

Letters from our readers

19 November 2011

On “Obama increases US military presence in Australia and Asia”

The establishment of a US military base near Darwin fills me with deep concern. I’m aware other countries’ experiences of having such a base have not been good: reports of US soldiers molesting women and girls in the immediate community around the base, US soldiers committing serious crimes but subject only to court martial which invariably exonerates them and generally poor relations with the local people, to name a few problems.

There is also the fact that Prime Minister Julia Gillard agreed to allow US military forces to conduct wargame exercises in the Northern Territory without notifying the government of the nature of such exercises, what weapons might be involved, and where and when they take place. We will have no assurance that dangerous weapons like DU weapons, white phosphorus or thermobaric weapons are not being used.

Jennifer H
17 November 2011

On “The crackdown on Occupy protests and the criminalization of dissent”

Thank you for such a nice job summarizing the extent of state repression that is already taking place against the Occupy movement. While I am deeply encouraged by just the fact that such a movement even exists in this country, I can see that it is still a long way from being a vehicle for focused and effective system change.

Therefore, I find it somewhat incredible that such a tepid yet well-intentioned protest movement is already generating relatively high levels of state repression. This disproportionate reaction only serves to point out how vulnerable the capitalist orthodoxy is to any dissenting opinions whatsoever.

As this article points out, in spite of efforts by Occupy organizers to render the movement impotent from the start by imposing the “no politics” rule, the movement has nevertheless succeeded in raising some revolutionary issues. It is especially important, as you point out, that the movement and its supporters should have a clear understanding that the entire political system is “impervious to the views, demands and needs of working people and youth” and that it “cannot be swayed simply by protest”. Too many people still believe that

holding up cardboard signs is all that’s necessary to bring about change.

The working class and youth need to arrive at the realization that any push-back against the ruling class and their reactionary social policies will involve a fight; the ruling class, with their paramilitary law enforcement minions, have understood this fact for centuries already.

Richard
California, USA
16 November 2011

On “Protesters speak on Occupy Wall Street eviction”

The mass media obediently echoes the claims that the Occupy Movement encampments pose a serious “health hazard”. This amounts to a phony effort to discredit the committed and courageous people who are facing beatings and arrest to uphold our right of free assembly. These persistent complaints from the authorities concerning purported “unsanitary” conditions at the protest sites across America deserve a moment of attention: what exactly are they upset about?

George Orwell, in his *Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), examined his own upper-middle revulsion at the “bodies” of the lower classes. Brought up to believe that the “working class smelled”, his travels with the chronically unemployed—documented in his *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1933)—“cured” him of that perception.

That’s more or less what the mass media in the US is insinuating; that the protesters stink. It’s just a stealthy expression of disdain for working people. The self-complacent and cynical “journalists” who cover these events reveal their filthy attitude toward the Occupy movement. The crudity and cowardliness of these charges speak for themselves.

But there is something in the air. What the police, city mayors and governors actually smell is a whiff of Rebellion. This scent, carried by the winds of insurrection from North Africa, promises to overpower even that most odiferous of cheap perfumes: the stench of Wall Street.

Randy R
Oregon, USA
16 November 2011

I count on WSWS for offering perspectives that are most in agreement with my own. You never fail. Thank you for the penetrating updates on the OWS movement and the brutal actions of law enforcement to suppress assembly, free speech and dissent.

I think use of the word “police” to describe uniformed thugs attacking defenseless people is a misnomer. These are paramilitary units the likes of which are seen in fascist states. This is an Obama operation and he is responsible. History will be his judge for people are still too mesmerized by him and his media fog machines when they aren’t paralyzed by intentionally induced fear and panic.

Finally, if the brave souls in the OWS movement think that they have a friend in the White House, or any in the Democratic Party and the Lib-Progressive wing of the faux left, they only need read some of the comments left by readers at the *New York Times*, striking in resemblance to right-wing reactionaries.

We are caught in a beginning stage of fascism in America.

Michael B
Maine, USA
15 November 2011

On “Social reality in New York”

Wow! Thank you for this fiery and pointed commentary—this should be read at every Occupy or other large gathering. The stark contrasting of what the high-born modern aristocracy expect and receive as their due and what the rest of us virtual peons are expected to make do with (or get out!) is astounding. Thank you, Mr. Mazelis, for this powerful portrait of just where we are now.

Christie
Washington, USA
15 November 2011

On “Changing political attitudes in twenty-first century China”

This is a great interview, and I’m so glad I stumbled upon it. It is especially interesting to me since I was also in China at that time, though in a different region and can compare it to my own experiences.

I would recommend this to all readers interested in China, or East Asia in general.

Mirko
16 November 2011

On “Clint Eastwood’s J. Edgar”

I was most interested to learn that Clint Eastwood was to do a

film on J. Edgar Hoover. My involvement in the anti-war movement in the 1960s brought me into contact with the FBI in a most unpleasant way. I must thus confess to being no fan of J. Edgar’s.

I have read numerous reviews of this film over the last week both before and after viewing the film. These reviews largely missed the point that the film fails to set Hoover’s extreme anti-socialism within the context of the century-long attacks on those involved in left/progressive politics by the ruling elites in the USA. These elites harboured (and still harbour) a pathological fear of a socialist revolution in the US. Until the fall of the Soviet Union, it was “reds under the bed” that was used to discredit all left politics. Now it is “terrorists under the bed” being used for the same purpose.

Joanne has elucidated for her readers the full picture of the social context of Hoover’s red baiting. Her review is a much needed history lesson for those who do not know details about these important and often ignored events in America’s past. She does so while giving her customary insightful cinema commentary. She also treats the matter of Hoover’s tortured sexuality with great sensitivity.

I have come to rely on the WSWS for the best cinema reviews. Again, Joanne and the WSWS are to be congratulated for demonstrating through her writing that cinema critique is not simply about evaluating the performances of actors, directors and the like, but about placing cinema within its social context.

Diane A
Michigan, USA
17 November 2011

On “Asuncion: Inauspicious debut play from film actor Jesse Eisenberg”

Your review of this play seems too generous to me. The “anti-political-correctness” attitude has become a political correctness of its own, and deeply reactionary. An example is the use of the word “victim” as a character trait (a negative and derogatory usage) rather than a noun. And how strange that viewing the victims of the world as oppressors should be presented as something refreshing or “empowering”—it reminds me of a saying I heard once: “Some people are too cool for their own good.”

KV
British Columbia, Canada
14 November 2011



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