

Letters from our readers

12 July 2011

On "US jobs report points to renewed downturn"

I feel you are right. The Obama administration is just another party that is no different from the previous party. Look at the facts: more foreclosures, higher tuition rates across the country, more cuts in social services. High unemployment, more credit card debt. The young are forced to join the military to fight in endless wars just to pay off their debt, go to college. I do agree we need a new party just like the SEP.

Paul
Washington, USA
9 July 2011

Even informal jobs are evaporating; by some counts the agricultural workforce has hired 100,000 less than this time last year. This is due to the flood delays and setbacks in the Corn Belt and drought in Texas, which have quickened the economic crisis through the middle of the country. Based on what I have seen and heard, construction work, much of it casualized, is also down, as are jobs in lumber and extraction. I know highly skilled and educated workers who, while putting in applications for professional jobs, are desperately seeking work at sawmills and farms. It is an ominous sign.

EG
Michigan, USA
9 July 2011

On "The acquittal of Casey Anthony"

I look forward to Mr. Walsh's articles. He eloquently articulates the general decline in American (though it is also applicable to Canada) culture. Whenever I pass through Headline News on my way through the TV channels, I almost always catch a glimpse of the latest Evil Mother story. As David Walsh describes in his article, this is an effective tool for deflecting the inarticulate audience from the real source of their pain. I understand Ms. Grace had a hand in driving another designated Evil Mother to suicide. Nancy Grace and her sociopathic ilk have many counterparts in local media around North America. It is ironic that this obsession with Evil Mothers goes hand in hand with its twin, the Spitzer/Polanski/Weiner/Strauss-Kahn type of story (I can't think of a good name for it). This seems to be what the bourgeois

concept of "gender equality" amounts to.

Kamilla V
British Columbia, Canada
8 July 2011

On "Former top aide to British prime minister arrested in Murdoch hacking scandal"

Although Murdoch was so useful for the establishment over the years, he was getting too big and too powerful for some at the top. This came to my mind... "In politics, nothing happens by accident. If it happens, you can bet it was planned that way." [Franklin D. Roosevelt]

George D
9 July 2011

On "The illegal state murder of Humberto Leal Garcia"

Thank you for your principled stand on these issues. The fight against the death penalty is not only a matter of one individual's fundamental rights, as important as they are. The death penalty, even when applied to nonpolitical crimes, has always been a show of force from the state designed to intimidate the crowd and encourage backwardness. On a side note: my understanding on this case is that Texas did not act "illegally" since the US Constitution doesn't grant direct effect to international treaties (unlike France for instance). The Obama administration did not "make an appeal on behalf of Leal's rights" because they actually had no legally valid argument to add. They could be sanctioned by an international court for this execution, but nobody could challenge them before their own courts. One more example of the silliness of the nation-state system.

Olivier L
France
9 July 2011

On "A comment on Peter Falk's finest moments: Husbands and A Woman Under the Influence"

To answer Robert Fowler's question as to what important work Falk did without Cassavetes, I would suggest that he look up this actor's credits that began in the "Golden Age of TV." In a Studio One production he played Stendahl. In 1958, he appeared in a live drama scripted by Larry Cohen that preceded his remarkable

performance in *Murder Incorporated* (1960). During 1962, he appeared in one of the best productions of the sadly missed *Dick Powell Theatre*, "The Price of Tomatoes," where he played a Greek truck driver. Also, let us remember his debut appearance in Nicholas Ray's *Wind Across the Everglades* (1958), where he played one of Burl Ives's social misfits in an ensemble matter operating as a counterpoint to the oppressive middle class society in Miami of 1900. Yes, Falk delivered many outstanding performances outside his work with Cassavetes and deserves to be remembered for those as much as *Columbo*. Fortunately, recent DVD releases of these neglected television classics should reveal a much more comprehensive array of what this talented actor was really capable of doing in addition to his most celebrated and remembered roles.

Tony W
8 July 2011

Thank you for an excellent article concerning the late Peter Falk. There is one other film to which WSWS readers might turn their attention. In 1969 Falk appeared in the film version of William Eastlake's novel *Castle Keep*. He portrayed Sergeant Rossi, one of a group of American GIs stationed at a medieval castle sitting astride a vital crossroad during the Battle of the Bulge. The film was not well received at the time, the main charge against it being that it attempted to graft a Vietnam-era sensibility about war onto a narrative dealing with World War II (the so-called "good war"). Nevertheless, the film raised and explored several rather serious philosophical issues including: (1) when is the sacrifice of the physical artifacts of a civilization's cultural heritage (in this case the European Medieval and Renaissance art contained in the castle) necessary to stop evil (Nazism), and (2) are soldiers fighting to stop the advance of fascism obligated to defend a hopeless position and sacrifice their own lives so that their comrades can successfully carry on the fight against fascism. Falk brilliantly portrayed the dilemma of the common man, not a professional soldier caught in this situation. Most poignantly, Falk's character also foreshadowed the loss of his own life and that of his colleagues in the climatic battle by the use of makeup and lighting, indicating a ghostlike appearance and an instinctual awareness of impending death. A film well worth seeing.

Sincerely,

Peter L
Connecticut, USA
8 July 2011

On "Werner Herzog's Cave of Forgotten Dreams"

Your review of Herzog's new film obsesses over facts about the caves but does not pay any attention to the filmmaker's longstanding refusal to make straightforward documentary films. You can read about this in his "Minnesota Declaration" and other

similar statements. Herzog is an auteur and has a very seasoned approach to film form, which you ignore and which unfortunately weakens any contribution you might have made to our understanding of his work. Thanks.

Marc L
9 July 2011

For me the outstanding point that Herzog's film makes is that the people who made this art were...us. They were not a "savage, diminished, primitive" version of us. They were us. Granted, there have been significant cultural changes in the intervening 30,000 years. One of the astounding considerations is that this art was created at least 20,000 years before humans developed agriculture, a more settled existence, and more sophisticated divisions of labor. The person painting leopards, lions, horses, mastodons and bison was the person who tracked, hunted, killed (or was killed by) and consumed these animals. The tools at hand were not high-powered big game rifles but sharpened sticks and clever social stratagems. One of the site's curators makes the comment at the beginning of the film that Chauvet contains some of the world's most beautiful paintings. That is easily taken as hyperbole from someone who cannot be unfamiliar with the work of DaVinci, Donatello, David or Degas. You quickly discover that the curator's remark contains no exaggeration. The irresistible conclusion is that the people who made these magnificent paintings had as much or more depth of emotion (and imagination!) as you or I. The film's achievement is its ability to allow us to reach across the millennia to embrace a people not so different from ourselves.

Bob
8 July 2011



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