Although I appreciate Amy Goodman’s crusade for an independent media (who isn’t in favor of an independent media?), I agree that their orientation is toward the Democratic Party. Once again, as with Naomi Klein’s book *The Shock Doctrine*, the situation is accurately described in terms of its effects—shredding of the Constitution, immoral “preventive” war, torture, domestic spying, war profiteering, sociocide, etc.—but the solution advocated by these writers and others like them is to support the Democratic Party and somehow (it’s always “somehow”) turn them to the left.

The American people have been sold a bill of goods by the rigid political structure in this country—only two parties are recognized as “legitimate,” and all other contenders are somehow “fringe” groups whose intentions are to somehow (there’s that word again) bring down society by insisting on an independent party of the working class (or of any other group, as a matter of fact). Supporters of independent parties find it nearly impossible to get their parties on the ballot or their candidates into debates with the “established” parties. The SEP knows all about that, of course; but it isn’t just socialists who are effectively banned from running candidates. It is anybody who dares to offer an alternative to the smug pap pronounced by the Democrats in their pose as a party of the “left.” What a joke.

So, I appreciate your review, and you are correct that the Goodmans could be doing a lot more with their bully pulpit than supporting the Democrats, particularly as they know first-hand what the truth is around the

world, since Amy (and undoubtedly her brother) has covered international news for years.

CZ

San Francisco, California, USA 27 May 2008

On “Iron Man: *Just what sort of hero is this?*”

I had the displeasure of sitting through this movie with my fiancée and some friends. I was the only person who thought it was utter garbage. The fake patriotism, especially in the first third, when Stark is still all gung-ho for his weapons, actually made me queasy, what with all the young children in the audience. I have a weakness for superhero movies. I like the thought of being able to save the world, but this one was awful. Thank you for this thoughtful piece, and thank you for giving me the heads up on some really fabulously awful movies!

LM

Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada

27 May 2008

I just read your review of *Iron Man* I would bet that the director and main actors involved thought (erroneously) that much of the subtext of their film actually questioned US policy and tactics. That said, in the end, the film basically wants the audience to believe that the US military, US government and US corporations (and the system they work within) *does* in fact work for this world...if only we can defeat the bad apples in our midst (the Jeff Bridges character, the “bad guys” in Afghanistan, etc.).

Anyway, I enjoyed your piece.

TM

29 May 2008

I just wanted to mention that I agree with the reviewer’s assessment of the *Iron Man* film. If one is sensitized to the neo-colonial nature of American presence in Afghanistan (and elsewhere), this film is nauseating. What was even more difficult was the audience reaction to scenes that affected me negatively with cheers and laughter. It all was a testament to the degree to which the brainwashing of the American people by right-wing imperial interests has been successful.

DH

Lawrence, Kansas, USA 26 May 2008

On “Worldwide drive to privatise water”

My vision is that the distribution of drinking water should be better organized. The World Water Fund

should be able to deliver any amount of drinking water anywhere in the world within 48 hours. There should be a worldwide network of drinking water distribution based in Brazil, which has the largest water reserves in the Amazon.

So far, billions of euros have been spent to finance travel expenses for all kinds of yuppies and paper committees, and not a single drop of water was delivered to the people who need it.

PL

Fortaleza, Brazil

26 May 2008

On “Aftermath of US slaughterhouse raid: Fear and repression grip Iowa town”

The Iowa story makes for an interesting article. Thank you for writing it. Recently, in Lahaina, Maui, there were a series of raids of the local restaurants. Many businesses lost their entire kitchen staff, and some were closed. With all the larger problems we face in this economy, this procedure was grossly overfunded. The streets were filled with children, families, and visiting tourists. Suddenly, there were black blazers with tinted windows parking on the sidewalks. Aggressive officers, carrying loaded weapons, surrounded crowded restaurants. It’s 5:00 p.m., right in the middle of the sunset dinner rush. They harassed everyone. One girl was from upstate New York, and the officer said, “Yeah, you sure it’s not Canada? Stand over there until we see your Social Security card...” Who on earth takes their Social Security card to work?

These kinds of raids are an assault against our humanity. It is embarrassing. I am ashamed of our government, treating people as animals and criminals, without proof or provocation. Whose country is this? My ancestors came here from Ireland. Everyone in this country came from somewhere else.

SM

27 May 2008



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