Letters from our readers

22 December 2009

On "Historians in the Service of the 'Big Lie': An Examination of Professor Robert Service's Biography of Trotsky"

Hi there, Please convey my congratulations to David North for his wonderfully informative and well-researched essay.

I learned a lot from this article, not only about Leon Trotsky and the attempt to falsify who he was, but also about the obligations of scholarship.

I have often thought, "The first duty of a communist is to tell the truth." It seems that right-wing ideologues like Robert Service lack this basic prerequisite for civilized discourse. Reading David North's speech has further deepened my sense that I must face the truth about all things, and do my homework before holding forth with my opinions. Warm regards,

Eric S
Beijing, China
18 December 2009

***

Thank you for David North's two reviews of Robert Service's Trotsky biography. As an academic, I am struck that the British professor wrote such a bad book.

Scholars should not allow their personal and political hostility towards a subject compromise research methods and distort facts. That is completely inexcusable.

Service's *Trotsky* is available for limited preview at *Google Books*. There are some interesting comparisons to be made with Trotsky's *My Life* at the *Marxists Internet Archive*.

Sincerely,
ADW
19 December 2009

On "Polls reveal disappointment, dissatisfaction with Obama"

Thanks for reporting on the shifts in thinking amongst working class people in the US! Although the polls offer only a distorted picture of these shifts, we can use these facts to get a better understanding than would be otherwise available. One thing is for sure, and that is the fact that opposition to the two-party system is increasing.

The long struggle for the political independence of working people from this system by the SEP—and before that the Workers League—is being historically vindicated on a wider and wider scale.

The situation in the European countries has become subject to the same global processes as the US, and therefore the parties of the ruling class in each country (with respect to "their own" working class) are today more like one single party which stands for the interests of finance capital. While the workers face a more and more homogenized situation throughout the world, each ruling class spares no effort in trying to convince workers that they can only defend themselves by siding with "the nation" against its "international rivals".

We are the only ones promoting an international socialist perspective as a means to further the interests of the majority.

We can expect sudden and historic changes in the coming years, as millions come to understand that there is no future for them under this system. It is important to keep a close watch on these changes in mass psychology, as a means to ensure the effectiveness of our own efforts to win the majority to our perspective.

TJ
UK
18 December 2009

***

Dear David,

Very interesting results, great article as usual. I can't wait to see the folks at the *Nation* try to spin-doctor

© World Socialist Web Site

this. As one who designs surveys and works with statistical data, I find the point you made at the end of the article to be highly illustrative of the bias of the mass media. To craft a question that involves two abstract (to put it charitably) concepts ("winning in Afghanistan" and "winning" the War on Terror) in one survey question is so transparently disingenuous and amateurish that it's brazen even by ABC's standards. While they're at it, they should ask, "So how do you feel about living under ever-greater levels of corporate fascism?"

Mike T
Michigan, USA
18 December 2009

***

Only 93 percent think that the economy is in bad shape? Apparently the other 7 percent can't afford their meds.

Troy J
Arkansas, USA
18 December 2009

On "US threatens Iran with harsh sanctions"

The US president declared: "Those who seek peace cannot stand idly by as nations arm themselves for nuclear war." I understand that the "nations arm themselves for nuclear war" have the US in the front, but who are "those who seek peace"?

Prabhakar
India
18 December 2009

On "This week in history: December 14-December 20 "

In your historical summary, "75 years ago: Tensions rise in 'Abyssinian Crisis,'" readers would be interested to know that not only Britain and France aided Mussolini in his invasion and war against Ethiopia, but the United States government also. These European countries did not place any sanctions on oil, which Italy required to fuel her army and air force in Ethiopia, and according to historian William Keylor in his excellent work, *The Twentieth Century World*, "Italy was receiving the bulk of her petroleum from the United States (whose oil exports to Italy more than doubled during the Ethiopian conflict)."

BL
California, USA
19 December 2009

On "Britain: City attacks Labour's bank bonus tax"

Threats to desert Britain by the parasitic, avaricious bankers if their bonuses are taxed speak volumes about their patriotism and loyalty to the country. Let's not forget (ever) that these are the very people who created the crisis and would not be in their current positions had it not been for the plunder of "tax payer's money"!

This attempt to blackmail the country demonstrates the banker's true nature, which is only interested in accumulating obscene sums of money for personal gain. Their loyalty and patriotism is on condition that they are to do as they please and if not they desert. Not the type of people one would want in the "trenches"!

These people should not be in a position to dictate but should be investigated and brought to trial.

Barry W
UK
19 December 2009

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site