

Letters from our readers

14 June 2011

On "Obama's illegal war against Libya"

Obama seems to think he can do whatever he pleases. Libya is just another example, while most of the US media is biased, in love with Obama, while instead they should be hammering on this issue. Let's not also forget ground troops, which would be a direct violation of the UN resolution. Why aren't other news media saying anything against Obama for this illegal war in Libya? I'm glad someone here is talking about it.

Peace,
Michael
8 June 2011

On "Amid savage crackdown on protest, Obama welcomes Bahrain prince"

I would like to thank David Walsh for bringing attention to the blatant hypocrisy of the ruling elite. It shows the criminal means that these regimes must now resort to [in order to] maintain their power over the masses, as the global capitalist crises lower the living standards of everyone except the wealthy.

In the article "Washington exploits uprising to escalate secret war in Yemen", Bill Van Auken reveals the predicament of Anwar al-Awlaki. [He is] US-born and declared a "global terrorist" by the Obama administration and condemned to extra-judicial execution. Another example of the violations of human rights is the incarceration and torture of US-held Bradley Manning, who Obama has publicly stated as being "guilty" even before a trial.

This cynical use of human rights to lend cover to the criminal machinations of the international bourgeoisie has a long, dark and bloody history. The question: has there been any nation where they have "involved" themselves [in which] a majority of the people hasn't been oppressed?

It seems that the issue can be boiled down to its elements: private profit or human rights.

Steve J
USA
10 June 2011

Thanks, David. There has been no better juxtaposition of the two-faced and hypocritical attitude of the elite contrasting to what is presented as reality by Amnesty and witnesses. The question is

whether these people like Obama or Biden really believe their pronouncements. I think yes and no, because whilst having access to credible information, they live in a bubble that the ruling class has created to defend its own class interests, power, and privileges. Furthermore, after losing power due to retirement or being forced out, they are still "on message"; it serves them well.

For instance, Bush is reputed to "earn" \$250,000, and Clinton (that is, Bill) a bit more, apart from being a de-facto ruler of Haiti.

This contribution by Walsh illustrates most clearly and compellingly, the irreconcilable class division throughout the world that cannot be overcome by less than revolution of the working class. We hope this has already started, as the turmoil around the world bears an uncanny resemblance to 1848.

Mirek
New South Wales, Australia
10 June 2011

On "Defend Catherine Ferguson Academy!"

I've just read this article and listened to Rachel Maddow's report on the Catherine Ferguson Academy being closed in Detroit. As an early childhood educator and parent, I can't believe the state of Michigan doesn't feel that it is important to keep this school for young teen mothers and their babies open. Basically they are throwing out the babies and these young ladies futures with the wash. It's a disgrace and a shame that these young, poor, teen moms can't hope for a better life for themselves, if this school is allowed to close on June 17th. Please explain to me what is worth more than their futures. Districts all over the country are experiencing budget cuts. This is the absolute worst scenario I have heard of yet, when speaking of mis-education in America. I hope every member of the emergency management team or Mayor Bing will have a change of heart.

Rhonda N
10 June 2011

On "New research sheds light on cognitive abilities of animals"

Marx called humans "a species being" precisely because he recognized that it is social labour that makes us human. This contrasts with other forms of "leftist" socialism that are based on romanticized notions of the value of "fellow feeling".

I wonder what this new research does to Chomsky's theory that grammar is "hard wired" in the brain and that this is what makes us human.

Joan C
Alberta, Canada
10 June 2011

On “Zizek in Manhattan: An intellectual charlatan masquerading as ‘left’”

I just finished reading the article about Zizek. I felt compelled to write—in fact *had* to write because you were so absolutely spot on; that is, spot on about our social class division in this country. I have been talking about the complacency disease that nurtures someone like Zizek, for so long and have been yearning to hear someone else understand what I’m talking about. You do! I’m not crazy!

I am no decorated intellectual, I haven't obtained any high degree, although I've had six years of schooling in various low-end colleges, money issues have kept me from completing. But that doesn't stop me from attempting to get a handle on what I see from my bottom view—the complete degradation of US economic and social conditions in the last thirty years.

Why I give you that brief history of me is important in that without the credentials to discuss, or class status to access those who make such discussions of economic and social justice—the so-called left of this country, I have been removed from the crust of those who pretend (and I say this after years of observation) to give a care about social justice, while on the other hand, making sure that nothing changes within the status quo of the social system that at present actually works so well for them.

I have felt alone in my observation that the left of this country is nothing but a sham of posers and wannabes who wish they had something to juice up their otherwise boring lives and at the same time, tame the guilt that rises inside of them every time they climb into their Volvos or pay the maid for her services or look down upon the grocery store workers or gas station clerks, who they know struggle everyday to survive— in service to them.

Most working class people hate the left, not because of the left's ideals, but because they are hypocrites on a level that is really hard to describe. And this is where your analysis of Zizek comes in. Where does this man fit here in the US?

He placates the bourgeoisie—the morally crumbling petite bourgeoisie who know damn well that their lifestyle is contributing to and benefiting from the worker's struggle. Their view of and treatment of the working class in this country is that kind of indifference/amusement dichotomy that was so rampant in the 19th Century with “observation and study” of the noble savages—the study of which was just an exercise in justification of social oppression of a people based on narrow and ridiculous definitions.

So it is today.

You so well described the same platitudes, the same self-

pleasing and stroking that the upper middle class “intellectuals” do today. And, he reminds me of how further up the class chain you get, the less blaming the lower classes for their struggle and more of a shining, obvious and grotesque dismissal of their existence.

Kathryn T
New Hampshire, USA
12 June 2011

On “Musician and poet Gil Scott-Heron dead at 62”

Thank you for the article. I really did enjoy it, especially because I knew very little about Gil Scott-Heron. But I'm a bit confused, because you start the article with saying that Gil Scott wasn't a “great artist” yet at the same time you describe him as what sounds to me, a person that people should know and listen to. You also say how he had an impact on hip hop artists like Mos Def and Public Enemy. Maybe I don't understand what makes a “good” or “great” artist, especially under capitalism. But it seems to me that anyone that could somehow influence and have an impact artistically on later generations would be a good artist.

Thank you for all the work you do. I read the WSWS for the Marxist education. The WSWS is the voice of the working class.

Jason
California, USA
11 June 2011



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