

Letters from our readers

23 October 2010

On "Workers face a struggle for power in France"

Alex Lantier does a great job of illustrating in the final few paragraphs an internationally linked working class movement which by nature is the only force capable of meeting the scope and ferocity of attacks that are being carried out against it, as well as exposing the endemic feebleness of the supposed left groups and parties set to essentially circumscribe the working classes level of action and limit them to their own bourgeois governments.

Nick V

22 October 2010

On "US policies intensify world currency, trade conflicts"

Dear Editor:

I don't recall a more thorough and—dare I say—*brilliant* analysis of the current devolution brought forth firstly by American finance and now, after bringing the world economies to their knees, holding a shotgun to their heads. Meanwhile, the villains roam the planet both militarily and in concept, economically. Of course, Americans are both the last to know the measure of things, and the least capable of taking responsibility for this global tsunami.

Domestically, the structure will collapse leaving the society two choices: to unify through war (against the world at this point) or engage in disintegration through civil wars. I've maintained that both will occur.

Michael B

19 October 2010

On "Teachers' democratic rights under attack in US"

This is a stunning article; I was not aware of this re-emergence of an ever-present moral dictatorship, which, as stated, is inseparable from the overall effort to destroy good-quality, universal public education.

I recently visited my high school, which I have done every year for six years since graduating. The changes in one year were shocking. Previously I would drop in on a former teacher as I wished, just walking into his classroom, updating him on my educational progress and learning of how his teaching was going.

This year, I tried to open the door, and it was locked. I was buzzed in. In the office, I asked politely if it was a good time to visit this particular teacher, noting that I arrived during "homeroom" period, when attendance is taken and class is not in session. The secretary

replied that "there is no homeroom" and "we don't allow teacher visits until after the school day is over." I noted that I have been doing such visits for 5 years, and I lived out-of-state, and was going to leave in an hour. "You can ask the principal but he will say no." Behind her is a man in his late twenties or early thirties, who I assume is another administrative worker. "Can I speak to the principal directly?" Secretary: "That is the principal."

He allows me permission, which means I have to sign in as a guest on a computer, and then receive a printed out "guest" tag stating the purpose of my visit and the date. Of course, I had to present I.D. for this.

Talking to my former teacher, I learn this principal is has just graduated from a local half-rate college with a master's degree in "leadership." Elevated in an instant to leadership of dozens of teachers who each have decades of experience, I'm told he has made almost no effort to learn from them. Instead, he just bought a new \$500,000 house with his new found principal-level salary and was inviting the entire staff over for drinks, which I'm told will be "the most he communicated with teachers."

I'm pretty sure the teacher I spoke with will not be attending. Now I wonder if the mini-mansion will be rigged with cameras...

Jeff L

22 October 2010

On "Tony Curtis (1925-2010)"

Thank you, Hiram, for this very comprehensive and touching tribute. It avoided the mention of his early Universal films and the line mentioned in most obituaries— "Yonda lies the castle of my fuddah"—which Curtis friend and fellow actor Brett Halsey quite rightly told me off about some years ago. Curtis was a much better actor than most people realize and the lack of further opportunities to stretch his talent as well as the temptations of the "Dolce Vita" lifestyle tended to dissipate. He will be remembered for the good films you have mentioned here.

Tony W

22 October 2010

On "Solomon Burke (1940-2010): a great inventor and innovator of the 'soul' sound"

One more note about Solomon Burke. He—along with other great blues, R&B and soul artists like Muddy Waters, Jimmy Reed, Slim Harpo, Wilson Pickett, Otis Redding and many others—had a tremendous influence upon up-and-coming British musicians in the early and mid-1960s. The early Rolling Stones, for example, covered at least three of Burke's songs: "Cry to Me," "If You Need Me" and "Everybody Needs Somebody to Love"; indeed it was through these recordings and covers of those of the aforementioned others that these great artists were rediscovered (or discovered in the first place) on a large scale by young listeners in the USA. Thanks Brits, from a grateful Yank.

Lary M
19 October 2010

On "German chancellor agitates against immigrants"

Thank you to Peter Schwarz for an insightful view of the historical context in which Merkel's remarks were made. It is a dreadful irony that Germany, which has been a leading exporter of goods and products for over two decades, now says it dislikes that part of the world which has made Germany its home. It is just as worrying that the term 'gastarbeiter' has never been replaced in common discourse with one that recognises the responsibilities of the state to all citizens, whether of ethnic origin or not. As even the UN Secretary General has recently pointed out, none of Europe's largest and wealthiest powers (Germany included) has signed or ratified the Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers 20 years after it was adopted.

Rahul G
Goa, India
22 October 2010

On "Commonwealth Games spell major crisis for Indian elite"

Quite informative article. To the Indian middle class, the Commonwealth Games is a means to tell the "world" that India "can make things happen". Otherwise "what will they think of us?" Regarding the high levels of corruption and substandard works, instead of going into the depth of the system, the Indian ruling elite, supported by the media, has made just one individual, Suresh Kalmadi, Congress politician and Chariman of the CWG Organising Committee to be the sole cause of the entire mess and if someone else were there, things would not have been bad.

Prabhakar
India
19 October 2010

In support of the Indianapolis GM Stamping Rank-and-File Committee

I write to express my wholehearted support for the forthright and necessary struggle by the Indianapolis GM Stamping Rank-and-File Committee.

By your stand against the despicable actions of the UAW and GM you defend not only your own rights, you stand up for the rights of the working class the world over.

The UAW shows itself to be like the vast majority of union organisations today, that systematically position themselves to act as agents and brokers for business interests—and against the interests of working class people.

In Australia unions have used rank and file members' money for real estate deals, property development deals, and for setting up of superannuation funds. All of these have union officials placed in lucrative upper management positions.

Unions have turned capitalist, and set themselves against the workers.

Consider the growing union mantra: "we must understand the importance of global competitiveness." We see how unions have adopted a core capitalist lie, joining with capitalists to use it to strip workers' wage to a minimum.

If workers say 'No!' to this lie—as they must—the unions, business and media collude to portray them as selfish.

They dare to suggest that workers should be ashamed of themselves for not taking a pay cut!

They dare to suggest that workers do not care about future generations!

They dare—by pushing *their* false doctrine of 'global competitiveness'—to drive a wedge between the working class!

But a rapidly growing number of us, like Indianapolis workers, are growing acutely aware of that grand lie of capitalism—that workers are antagonistic to each other, separated and powerless—and will refute it utterly.

I join you in encouraging Lake Orion workers, and all other auto workers, to form rank and file committees to fight the UAW.

In solidarity,

Shane M
Victoria, Australia
19 October 2010



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