

Letters from our readers

24 February 2011

On "Uprising spreads to Libyan capital"

What should also be mentioned, perhaps, is that since 2005 the US government's National Endowment for Democracy [NED] group has given over \$234,000 in grants to Ashur Shamis's Libya Human and Political Development Forum opposition group (including a \$76,800 grant in 2009), according to the National Endowment for Democracy's web site.

Bob F

22 February 2011

On "Israeli workers and the Egyptian revolution"

My first letter to your exceptional web site looked forward to this day when the opium-smoke wall of religious differences lift in the Middle East and working people look at each others' conditions across borders as brothers and sisters. And that the young are in the front lines everywhere reminds one that Leon Trotsky was 26 when he addressed the St. Petersburg Soviet as its Chairman.

I am not young, but neither was Wordsworth when he recollected how it felt when the masses first entered history in the French Revolution. "Bliss was in that dawn to be alive/ But to be young was very heaven."

There is to be sure an efficient cause to this fearless, joyful shrugging off of traditional restraints, and it is not the Islamic Brotherhood's stale prayers.

Old Wordsworth, reactionary as he had become, got it just about right:

"——— Oh! times

In which the meager, stale, forbidding ways
of customs, law, and statute took at once
The attraction of a country in romance
When Reason seemed most to assert her rights
When most intent on making of herself
A prime Enchantress- to assist the work
Which then was going forward in her name
Not in favored spots alone, but the whole earth."

AL

Toronto, Canada
18 February 2011

On "UK's PM Cameron talks 'democracy' while peddling arms to Gulf despots"

Thank you Julie. A straightforward question to Cameron and any other western leader. "Why are you in Egypt?" I took it that Mubarak and these other specimens underestimated the informed population as to the real intentions of these parasites, lining up to strike deals in order to keep their ailing budgets afloat. Cameron may be the first in line, but the struggle in the Arab world will never give up. "Restraint"—a word that has no beginning, middle or end to a grieving innocent.

Philip T

Germany

23 February 2011

On "The Wisconsin struggle and collective bargaining"

As a union member of SEIU, I completely agree with you about the unions. They have carved out their turf and are very aggressive, very serious in defending their role as "negotiators." Never mind that they are negotiating away worker's benefits and salaries, as long as they are running the show. It's very clear from your reporting on Wisconsin and it's clear from what's happening in Ohio. If I had not listened to their double-talk with my own ears, in numerous union meetings, I would never have believed anybody could be so deceptive.

In Ohio, the AFL-CIO, SEIU and the Democratic Party are running scared because of Senate Bill 5, blitzing union members e-mail and phone mail with emergency messages about saving the middle class, warnings about the "destruction of the labor movement," and "gutting workers voices." The Ohio Democratic Party had the gall to e-mail union members repeatedly, asking us for money to combat the Republican offensive. Underneath the strong rhetoric and false promises, all they care about is their own bread and butter.

Thank you very much for the excellent coverage of events in Wisconsin and Ohio.

Lesley J

Ohio

23 February 2011

On "The struggle of Wisconsin workers enters a new stage"

Wisconsin is a very average state. Its population is ranked approximately in the middle of all 50 US states. Parts of it are very heavily industrialized, while it also has large rural areas. For these reasons, it was once considered a key bellwether state in the presidential primaries (before the two major parties began to manipulate the primaries to control who became the party leadership's candidate of choice). A victory in Wisconsin's primary was a significant boost for many candidates.

Wisconsin is still a bellwether state. The recent events there are only a foreshadow of what will happen in the rest of the country. There is nothing about Wisconsin that makes it significantly different from any other state.

Wisconsin does have a long, rich history of progressive politics, so it is no accident that the current protests erupted there. From supporting abolitionist policies during the Civil War, to the Progressive Era in the early 20th century, to anti-Vietnam War protests during the 1960s, events in the state have reflected the mood in the rest of the country for a long time.

Andy H
21 February 2011

On "The Wisconsin protests and the re-emergence of the American working class"

I usually read this site every day, and this is one of the best articles I've read in ages!

Rebecca C
18 February 2011

I wonder if these demonstrations of frustration with the present 'system' have legs that will grow into a national protest. As a retired teacher I found the item very informative.

Charles P
Canada
18 February 2011

Editors;

The article begins: "Growing mass protests in Wisconsin involving tens of thousands of state workers, teachers, students and their supporters against sweeping attacks on working conditions and democratic rights mark a turning point in the political life of the United States and of the world."

A great lead, and true indeed. But what's to follow? Anything? Drudge played it up; the Times played it down. But... Wisconsin? Therein lies the beauty. This ain't Times Square, folks. And it's not the Castro. It's... Wisconsin. As in cheese. As in, welll nothing, frankly. If they can do it, anyone can. (Apologies to ol' blue eyes.)

CW
18 February 2011

On "India: Sanmina workers strike for higher wages and union recognition"

Annual Profit of \$6.3 billion versus a monthly wages of \$111. Offensive becomes stronger as capital becomes heavier and our wages keep on becoming thinner.

Spring Elections! Is there spring anywhere in workers' life without a fight? Fight for socialism.

Sathish
22 February 2011

On "Detroit News continues its slanders against Detroit Symphony musicians"

Thank you for exposing the hypocrisy of these so-called journalists. I watched an orchestra performance arranged by the middle school my daughter would join in fall. She played the cello for the 5th grade orchestra. There were groups all the way up to high school—it was remarkable. And on a shoestring budget.

My daughter's music teacher—with whom I've had one conversation—appealed to the audience to work with the legislature, school board to convince them to keep funding the arts program.

Thanks,

Thushara
17 February 2011



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