

Letters from our readers

2 May 2009

On “The Future of Art in an Age of Crisis”

Dear WSWWS,

Thank you for David Walsh's two-part essay “The Future of Art in an Age of Crisis.” The writing is clear and readable. Mr. Walsh does not assume previous knowledge on the part of the audience; and what may otherwise be dense discussion of Marxist aesthetics, the Frankfurt School, and Postmodernism is accessible.

Regarding the brief section on Jean-Francois Lyotard and *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979), it should be noted that this major founding document of postmodernism was commissioned by the Canadian government, specifically by the Council of Universities of the Provincial Government of Quebec.

There is something telling in that a prominent leftist French philosopher—not a sociologist—authored a work advancing “incredulity toward metanarratives” (e.g., the Enlightenment and Marxism), especially when that work stands as a commissioned project of a higher education council of a bourgeois government.

That reminds me of the “post-Maoist” French philosopher Alain Badiou. The copyright page of his abstract *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil* (2001) reads, “This book is supported by the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs as part of the Burgess Programme, headed for the French Embassy in London by the Institut Francais du Royaume-Uni.”

Amazingly, the promotional blurb on the back by the pseudo-radical Slovenian psychoanalyst Slavoj Zizek declares, “A book that aims at the very heart of politically correct ‘radical’ intellectuals, undermining the foundations of their mode of life!” Were that really

the case, an official French government center probably might not support it.

Lyotard and Badiou are not collapsible, of course. They were intellectual rivals, and Badiou, who presents himself as an anti-postmodernist, reportedly described Lyotard as a representative of “new sophistry.” I am actually interested in reading a WSWWS critique of Badiou’s book on aesthetics titled *Handbook of Inaesthetics* (2005).

Sincerely yours,

Adam Haig

29 April 2009

On “What happened in the skies over New York City?”

Not everything that occurs as a result of the US government is a conspiracy or a cover-up. In fact most such events are the result of just sheer stupidity. The US government, like most governments, is populated by some of the least intelligent people in the nation, which is only exceeded by our even less intelligent business leaders.

To be true, many of these people are psychologically dysfunctional and are quite capable of coming up with endeavors that are purely pathological in nature. Simply look at US foreign policy for a glaring example.

Nonetheless, the same attributes hold for the purely stupid, and flying expensive aircraft over NYC for a photo-op with limited foreknowledge provided to most of the leaders who should have been involved is just part of the same. I wouldn't go overboard on this subject unless you can provide more conclusive evidence aside from speculation, which is all anyone has at this point.

Steve N

New York, USA

29 April 2009

I live in a quiet midwestern town, and these jets are constantly flying over the local golf course at elevations from 400-800 feet. These are 747's from Obama's fleet. There is no secrecy here. They are here for maintenance almost weekly. I personally feel they were being used to test the 9/11 theory that semi-skilled terrorists could handle difficult flying conditions in order to pull off direct hits. Perhaps they're doing a bit of homework.

PK

29 April 2009

On "Five New Jersey men convicted in FBI-concocted Fort Dix 'terror' case"

Dear Mr. Van Auken:

I want to thank you for the articles you have written on the Fort Dix 5. I am someone who knows these guys very well; they are almost family to me. Shain was my boyfriend for over 3 years. Although that was several years ago, it is unbelievable to hear how the media has convicted them from day one. Every article I have read since that day, May 7, 2007, has been biased against them, which in turn biases the readers. They were not given a fair trial, and that breaks my heart. They are being put away for something they absolutely didn't do, which the evidence clearly shows—but this evidence was muted by the FBI. The pain that has been inflicted on me and the family is unbearable, but our hands are tied. It is wonderful, though, to hear someone actually give them the benefit of the doubt and not just assume—because they are Muslims—that they are guilty. So thank you.

Jackie T

New Jersey, USA

30 April 2009

On "Politics and economics dominate response to swine flu epidemic"

This global health crisis is directly attributable to one of the truly great evils of the past half century: the rise of factory farms. An exploitative system that has decimated independent family farms, ecological balance, the integrity of rural communities, workers' rights, and, last but certainly not least, the humane and responsible treatment of animals destined for food consumption, factory farms and their powerful agribusiness lobbyists in Washington definitely prove

that this greed-before-human-need way of doing business will continue regardless of the devastating social costs to the majority of the worlds' peoples. People who consume animal products need to question the origins of the contents in the neatly wrapped styrofoam packages at their grocery stores. The "Old Mac Donald's Farm" of children's nursery rhyme fame has long since been relegated to the dust bin of history unless more people take the time to educate themselves about and protest the vile industry of factory farming. Support your local, organic, independent family farmers!

Kind regards,

AA

Illinois, USA

30 April 2009



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