

Letters from our readers

20 August 2011

On “Professor Cole ‘answers’ WSWs on Libya: An admission of intellectual and political bankruptcy”

There’s a cautionary tale in the Juan Cole’s sordid response to Bill Van Auken.

If you have the temerity to slander or libel the *World Socialist Web Site*—and you happen to be a heavy drinker—you’d be well advised to have a breathalyzer installed on your personal computer.

Randy R
Oregon, USA
18 August 2011

On “Letters on Juan Cole”

I stopped reading Cole a long time ago. At the very least he has always been a gatekeeper of the left, as is Chomsky, Goodman, and many others.

Read the following: “Disciplined Minds: A Critical Look at Salaried Professionals...”, by Jeff Schmidt. Universities, as Schmidt details, aside from teaching the technologies of various occupations, are the foremost trainers in the “dominant ideology,” that is, a top down power structure. You cannot expect much from most of those in academia, except to adhere, to promote, and to support this ideology, their “careers” depend on it.

Joseph S
New York, USA
18 August 2011

On “Injunctions attack democratic rights of Verizon strikers”

Verizon strikers should expand their protest to Wall Street, Verizon top executives, the investment banks and the largest stockholders of Verizon (including the homes of top executives) for attempting to break the strike and extract blood money from the workers. The scabs are working on infrastructure built by the striking workers, which is

unethical.

Kim H
19 August 2011

On “The end of the US space shuttle program”

Thank you for this informative and incredibly saddening article. For all of my life, I have been excited by the fact of human space travel—more so by the fact of humans living in space (even though still “nearby”) in the ISS. Art and space travel have long struck me as the finest of human achievements—proof of our amazing potential.

This paragraph in particular hits home: “Given the problems which confronted Hubble, which had a flaw in its optics that shuttle astronauts famously corrected, any disruption of work on the James Webb telescope, now under construction, could destroy the project. This can only be described as an act of anti-scientific political vandalism.”

These modern-day Savanarolas, who so willingly sacrifice our future, so cavalierly throw away our potential, deserve nothing but scorn.

My head and heart ache for what is being lost to us all, and for the rocket scientists and all who worked so hard to bring us that much closer to the stars and who are now, like so many, pushed out of the work they loved.

Christie S
Washington, USA
19 August 2011

On “Youth sentenced to years in jail for posting Facebook notices during British riots”

“The hypocrisy and double standard are brazen”, you say, but they are absolutely craven and despicable, when one considers the relatively recent events of political knavery in the allowances scandal, when some politicians caught rorting their allowances were allowed to “negotiate” the return of stolen money, or the more recent where the hacking scandal reached the highest level of Establishment, and revealed the cozy relationship between media, politicians

and the police. All that has been forgotten in the right-wing hysteria of “morality”, “looters”, “civil disorder” and punishment for the most vulnerable.

This moral panic, now being voiced from the mainstream media, from the BBC, *Daily Telegraph*, *Daily Mirror* to the tabloids, the entire political caste, all agree that exemplary action must be taken. Calls for harsh sentencing, even for kids as young as 12, water cannon, rubber bullets, etc., are the order of the post-riot day.

An article in the *Economist*, by no means a left publication, traces those outbursts of self-righteous moral panic back to Brixton riots in 1981 and beyond to the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, in a witty and comprehensive review of “Hooligan: a History of Respectable Fears” published in 1982, showing a continuity in the “outrage” of the ruling class to the “excesses” of the time. The vindictiveness and lawlessness of the ruling class seems to me of a qualitative step forward towards a neo-Nazi police state. The working class should take this warning seriously, and keep organising a focused resistance.

Mirek
NSW, Australia
19 August 2011

On “Merkel and Sarkozy propose financial dictatorship”

The threat of dictatorship sounded by Sarkozy and Merkel (as any threat) is directly proportional to their ability to impose it. On this basis the threat is just hot air. Neither the French nor German political elites nor both combined have any actual plan to accomplish the stated goal of unified political governance for the eurozone.

The economic crisis is the tiger both elites ride. Since they never can get off they must go where the tiger takes them. Their statements can be read as a declaration of war on the rest of the eurozone or a belated recognition of what should have been done before the euro was actually launched. This crisis cannot be ended by words. There is no possibility of appropriate deeds. It will develop apace.

Chris
Ireland
18 August 2011

On mining in Appalachia

Eastern Kentucky mines are going nonunion. These poor young miners get these good paying jobs thinking they’re a good career. They work for companies that are so greedy and cheap. Quota means more than the miners. It’s still the same old story: “You can replace a man but you have to buy

a mule.”

Teri H
18 August 2011

On “Notes on the social crisis in America”

In your story about depression rates in Appalachia, you should note that coal-burning power plants line the Ohio River. These plants spew huge amounts of pollutants, including mercury, into the air. Mercury causes depression and bipolar disorder, as well as many cancers. The more industrial activity is allowed along the river, the worse the mental and physical health of the residents becomes.

Cancer rates—already highest in the nation—have ballooned recently. We get the run-off from all the hydrofracking in Pennsylvania. Huntington is downwind from a major coal-burning power plant in southern Ohio. The poor economy is depressing, for sure, but this area has a strong tradition of self-reliance, including producing our own fuel in the form of wood, owning our own water supplies in the form of privately owned wells, and producing our own food.

I think the biochemical issues from pollution are the big difference now. We have been assaulted by so many pollutants our bodies are no longer able to cope. You should incorporate this into your understanding of the situation. The implications are enormous as it becomes a matter of individuals vs. goliath corporate industries—i.e., capitalism run amok.

Thelma S
18 August 2011



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