

# Letters from our readers

20 May 2010

*On "Gulf oil spill compounded by BP's control of 'cleanup'"*

WOW... I just watched 5 hours of the House testimony of oil execs on CSPAN. This is the best article I have read summarizing what we know about the spill in the Gulf. Very informative. I could have read this instead of watching the complete hearings. Outstanding questions for me: I know this was an exploratory well set to be capped, but does BP still intend to use this well for future oil production? I was confused by phrases such as: "secure the well," "bring the well under control," and the strange and interesting "temporary abandonment of the well." This left me wondering why "containment" was the predominant approach to the spill and not a "top kill" (which appears to be option number 4 in a long list).

Accountability and the release of information is definitely very worrisome. I was struck by the contradiction in Obama's Rose Garden press conference that he faulted oil execs for finger pointing, and yet I can't count on two hands the number of times the Federal Government stated the spill was "BP's responsibility."

As a taxpayer, we subsidize these companies in order so that they can drill in these expensive locations and still make a profit. This is our rig, and it's our well. Hence, it's our responsibility to pick up the pieces after something goes wrong. I wanted to thank you for your coverage, and hope you stay on top of your game. It encourages me that "someone" is out looking at the issue from all the angles.

Ed L

15 May 2010

*On "Gulf oil spill at least 10 times larger than previous estimate"*

I wish that people would stop referring to the Gulf oil disaster as a "spill." It's an unmitigated hemorrhage. A cataclysm.

Max

16 May 2010

*On "Marxism and the Holocaust"*

This was by far one of the best lecture transcripts that I have ever read on the issue of the Holocaust. I learned about things I had never before completely taken into consideration in regard to what Nick Beams referred to as the "bigger picture" of Western imperialism that began with the British Raj in India and the mass slaughter in Sudan by Kitchener as well as German imperialism's genocide in South West Africa, now known as Namibia. It was as Nick Beams suggests in his lecture not human nature and/or all the other convenient dodges that are employed by the anti-Marxist crowd but rather the failure of leadership within the international workers movement that led to this disaster. Thank you Mr. Beams for this most excellent lecture.

Charles K

15 May 2010

\*\*\*

"This takes us back to the age-old argument that socialism and the advance of civilisation is, in the end, impossible because there is lodged within mankind itself a kernel of evil that can never be overcome." The so-called "problem of evil" is a philosophical non sequitor. It is, however, a very interesting scientific problem. From the standpoint of evolutionary biology, it is impossible to separate mankind from its roots. Man is ultimately a primate, and primates do terrible, terrible things to one another. Humans are clearly significantly different from even their closest ancestors, but we share a genetic legacy. For my own part, biological taxonomies that include man and greater apes as close relatives, rather than mankind as some elite and separate group, are far more honest and scientific.

This does not negate the notion of social progress. On the contrary, human evolutionary gains (culture making and social organization) emphasize socially progressive collective behaviors. However, it does raise questions

about deeply-rooted evolutionary adaptive behaviors. The answer is not to throw ones hands up. But an honest investigation of the “kernel of evil” in man will yield many useful answers.

Overall, I think this was one of the most informative articles I have read on the site. I think that the author provides far more satisfying answers about why the Holocaust happened than any other I’ve read. But it seems worth noting that mankind has a tremendous capacity for the sublimely good and the grotesquely evil. Fewer things exhibit this quite so clearly as the Holocaust.

Nick P

16 May 2010

*On “Detroit police kill seven-year-old child”*

I forced myself to read this article. The death of a child is a very hard thing to take in. Thank you for both the sensitive handling and the unblinking look at what killed Aiyana Stanley Jones. This is the kind of tragedy we are going to be seeing more of as conditions worsen still further.

The police are right to fear public outrage and backlash. Unfortunately, when the mayors and police feel fear they up their firepower and aim it at the heads of children, women, and men indiscriminately. Class warfare indeed.

Christie S

17 May 2010

*On “San Francisco International Film Festival 2010 Part 3: War, and more war”*

As I’ve said before, I’m in full agreement with your criticism of the current crop of war films. But there is one point that I believe needs to be taken into account. I don’t offer this as an excuse to filmmakers for their lack of political will, but it nonetheless exists as an objective condition to be considered. You’ve made note in past reviews of some of the best anti-war movies produced about the Vietnam war: A number of critics assert that *The Hurt Locker* follows in the tradition of anti-war films such as Oliver Stone’s *Platoon* or Stanley Kubrick’s *Full-Metal Jacket*. This is absurd. Whatever the weaknesses and eccentricities of those films, they were unambiguously hostile to the Vietnam War and to the military’s dehumanizing impact on young people. Comparisons of *The Hurt Locker* to Francis Ford Coppola’s devastating *Apocalypse Now* are even more farfetched.

Again, I agree with your assessment of these films. But there is one crucial difference between them and the war films offered now. The three films you mention were produced after the Vietnam War ended. And I’m fairly sure that most of the others were too (*Boys in Company C*, *Homecoming*, etc.). There seems to be a pattern when it comes to war films. The propagandistic, pro-war films in the past tended to be made during the conflict and the anti-war films were made when the wars were safely in the past. I wonder what Oliver Stone’s chances of producing *Platoon* would have been had he tried to make it in 1969? In fact, I believe *Platoon* may have been his first script, and he had to wait a long time before he could actually make it for the above stated reason.

With the open-ended “war on terror” this pattern breaks down. Filmmakers are pressured to make either blatantly militaristic films in all their various guises (Sci-fi, Horror) or, because the various conflicts continue with no end in sight, tepid, “neutral”, “apolitical”? films. I’m wondering if this popular art form is even viable anymore for making truthful social and political statements. It’s simply impossible to make a film with out the backing of those who can provide absurd amounts of money. And it is those very people who, as you say, are attempting to rehabilitate the two occupations.

Bob C

New Jersey, USA

14 May 2010

*On “SYRIZA rally: the reactionary politics of the middle class ‘left’ in Greece”*

Dear People, “Syriza” sounds just like the Democratic Party and the Obama administration, “demoralizing and disorienting” working class people.

Bill B

Washington, USA

17 May 2010



To contact the WSWWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](http://wsws.org/contact)**