

Letters from our readers

27 January 2011

On “Secret Palestine documents expose sham ‘peace process’”

Anyone who has followed the trajectory of Abbas and the PA leadership knows that they have long acted as a local franchise for the USA/Israeli government axis. These documents are exactly in line with informed articles that have circulated on the net for years. The Israeli government clearly intends to adopt a policy that past American governments applied to the Native Americans. Palestinians in the West Bank are to be forcibly ‘relocated’ to various inhospitable reservations. Where they will be easier to police by the PA, under Israeli supervision. The model ‘reservation’ that the USA/Israeli axis intends to replicate is the Gaza Strip. It is a measure of the degraded state of the Western Press that these stories appear as revelations.

Chris
Ireland
25 January 2011

On “Amnesty International opposes US abuse of Private Manning”

Considering the history of incarceration, persecution, defamation of people of conscience, of political ideology and or activity contrary to the lockstep of those in governmental power positions, what is being done to Bradley Manning is a present day example.

To say history will judge his prisoners as wrong—or more accurately, as executioners of torture—does little to counter this crime or to help him in the present, without action of those who recognize the moral conscience of what he is accused of doing, which is of a higher patriotic principle, whomever supplied the public with the real crimes currently perpetrated by the United States via its military, the crimes of those who want to keep secret from its citizenry its policies and actions.

Michael S
25 January 2011

On “True Grit, a revenge tale from the Coen brothers”

To Whom It May Concern:

I am seldom highly impressed with WSWs cultural criticism, but it rarely disappoints me as much as the review of *True Grit*.

The review seems little more than a pro forma condemnation of Hollywood generally, with grudging nods to the talent of the Coen Brothers. Nowhere does the review address the meticulously researched dialogue or the slight figure cut by Tom Chaney compared to the mythologically evil character constructed by Mattie. Nor does the review address the lush cinematography or the theme of youth versus experience, a theme prevalent in much of the Coen Brothers oeuvre.

The now-standard complaint of the WSWs about films—lack of social context—as applied to *True Grit* seems to warrant special attention. The film takes pains to show the lack of options available for those seeking justice in the lawless, post bellum west. Aside from the great sacrifices taken by Mattie to hire justice, the interaction between Rooster Cogburn and Texas Ranger LaBoeuf regarding their war records speaks volumes about both the social context of the film and the historical conditions that inform that context.

The *World Socialist Web Site* is right to expect more from popular culture than the bourgeois press. However, we, the readers, ought to expect more insightful criticism from the WSWs than displayed in the review of *True Grit*.

Comradely,
Nick P
24 January 2011

After reading your review of the new *True Grit*, I have to ask if you actually saw the movie. You write that it contains more humor than the original. That is patently untrue. The new version, as many critics have pointed out, is completely void of humor. And you write that the second version is “more successful”. Do you mean at the box office or in quality. If it’s the latter, you missed the mark again, because the movie is a complete bore. Jeff Bridges is no John Wayne, and it was Wayne’s performance in the first movie that lifted it above the usual cowboy fare. The first movie was a pleasure; I’m sorry I wasted two hours watching the second.

Jonathan F
25 January 2011

A perceptive and interesting review of the Coen brothers' remake of *True Grit*. There is one element of the original 1969 version to which I would respectfully call WSWS readers' attention: the role of Tom Chaney. Chaney's actions are the causative factors that set the rest of the film's revenge motif into action. He occupies the lowest economic and social rung on the ladder in the film's version of the American West (clearly below the trusted African-American employee of Mattie's father who accompanies her on the initial stage of her quest) and probably only "above" those American Indians imprisoned on government reservations. He is pursued by the law for killing a Texas state senator (presumably a wealthy man and as part of the Confederacy and ex-slave owner) after a confrontation resulting from Chaney's allegedly killing the senator's dog. Chaney's killing of Mattie's father results from that gentleman's possibly misdirected interference in preventing Chaney from wreaking vengeance on individuals who cheated him in a card game.

When located by Cogburn, Chaney is scratching out a living (apparently none too successfully) as a cattle thief with "Lucky" Ned Pepper and his crew. Everything points to Chaney as a member of the "lumpenproletariat" yet he is the only one whose crimes the law seeks to punish (at least until the film's climax). Interestingly, when confronted by Mattie and afforded an opportunity to kill her (which he could have easily done; he is armed and has the element of surprise on his side) he chooses not to. What does this say about his character and that of the individuals pursuing him?

Finally readers should note the identity of the actor portraying Chaney: Jeff Corey. Corey was a combat cameraman in World War II; the Army decorated him for his services. During the 1930s he was involved in various progressive causes for which he was blacklisted and lost what most critics felt was the beginning of a promising acting career in the 1940s. Yet he never "named names" or ratted out his friends even though this might have saved his acting career. After this experience he devoted his life to teaching speech to the disabled and in his spare time teaching acting (Jack Nicholson was allegedly one of his pupils). Maybe this humanity shone through in his characterization of Chaney?

Sincerely,

Peter L
Connecticut, USA

25 January 2011

On "Keith Olbermann leaves MSNBC: Another rightward lurch in US media"

What almost everyone overlooks in their criticisms of Mr. Olbermann is his devotion to the Free Medical Clinics. He and his watchers donated millions to the Free Clinics, which were held all over America.

Do any of the other million-dollar hosts of Fox News or Rush Limbaugh do any thing of a charitable nature? No, only Keith. His program was central to my husband's and my evening. We always were in front of our TV and MSNBC, at 7PM (Central time) and recorded it if we were going to be gone. He will be sorely missed.

MS
24 January 2011

On "Fifty years since the murder of Patrice Lumumba"

Thank you for the analysis. Even if Lumumba had appealed to the working class, he would likely have received similar treatment. But he may have been able to advance the struggle further by raising the working class consciousness.

Thushara
24 January 2011



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