Letters from our readers

15 January 2011

On “Obama in Tucson: Providing an amnesty for the right wing ”

This essay is cogent, honest, articulate, in my opinion, and should be read by everyone. Mr. Martin cuts through rhetoric and speaks truth.

“Trust those who are seeking the Truth. Doubt those who find it.” – Andre Gide

Thank you,
JLA
14 January 2011

On “More evidence of right-wing links to Tucson attack”

Thank you for continuing to uncover the links between Loughner and the ultra-right. I hope you will write more about Palin’s deliberate use of the phrase “blood libel” in her infamous video message. As I understand it, the phrase was originally used in vicious anti-Semitic attacks that claimed that Jews sought Christian blood to use in their religious rituals. While the media discuss civility and gun control, these fascistic references earn little attention outside of your web site.

Cynthia M
Minnesota, USA
13 January 2011

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Jared Lee Loughner is not right wing. Everyone that knows him has said he was liberal, and he is a registered independent.

This tragedy is not politically driven. This was an assassination. Whether Jared Lee Loughner was simply crazy or an MK Ultra assassin is the question.

Victor M
13 January 2011

On “After the shooting in Tucson”

National Public Radio is now on board with the WSJ, the *Washington Post* and the rest of the “liberal” mass media in adopting a “wait and see” outlook on what, if any, influence politics had on the accused assassin Jared Loughner. NPR reports that Loughner has “refused to speak to authorities or help in the investigation. “

The young Mr. Loughner—failing to cooperate in efforts that will likely put him in a death chamber—is making it difficult for the “hundreds of FBI investigators” who have been assigned to the case. “Officials say the current investigation is likely to take months” because “until they unravel what his motive was, or understand what triggered the violence, what possessed Loughner to allegedly start shooting is unclear” according to the NPR report. Much has been made that the accused possessed a copy of Karl Marx’s and Frederick Engel’s *Communist Manifesto*.

This extraordinary document—published in 1848 and still relevant today—will no doubt be exhibited as proof that Loughner was an “extremist” and “mentally deranged”. On the contrary, a careful reading of the principles put forth in this work would more likely have deterred this man from engaging in murder. The document is one of great optimism, clarity and moral purpose; it’s well worth reading. At all events, as former Alaska governor and US vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin generously provides clues as to “what triggered” the violence with accusations of “blood libels”, the FBI will persist in looking for Bolsheviks among the gunman’s personal effects.

Randy R
12 January 2011

On “WikiLeaks founder faces “real risk” of rendition to US, torture and death”

In Canada, a professor from the University of Alberta, and a former mentor of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, stated on the Evan Solomon [Canadian Broadcasting Corp.] news show, that Julian Assange should be assassinated. I read somewhere that there was an investigation because of his comment. However, apparently, nothing has happened, because he still is appearing on the Evan Solomon news show as a commentator. Tom Flanagan appears to me to be a right wing zealot, like Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Raymond C
Canada
12 January 2011

On “Don Van Vliet—‘Captain Beefheart’ (1941-2010): Avant-garde musician and painter”

Don’t get me wrong—I love Beefheart. However, I am a little surprised at the tone of this article. No social context and a lot of

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hero worship. I feel like Beefheart could have been done more justice with a more balanced portrayal of his life and a deeper exploration of what made him leave music.

Nick P
12 January 2011

On California budget cuts and the SEIU

SEIU 1000 president Yvonne Walker supports Gov. Browns plan to cut those of us who refused to sign the same concessionary contract she sold her members. Listen to Yvonne Walker on KQED responding to the question about the proposed cut of 10 percent. She said, the governor only wants the other six unions to accept the cuts we (SEIU 1000) have already taken… "I certainly support that"...

Obviously Walker has no sense of workers' solidarity. She has stepped forward to help Jerry Brown impose Wall Streets austerity by accepting the same concessionary contract the SEIU accepted without a fight. For two years during the furloughs Walker had a mandate from her union, which voted 74 percent for a strike authorization and which she did nothing with.

Workers were asking, when is the strike, and Walker's staffers came around with their campaign putting up lawn signs saying "I am proud to be a state worker." She never had any intention of fighting the furloughs. Like the other state unions SEIU worked to contain the anger of the membership and deny the nature of the crisis so as to keep the workers dependent on the courts and the Democrats instead of their own self mobilization. Next we can expect to see the unions mobilize the members to get out the vote for Brown's budget proposal of social cuts, wage cuts based on tax increases.

This is how our rotten union leaderships accept the lie that the workers are the problem and cause of the crisis. But the workers did not create the crisis. The crisis is one of stagnating production and dormant capital flow. The owners of big capital can not make it productive and put people back to work.

If capitalism is a social contract where the workers agree to work for a day's wage and capital administers the organization of production as per the dictates of the market, today the market dictates that the factories be closed or sent overseas. Capital can no longer make a profit making widgets so it searches for profit in speculative bubbles which all must eventually pop... equities, commodities, real-estate... this is the house of cards that is collapsing in our faces.

The banks and big holders of capital can not make it productive, the market has stalled production; this crisis has broken the social contract.

Therefore there needs to be a new arrangement where capital is put to productive use regardless of market dictates. With diminished profitability big capital no longer wants to afford the social wage (not just the individual wage, benefits and pension—but the common wealth: education, roads, services, care for the poor, elderly and indigent that we pay for in our taxes all are under attack) it gets in the way of profit grabbing especially when the $600 billion+ military industrial complex is sacrosanct.

Real unions would not offer to be the enforcers of Wall Street's austerity as has Ms. Walker, they would mobilize workers to demand full employment at fair wages and benefits for all. They would advocate for a plan to employ those out of work, clean up the productive processes and address the environmental situation of the planet.

A fighting union would confront the furloughs with a call for thirty hours work for forty hours pay in order to put our unemployed brothers and sisters to work; rather than send people home without pay when there is work to be done! A real fighting union would point to the stagnated capital resources and demand that if capital can not put itself to work then the working class could do so, by nationalizing the banks under the collective control of the workers democratically administered in the interests of all.

But our unions are little more than dues collection agencies, with nothing more to offer their members than free parking at Lego Land and a 10 percent discount on Avis rent-a-cars. Unless we develop a new fighting leadership from the rank and file which has a perspective of confronting the corporate power elite, breaking with the corporate politicians of the Democratic and Republican parties and developing a new fighting strategy based on the power to withhold labor power (i.e., strike) and act politically independently in our own class interests we will be beaten down and stripped of the quality of life we have come to expect for our day's work. And this defeat will be accomplished by Jerry Brown with the assistance of the likes of Yvonne Walker—clearly a traitor to her class.

Charles R
14 January 2011

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