

Letters from our readers

25 January 2011

On “Thousands march against Tunisia’s ‘unity’ government”

There are many things of objective historical interest here—and your coverage has been key to my understanding—to the Tunisian situation, certainly, but more broadly to the seismic global forces at work.

A major thing is the speed at which this event unfolded, after decades of festering injustice and social inequality. Perhaps the clucking tone of the US ambassador’s remarks about this being a new experience to Tunisians was meant to comfort some—his calls (kneejerk mantras) for “extreme caution” and “responsibility.”

I’d like to be a fly on the wall and hear what’s really being said in the power centers of America—so divorced and alienated from what’s really going on in the country. I suspect the tone of those conversations are more undergirded by fear than caution, as the parallels between Tunisia and America (as well as the global situation generally) are only too keen.

Rob M
20 January 2011

On “Obama’s jobs fraud”

Fraud indeed. This new commission is simply a retooling of an existing commission headed by Paul Volcker and on which Immelt was a member; a commission the President managed to meet with all of four times during the first two years of his presidency. This newfound concern for jobs is nothing more than a cynical move as part of Obama’s reelection strategy. He hopes to show Wall Street and big business that as a Democrat and a minority he would be a better President for their interests as he would help disarm some of the more “liberal” elements of the Democratic Party while supporting the economic policies of the business elites.

MZ
Maryland, USA
22 January 2011

On “The Denisova discovery: Ancient genomics shed new light on human origins”

Congratulation on a fantastic article. I really appreciate, and I don’t think I am alone, that the WSWs devotes a portion of its site to discussing some of the most important scientific advancements of the

times. The science articles you post are intelligent in and of themselves but also relevant to the politics and life of today. Intelligent workers are discussing the very issues which the WSWs covers so well and accessibly. Continue with the great work you are doing in not only the science section, but also what you write on history and culture. The site is already a wonderful place to be educated, and I’m sure it will expand and develop.

Julian Q
California, USA
18 January 2011

On “A reply to a letter on the Spanish air traffic controllers’ struggle”

A real slap on the face for such middle class tendencies. Having said that it was not a blame on the individual, but clearly saying that the person reflects the idea of popular media. Best satirical one liner was ‘Mussolini made the trains run on time’. In India the same line is said of Indira Gandhi government, which did enormous atrocities on workers during emergency period despite having the democracy tag.

Sathish K
India
24 January 2011

On “Roma woman dies following deportation to Kosovo”

This was a very cruel act on the part of Germany. The woman was obviously stressed by her situation and they didn’t have the decency to leave her be. Stress can lead to death. Roma are very poorly treated in many countries in Eastern Europe. Her family should demand compensation from Germany for this inhumane act.

Ibivi
19 January 2011

On “The US-China summit”

The ritual repetition of the phrase “human rights abuses” with respect to China seems to have lost all meaning. In the 1970s and 80s, it referred to the endemic practice of slave labour enforced in prisons, particularly when the prisoners were dissidents.

We don’t hear much about this anymore. Right around the time

when the effects of globalization were just beginning to be noticed, and when democratic welfare states began shredding their social safety nets, we also began hearing reports of prison privatization—what Michael Moore called the “prison-industrial complex”—in which slave labour was re-introduced to Western democracies.

With worsening wage and job conditions and the continued assault on the safety nets, there are bound to be more people turning to petty crime to supplement their income. It is estimated that during the post-WWI depression in Germany, a third of the workforce supplemented their income this way, and that in Victorian England, half of all working class women turned to prostitution during the cyclical depressions of that era.

Currently, the US has the highest incarceration rate in the world (“Massive US prison population continues to grow”; WSWS, 7 December 2006). It has been suggested by some that the real motivation for the “war on drugs” is simply to give a reason to build an extensive prison system and to maintain an extensive system of police apparatus. The ruling class knows the effects of poverty on the working class and knows how to exploit it—after all, we have to keep our economy competitive, and to do that, compete with all that prison labour in China, don’t we? And how can America keep manning all its wars if they don’t have a large pool of prisoners to draw on by offering enlistment in the army as an alternative to prison?

So, what’s so bad about China’s human rights record, again?

Joan RC
Canada
20 January 2011

On “Bombing attempt at Martin Luther King march in Spokane”

This is the first I have heard of this. The radio airwaves here have been too clogged with “news” about the “Christmas Tree Bomber” and the non-bomb in that incident of FBI frame up to cover this, I suppose. That incident is being used as a lever to get the Portland police department to re-join the Joint Terrorism Task Force—meanwhile, the actual threat goes unmentioned.

Christie S
Oregon, USA
22 January 2011

On “The Fiat vote in Turin: Unions push through historic attack on Italian workers”

Good one, Marc. This fits in with our discussion about the trade union’s treachery and how workers can never advance any program under the auspices thereof. This article together with our discussion makes it more clear for me.

Thanks!

Edward E
California, USA
19 January 2011

On “How I Got Over, the new album from The Roots”

Dear WSWS,

Great to see a review of The Roots on the site. The single, “How I Got Over,” is fantastic. It’s such a great combination of hip hop and soul. Anyone at all interested should be sure to see the video for the song; it’s well-made, smart and moving, and it provides an even clearer image (than the song alone) of what The Roots are thinking about at the moment. While I’m sure the album and the band’s outlook have their limitations, The Roots should be commended for making top flight hip hop that is energizing, intelligent, and critical of American society.

Keep up the good work,
MJB
19 January 2011

On “Police march en masse at Toronto funeral”

Regarding the apparent appointment of Don Cherry as national chaplain: he recently gave a particularly gross performance at the inauguration of Toronto’s new mayor. Along with Hockey Night in Canada, Tim Horton’s (a national chain of doughnut shops that also serves sandwiches etc, and has been adopted as an official mark of Canadian-ness, not least in their connection with “our” troops in Afghanistan), the elevation of the police to semi-divine status seems to have become part of the official state religion.

KV
British Columbia, Canada
20 January 2011



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