

Letters from our readers

1 March 2011

On “US retreats from strategic Afghanistan valley”

I want to believe what you say here is indeed the real situation there. It is still difficult for me to believe how the US troops can lose, with the utter barbarity they have been using.

But then, they did lose Vietnam.

What I fail to understand is what prevents them from completely killing everyone there? They can bring in people from other poor countries for rebuilding. So far I doubt that the American troops are not ready to kill all civilians there. The WikiLeaks video showed that they are quite willing to do this job, and Josh Stieber [“US soldier on Baghdad massacre: ‘Not out of the ordinary in Iraq’”] revealed that the leaked video was not an exception but the norm.

Thushara
28 February 2011

“There is within both Gates’s remarks and the military withdrawals carried out from strategic areas of Afghanistan the unmistakable whiff of an impending defeat that may well rival the debacle in Vietnam in terms of its social and political impact within the United States itself.”

I think that it will be far greater owing mainly to the costs involved estimated by some to be as high as \$1 trillion and the real effect that this war spending has had on the US economy.

Essentially the US economy is hooked on war spending like a junkie deep into his/her addiction.

Charles K
Florida, USA
26 February 2011

Mr. Obama should have a sign posted, “Welcome to Hamburger Hill.”

Richard C
26 February 2011

On “Obama and the Libyan crisis”

The Democratic Chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee and 2004 Democratic Presidential Candidate John Kerry—a close political ally of Obama—has already publicly called for a “regime

change” in Libya. It looks like the Democratic Obama Administration wants to first make sure that all US and European nationals/citizens are first evacuated from Libya (and that the regime in Tripoli doesn’t collapse before next Monday), before it adopts the *Wall Street Journal’s* recent proposal of a US/NATO (or Egyptian Army) “humanitarian military intervention” in Libya in 2011—for the purposes the WWSW.ORG site indicates.

Bob F
24 February 2011

On “US and Europe step up preparations for intervention in Libya”

Italy started colonizing Libya in 1911, by fighting and evicting the Ottomans. Here we are a century later with the colonialists, be they from the US or Europe, planning to intervene militarily again to secure their economic interests, in this case stable oil supplies.

Will the leopard ever change its spots?

BK
26 February 2011

On “As Libyan rebels close in on Gaddafi, US and Europe ramp up intervention”

The threat of NATO boots on the ground in Libya is western bluster. There are three good reasons for non-intervention (from the view point of the ruling western elites). The reasons are, North Korea, Pakistan and China. In the next decade, or next week, the political rulers in one of these three states may be similarly threatened with an uprising of their populations. And the military in these countries possess nuclear weapons. If in addition to social revolution the indigenous political elites face the prospect of invasion in support of the uprising the chances that nuclear weapons will be used grow significantly. Consequently NATO forces intervening in Libya increase the likelihood that similar uprisings in North Korea, Pakistan, China will result in the use of nuclear weapons. For the current leadership of these three countries it may well be a case of use them or lose them. And while the current western political elites are no prize intellectual packages, not all of their advisers or think tanks will be composed of similar dead heads.

Chris
Ireland
28 February 2011

“qualified” pension plans. A board of trustees chosen by the union oversees the plans’ investments.

If something goes radically wrong with the pensions’ investments (think Enron for example) the pension’s board of trustees has the authority to retain legal counsel after a competitive bidding process and to direct the law firm to institute a civil action in federal district court alleging securities fraud; failure to adequately investigate the underlying merits and risks of the investment (Section 11 of the Securities Act of 1933) and breach of fiduciary duty by directors and officers. The union is entitled to have these claims heard by a jury.

If the unions are destroyed workers will have to invest as individuals in “401k plans” with individual brokerage houses. These brokerage firms universally require their retail customers to execute customer agreements with binding arbitration clauses. These clauses require individual investors to waive their right to go to court if they feel they have been defrauded. Their only recourse is to arbitrate their claims before securities industry arbitration panels, which are notoriously biased against individual investors.

Such a result deprives workers of their only real remedy, the class action, to recover life savings lost through corporate financial misconduct. As such it insulates from liability corrupt corporate management and their enablers in the legal, accounting and investment banking world.

Sincerely,
Peter L
Connecticut, USA
26 February 2011

On “Detroit News continues its slanders against Detroit Symphony musicians”

The fight for art and culture must be utilised separate from the unions, as the unions have done everything to strangle this fight by DSO musicians.

The fact is that not one union has called mass strike action in support of the DSO musicians. The problems lay in the unions’ program of nationalism and bargaining with the employers.

During the boom times of capitalism and national economies the unions played a relevant role with little effort, in obtaining a decent family income, health benefits and a comfortable retirement.

Those days have come to an end. Unions are now a direct instrument used by management to increase their huge profits and massive bonuses, against their own membership.

Any fight that workers need to undertake, must be first to break from the unions by forming independent rank and file committees.

This struggle must not be to negotiate with employers on what level “employers can afford” if any can be afforded, but what is needed for humanity.

As with all the unions that have been built over the last 150 years globally, even when they have been built by workers with good intentions, unions have become a direct tool used by the employers against their own membership. Serious conclusions now must be drawn from this, and a

On “Wisconsin state assembly passes anti-worker bill”

Seriously, this cannot stand.

This is a war, and workers need to understand this. Only mass/collective organization, with an undergirding political perspective—permanent revolution—is the only way forward. This may seem a setback—a pyrrhic victory for the oligarchs—but the entente is just beginning; the mass organization in Wisconsin had to’ve been disturbing for the poobahs ... they will fall ... the sooner the better ...

Thank you for your excellent coverage—and insights—which will blaze the trail forward.

Your comrade,
Rob

PS: We are the many, they are the few ... never forget this ...

Alabama, USA
26 February 2011

On “Columbus, Ohio rally against anti-worker legislation”

Ohio State University is essentially a city within the city of Columbus. If the students could be galvanized to join the protest... well, the dynamic would change incredibly.

Richard C
23 February 2011

On “The International Socialist Organization gushes over unions’ role in Wisconsin”

The ISO’s tactics and (mis)representation of workers reminded me of a song...

The Cupid Shuffle!

To the right, to the right, to the right, to the right
To the left, to the left, to the left, to the left
Now kick, now kick, now kick, now kick
Now walk it by yourself, now walk it by yourself
(let me see you do)

Lloyd M
North Carolina, USA
23 February 2011

On “One-sided war in Wisconsin”

Thank you for an excellent and insightful article on an extremely important aspect of the Wisconsin workers’ fight. There is one other element which corporate media is ignoring and which I would bring to your attention: the legal immunity which would accrue to corporate boards of directors, the firms’ officers, underwriters and investment bankers for fraudulent financial activity if the unions are broken. Today union members, whether in the private or public sectors, contribute to

new mass party must be built by the working class along socialist lines if society is to progress any further.

Julian H
Queensland, Australia
25 February 2011

On "US vetoes UN resolution criticising Israel"

If the world leaders sincerely put their efforts to remove the veto power, that will be a great achievement in the world of democracy. If this one problem—Problem? Yes it is a problem—is solved, some of the longstanding issues will automatically come to an end.

More often the United Nations gives the impression that it is a mere publishing house under the ownership of the United States, which keeps on issuing new editions of resolution. Veto power is, in my view, a mockery to democratic credentials we preach every now and then. The veto power actually violates article 1 to 30 of the UN.

I had once requested Mr. Tharoor when he was the candidate for the post of UNGS to clarify whether he could justify to his duty as long as the big 5 wield the veto power. 'We have to live in the real world' was his reply. Same question I had put up with some of my friends who post comments along with me on the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, BBC, ABC, the *Independent*, the *Guardian*, etc. Many, all of them from the US and the UK, were opposed to the undemocratic system of the veto power. I think it is a subject that should come in the focus of world arena.

PNH
Saudi Arabia
26 February 2011

On "Cedar Rapids: Does Hollywood know much about American life?"

"The leading figure in Cedar Rapids is from Wisconsin. And everyone knows, the film's central comic conceit would have it, that Wisconsin is a backwater, the most subdued and tranquil corner of the country. Nothing ever happens in Wisconsin." David, this paragraph made me laugh so hard I nearly spit up my coffee! Truly, there is more humor in this statement than most recent comedies. Who says there is no irony in American life? I pity the actors who have to deal with this tripe and try to use their skill to make it into something fit to show the public. I hope they were well paid for it. Modern school children know more about life than the main character of this film, as described. In the end, one wonders why they bothered to make it at all.

Thanks for the laugh!

Carolyn
California, USA
23 February 2011



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