

Letters from our readers

1 December 2009

On "Film director Roman Polanski to be freed on bail"

Have just been onto the Internet Movie Database site (www.imdb.com) and found a noxious piece on Polanski. He is referred to as the "shamed film director," now on bail in a "luxury ski resort" having fled the states "before being sentenced."

You will note the cheap pun which is a sort of pre-trial judgment, a half-truth about his sentence and another half-truth about the ski resort, where Polanski has had a home for some years. It is as if he has been given the chance to live it up on bail.

This last point is perhaps the most sinister one, for we have here a nice example of the fascistic populism of the gutter press, ever ready to toady to the rich and famous, then kick them when they're down in order to appeal to the basest instincts in society. I remember the WSWs taking the defense (and rightly so) of Paris Hilton when she was being smeared because she was an easy target: the spoilt brat of the hugely wealthy.

Polanski is also an easy target: an artist, perhaps an intellectual, and also a Jew. I still find the negative use made of his Jewishness in certain quarters particularly revelatory of something far more dangerous than mere resentment, although the two go hand in hand (artist + European + Jew + cosmopolitan).

Best,
RH
Paris, France
27 November 2009

On "British documents detail US and UK plans for Iraq war"

I find it interesting that the film Roman Polanski was working on at the time of his arrest in Switzerland was about this very subject. According to David Walsh, in his article, "An Evaluation of Roman Polanski as an artist":

"It is at least intriguing to note that Polanski's new film, *The Ghost* (adapted from the novel by Robert Harris), uncompleted and unreleased because of the director's arrest, accuses a fictional former British prime minister (clearly based on Tony Blair) of war crimes and other perfidious acts."

Apparently, it is not Mr. Polanski's sexual misconduct that moved the United States to suddenly interest itself in his whereabouts.

Carolyn
California, USA
25 November 2009

On "In The Service of Historical Falsification: A Review of Robert Service's Trotsky"

Thank you to David North for writing what is perhaps the greatest and most comprehensive book review I have ever read. How dare Harvard University Press publish such a piece of trash. Robert Service has obviously written a long-winded boring book full of tabloid garbage and historical falsifications and inaccuracies. Any book about Leon Trotsky that does not seriously explain his monumental contributions to Marxism is not worth reading. I will make sure not to even consider reading this piece of filth.

Philip D
Indiana, USA
25 November 2009

On "A conversation with organizers of the Toronto

film festival protest”

It was a pleasure to see the faces of those courageous artists from Toronto—the ones standing up to the directors of the TIFF and organizing opposition to the “Brand Israel” campaign. This is the kind of response that one would expect to be provoked when a government (in this particular case, the Israeli government) inserts its military agenda into the creation and presentation of art.

I would like to make a friendly observation about how the artists responded—reacted—to this outrage. The whole scenario seemed predictable. I’ve been through this as an individual many times in the workplace as follows:

First, I approach the management: “What’s going on? Let’s talk.” Then the boss responds by showing up with his career-track guys and gals to bulldoze me. Then he says, “sorry, but nothing can be altered—it’s already in the contract.” Another “fait accompli.”

Then the key question from the management: “What are you, as an employee (or worker, or artist) going to do about it?” Or as Cameron Bailey said, “So where are we going from here?”

The only things they are really concerned about are “repercussions.”

The way I see it, “repercussions” are best carried out by forming independent international organizations of artists—video artists, poets, art critics, you name it—who address the interests and concerns of all working people. The artists need to speak for those of us who are workers, just as they are workers, in their own right. And based on a socialist understanding of what needs to be done.

This seems to be something that the Toronto artists have within their grasp—a real possibility.

Randy
Arizona, USA
28 November 2009

On “Britain: Family of Jean Charles de Menezes

forced to accept derisory compensation award”

This once again shows the contempt this system has for the working class no matter what nationality you are. This disgraceful compensation payment is an insult to John Charles’ family. There’s always some rationale when it comes to paying compensation to the working class or poor, but when it’s the rich or middle class then there’s no problem. If you compare it with a footballer who can command that for a week, or a model who can command 300,000 for 10 days in the jungle, it’s just plain scandalous. And if shooting someone seven times in the head and defenseless at that at point blank isn’t criminal, then what is?!

Malcolm B
27 November 2009



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