

Letters from our readers

10 November 2011

On “The JVP crisis and the SEP’s struggle for Marxism in Sri Lanka”

I cannot thank you enough for doing this. I was young in 1989 and was saved only because all elders I knew were extremely suspicious about this party’s leadership. How many young people gave up their life for this, and for what end?

You all are very brave. From what I hear, there is a clamping down on any anti-government action. Please be safe. It takes years to groom a revolutionary, but minutes to undo all that.

Thushara
8 November 2011

On “Oppose the extradition of Julian Assange”

The US media coverage, and lack thereof, of Assange, is as you describe it. But there are at least two exceptions in Glenn Greenwald of salon.com, and Naomi Wolf, both of whom have inveighed time and again against the clearly dishonest application of legal procedures to Assange and deployment of rape hysteria to discredit WikiLeaks. Wolf in particular has very effectively taken on well-meaning but misguided rape-victim groups which have allowed the Assange rape allegations to overshadow how Assange is being persecuted for exposing much larger crimes, and for laying bare the US media and the government secrecy regime it protects.

CR
7 November 2011

On “Letters from our readers”

Dear WSW: I’ve commented previously on the cynicism that pervades Chomsky’s outlook on social movements. As for Jonathan F’s interpretation and

defense of Chomsky’s pathetic pessimism, I won’t respond.

But I do have the perfect antidote—you’re reading it at this moment: the *World Socialist Web Site*. And that includes all the topics it covers: Art, Worker’s Struggles, Science, Philosophy, History, World Economy and—not least of them—Letters-to-the-Editor. That’s the first step to removing the Chomsky Left-liberal anvil from around one’s neck.

Randy R
Oregon, USA
5 November 2011

Response to Jonathan F’s letter regarding “Occupy Boston: Noam Chomsky speaks, but offers no way forward”

Chomsky one of the few “good guys”?

I would reserve that description for conventional leftist progressives like Barrie Zwicker, a Canadian journalist whose sometimes stumbling naivety, inquisitive aliveness and unmasked heart is quite a contrast to Chomsky’s studied speciousness and wooden visage.

Zwicker was correct in his worthwhile book *Towers of Deception* to raise serious and pertinent questions about Chomsky’s authenticity and the nature of political gatekeeping: questions and observations which gain sharper focus with an authentic socialist perspective.

I myself have long been disappointed with the MIT professor’s promotion of dishonest historical narratives which play on his grossly exaggerated reputation for being a “good guy,” especially among mutual-promoters on the established “alternative” left.

He is worse than a priest of half-truth: he is an effective promoter of futile political misdirection.

Robert L
California, USA
29 October 2011

Reader Jonathan F wrote that you should “cut Chomsky some slack” regarding his stating that the American people are not ready for a general strike because “he probably means (1) most Americans are too stupid to know when they are getting screwed (that’s why they continually vote against their own economic interests; see Michigan) and therefore are difficult to organize, and (2) the solidarity of the working class that existed in the earlier part of the last century doesn’t exist any more, making someone who still has a job go out into the street and march for those who don’t virtually an impossibility.”

Taking these two points in turn: First off, if indeed Chomsky is saying that “Americans are too stupid” to know when we are getting screwed, I say that it is pretty clear—given protests coast to coast and polls showing great support for those protests—that there is that understanding. As far as “continually voting against their own economic interests” I am going to have to point out that getting on the ballot is an onerous process, so much so that those without a huge amount of money are unlikely to do so above perhaps the very local level. It also bears noting the huge number of people who do *not* vote precisely because they know the candidates on offer have nothing good in store for them.

I take issue with the idea that Chomsky’s considering the American populace at large to be “stupid” excuses him. How, exactly, does such an assessment make him in any way a defender of the working class? It does not. When it comes to voting, Chomsky has proven himself again and again to encourage such things as voting against “our own economic interests”—most recently during the 2008 election cycle when he got behind Obama. “Reluctantly,” but he was there.

As for the solidarity of the working class not

existing—I am inclined to wonder where Mr. F was during the Wisconsin protests in February—during which time not only were union and non-union and unemployed people out in the cold together to the tune of 100,000 chanting for a General Strike. With, it has to be added, support coming from all over this country and internationally. Today quite a few of the Occupy protesters *are* employed—coming to the encampments between shifts or sleeping overnight and working by day. And General Strike is a subject which is very much on the table.

Chomsky doesn’t want a General Strike because it would not serve the interests he serves, not because he is in any way worried for we stupid workers and our lack of preparation. Were he concerned about such things, he would do his best to help prepare people, rather than discourage such considerations as a General Strike.

Christie
Washington, USA
29 October 2011



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