

Letters from our readers

17 January 2009

A selection of recent letters sent to the World Socialist Web Site.

On "Obama inauguration: The rich and famous throw a \$45 million party"

A \$45 million party? What a waste!

Well, maybe this will help. We the ordinary start to "get it." It has been many years since the defining issue in the US was race. It is actually economic class, and over the past 30 years, government policies have been enacted that serve to reinforce class barriers, not racial barriers. We really are moving eerily close to establishing a slave class via such policies as "workfare," prison labor, de-unionization, etc. And I can assure you, no corporation cares about the color of the people they can exploit!

No one in politics knows what it is like to be poor in the US since the Reagan administration (and things have grown progressively worse for this growing segment of the population). Too bad. Even those who should know better have taken the subject of US poverty off the table, out of the public forum. Oh, they'll still mention "working poor," but if you fall below that point, you are a non-person. As it was in Nazi Germany, those who can't be worked have no human value.

Obama did take a strong stand against "trickle-down economics" at first, and abruptly changed course several weeks prior to the election. It's clear that he now embraces "trickle-down economics." This grotesque party just puts an exclamation point on, "Yes, we (the rich) can!"

DH

13 January 2009

On "Obama, Bush team up behind another \$350 billion for the banks"

Barry, great article as always—several pointed barbs at the complicit two-party, "Vichy" facade of faux democracy fronting for the ruling-elite Empire.

Now that ruling-class empire control of government has

had a brief try of more than 2008 years, maybe we should try majoritarian working-class self-governance for a change.

Even Francis Fukuyama agrees that we should not allow the "end of history" to come without at least trying social(ist) democracy for a change.

Alan

14 January 2009

Maine, USA

On "Obama calls for 'shared burdens' in US economic crisis"

For the past 30 years, terms such as "shared burdens" translate into "more cuts for the poor." This time, presumably, the first target will be SSI (disability aid for those with little/no work history), and then SSDI (for disabled former workers). There has been talk about cutting Medicaid and Medicare. Maybe government will target even more homeless shelters for closure, or cut donations of surplus foods to food pantries. But don't expect to see a reduction in corporate welfare, or salary reductions for our wildly overpaid government "servants."

It seems that "shared burdens" never applies to the rich.

DH

Wisconsin, USA

14 January 2008

On "The New York Times and the Gaza crisis: Israeli war propaganda in the guise of news"

Well said. It is important that such cool analysis appears now. In years to come, everyone will be saying how wrong it was for Israel to have deliberately fired missiles into an imprisoned population with women and children inevitably likely to be killed or injured. By then it will be "safe" to say it, but far too late.

Michael

14 January 2009

On "Left Party in Berlin supports Israeli war on Gaza"

That is truly sickening. Thanks for reporting on this. I've not seen a word about this anywhere else.

Jim,
London, US

15 January 2009

On "The Reader: Entering into history light-mindedly"

I read your review of the movie *The Reader*, and I agree with you that it was not a general lack of culture that gave birth to the horror of Nazism because, as you said, and rightly so, and as reported by such connoisseurs of modern Germany as Raymond Aron and Francois Furet, it was certainly the most cultured nation in Europe at that time, and perhaps still today, and being the most cultured nation of Europe back then was synonymous with the most cultured nation in the whole world.

If culture were somehow to constitute a shield from Nazism, why wouldn't Heidegger be immune? A degree of erudition and sense of culture may sharpen one's intellectual consciousness, but it is, above all, the sense of collective political awareness and individual enlightenment that ultimately guide people towards a general common purpose.

Mohamed
Virginia, USA

On "Britain: Prince Harry and the 'P' word"

You were quite right to point to the way the anti-Arab insult had been glossed over in the media. How can an army be expected to kill people unless it has learnt to hate them? The military is a breeding ground for racism, and it is thoroughly hypocritical of politicians to present hapless Harry's behaviour as just lads' talk.

The most irritating thing about this affair was that it dominated the "news" media for days. Along with the valedictory musing of Bush junior it pushed the Israeli assault on Gaza into the background. Indeed, since then, coverage of Gaza has become much more low-key. It is as if at the same moment all the main media outlets decided that the public were getting bored with the carnage, or more likely that the word had got round that they should tone down the coverage to avoid fuelling protests.

Mike
Sheffield, UK
15 January 2009

On "US tortured Guantanamo prisoners, Army judge admits"

There isn't a rug large enough for Obama and the Democratic Congress and Senate to sweep this under, so

they're probably just going to pretend it never happened.

PK

15 January 2008

On "Trotsky's home in exile in Norway"

Thank you so much for the article "Trotsky's home in exile in Norway." It has been a long while since I have read such a touching story. I knew that Trotsky stayed for a brief stint in the Scandinavian country, but I did not know that life was so difficult for him there facing not only political persecution, but also physical illness.

Trotsky suffered so much in his lifetime when all he wanted was a world without hunger, war, or poverty. He dreamed of a world where workers would control their own destiny and fate. He dreamed of the coming future of humanity. It's no wonder the ruling Norwegian Labor Party didn't want Trotsky living anywhere near Oslo. He inspired workers wherever he went.

Sadly, the Norwegian government capitulated to the Stalinists, and Trotsky's visa was not extended. Running out of options, Trotsky relocated to Mexico, where he was welcomed by then-president Lazaro Cardenas. Trotsky lived there until he was murdered by a Stalinist.

When I read about Trotsky's life, it fills me with sadness at the suffering he had to endure when all he was trying to do was make the world a better place. It also fills me with hope and inspiration, however, as I know his ideas will live on forever and someday come into fruition.

It further leaves me feeling blue to know that there is no plaque or marker commemorating the fact that Trotsky lived in that particular house in Norway while in exile. If locals in the area knew Trotsky and his life and ideas, maybe they too would be inspired to take destiny into their own hands and change the world.

Philip
Indiana, USA
13 January 2009



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