

Letters from our readers

2 April 2011

On “Washington prepares to escalate the war in Libya”

And once again the *New York Times* does its job, the “liberal” *Times* endorsing yet another war in a Muslim country, its pathetic editorial mentioning only as a last resort that the Obama administration should take more pains to “inform Congress,” and of course virtually all the letters printed on same subject gave a similarly rousing “Hurrah!” of Obama’s action, of just the latest display of America’s “exceptionalism.” (How much “exceptionalism” can there be!?)

CW

31 March 2011

On “London conference plots imperialist carve-up of Libya”

You judge a person by what they do, not what they say. According to the BBC the “rebels” have been driven from their Western gains. And this would have been impossible if NATO aircraft had supported them. And this failure supports other reasons that lead me to believe that the Western states will settle for the partition of Libya.

(1) A war to conquer the whole of Libya will involve either NATO troops on the ground or arming the “rebels” with powerful weapons.

(2) If the “rebels” get lots of NATO ordnance there is no way at all to predict where it will end up or who eventually it will be used against. (The president of France now insists that arming the “rebels” requires a new UN resolution. It’s a much shorter trip from Libya to Paris than Libya to New York.)

(3) If the country is partitioned the East will be wholly dependent on NATO for its survival, and its oil at the disposal of the West.

(4) The elites in Western Libya will be in power at NATO’s discretion, a fact that will become

increasingly apparent to them over time.

(5) The revolutionary movement in Libya will be either destroyed or coopted into the new comprador bourgeoisie in the East.

(6) A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. The effective partition of Libya is occurring already, therefore relatively costless for the West.

(7) Divide to rule has been imperial practice since ancient Athens, Sparta and Rome. No European leader is likely to forget this trick.

(8) The BBC now reports that “Gaddafi is popular in the West,” so, remembering Bob Dylan, “I don’t need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.”

P.S. If the NATO campaign with its public face of a European leadership went wrong the US political elites intended to use the failure to reinforce the necessity of American leadership in NATO. Alas, the public refusal by Germany to take part in the war means that its failure will now undermine the leadership of the US. Another reason for the West to gather its ill-gotten (corpse-gotten) gains.

Chris
Ireland

30 March 2011

On “Rolling Stone publishes photos of US war crimes in Afghanistan”

Excellent article.

The web site of the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), which tracks hate groups and right-wing extremist groups in the US, contains articles investigating the presence of extremist, right-wing ideologues in the military.

Pictures *are* worth a thousand words—but these pictures almost leave one speechless.

Kate
Minnesota, USA
31 March 2011

On "The UAW: A purveyor of cheap labor for the US auto industry"

Thank you, Jerry White—this perspective is beautifully and forcefully laid out. The brazen attacks on workers—auto and other—which the WSWS has been documenting and analyzing for years have reached a head.

There is no longer even pretense on the part of the unions to protect workers. My own union has a “no strike” clause—astounding! The very basic right to withhold labor in the event of unfair treatment was given up as part of the contract negotiations! Of course this also excuses our branch from striking to show support for other branches of the same union, let alone workers in other fields. “Sorry, we can’t rise in solidarity—we promised our boss we wouldn’t!”

It is past time to break with these corrupt and thieving entities!

Christie S
Oregon, USA

On "Illinois abolishes death penalty"

Mr. Nykvist,

An excellent article on Illinois and its abolition of capital punishment. You state, however, “Michigan holds the distinction of being the only state to have never carried out an execution.” If you mean that Michigan has not carried out an execution since 1976 when states resumed executions after the Gregg decision, then you are correct. If you mean, however, that Michigan has never carried out an execution historically, then that is an oversight.

The Espy inventory accounts for Michigan executing 13 (some argue 15) persons between 1683 and 1938—five whites, one black, and seven American Indians over the period. Two of these prisoners were females. The first recorded American Indian female execution took place in April 1763 when Wayne County authorities in Michigan hanged an unidentified

Pawnee Indian slave woman for murdering her owner, Mr. Clapham.

Clapham was an English trader on his way to Detroit with two Pawnee slaves, a man and a woman, when the Indians decapitated Clapham and threw his body into a nearby river. An Indian party captured the Pawnee slaves and delivered them to authorities, who tried and convicted them for Clapham’s murder. British Major Henry Gladwin sentenced them to death. The male Indian slave escaped from custody leaving only the unnamed Indian woman to hang.

In the second instance, Ann Wyley, a free Negro woman, hanged with John Coutincineau, a French nomad and Wyley’s accomplice, in March 1777 in Detroit for the robbery of furs and other items from a store. Despite their death sentences, officials could not find a hangman given the pettiness of the crime. Authorities offered Wyley her life if she would act as hangman to Coutincineau. Wyley hanged Coutincineau but officials reneged and hanged Wyley the same day.

David B
California, USA
30 March 2011



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