

Letters from our readers

29 November 2011

On "The police assault at University of California, Davis"

I hope that everyone sees the footage of the California students being assaulted by police officers. I hope that everyone understands that no difference exists between those students and every one of us. I hope that everyone realizes that the freedoms that we are attributed are mere illusions. I hope that everyone wakes up.

The first step is education. We must educate ourselves and others that there is a better life and that we can live it. Otherwise, the valor of these young students is wasted.

Ailill M
Florida, USA
24 November 2011

The 1 percent has declared war on the 99 percent! The blatant and brutal police actions against the peaceful demonstrations of Occupy Movement that have occurred recently, such as those in the city of Oakland, and on UC Berkeley and UC Davis campuses, clearly show the fallacy of our "classless society."

It is quite obvious that we live in a police state and the police, like well-trained and obedient attack dogs, obey their master's orders without question. Clearly, the police will not hesitate to use any means or force required to protect the interests of the 1 percent. And what about the constitutional rights of the protesters to free speech and assembly? Obviously, they do not apply here: the Constitution only exists when it does not interfere with the ability of the 1 percent to protect their positions of power and privilege.

The politicians and university bureaucrats say they didn't give any orders for violence; the police say they were just following orders. Those excuses didn't work at Nuremburg and they won't work here. So far there have only been injuries, though some very serious ones, as a result of this fascist brutality, but it is only a matter of time before we have a Kent State and one or more protesters are martyred. When that happens, all hell will break loose. 99 to 1. Not good odds no matter how many billions you own.

The corporate-owned mainstream media propaganda machine has tried its best to ignore the Occupy Movement and the growing injustice and inequality that fuel it. If these police actions had happened overseas, the corporate media cronies and our puppet political leaders would all be screaming hysterically about the injustice and inhumanity of it. When it happens here in America, they simply turn a blind eye and reduce real journalism to the level of a gossip tabloid; talking ad nauseam about some celebrity's infidelity or drug rehab.

Fortunately, nearly every cell phone has a camera and many have video capability; combine that with nearly universal Internet access, and the corporate media has become obsolete. We are the 99 percent and we are watching!

Leon P

California, USA
26 November 2011

On "Opposition grows to police attack on UC Davis students"

So the student fee hikes are going to pay for more Storm Troopers to pepper spray them? What is the need for Riot Police on a UC campus?

Ken A
Oregon, USA
22 November 2011

On "David Harvey and the Occupy Movement"

This is an excellent review by Nick Beams on the nature of the petty-bourgeois. The quote by Marx should be memorized by all comrades involved in the Occupy movement to further clarify the nature of people like Harvey and groups like the ISO who have no wish to give in to the democratic demands for social equality, but rather want a larger slice of the capitalist pie.

Again, many thanks to Nick Beams. This was a spectacular article!

Bryan D
23 November 2011

Dear Nick,

Thank you and I eagerly await your future analysis on "The Limits to Capital".

In 2009, as I was reading Marx's original work, I found the writings of Harvey. As I continued reading *Capital* I noticed inconsistencies in Harvey's explanation of the same.

The most glaring error was Harvey's idea that since under capitalism, the global capital must continually grow, then it must at some point reach a limit. This is crudity at its best. Marx explained how at a certain point, the class relations of capitalism prevented the expansion of capital. There is nothing organic in capital that prevents continuous expansion, it is the irrational mode in which capital is accumulated in private hands that makes expansion impossible at some point.

According to Harvey, we cannot ever—even under socialism—think of a scenario where social capital can keep expanding. Thus all Harvey can fall back on in a socialist world is some theory of "planning within limits," "consuming carefully."

But the whole point of socialism is to break the fetter of the class relations so that social capital can grow—without limit.

By theoretically not allowing this, Harvey makes a theoretical connection to reformism and that service is proving valuable to the bourgeoisie at the present moment.

And this reformist poison now finds an expression as he intervenes in the anti-Wall Street protests. Thusly, fake intellectuals reveal their class collaborationist policies when the regime teeters on edge.

Thushara
23 November 2011

Hi Nick. I had a couple thoughts on the article you wrote about David Harvey and the Occupy Movement.

I recently watched Harvey's video series on *Capital* as I read it for the first time, and I must say from what I observed in his class his current position shouldn't come as much of a surprise. Despite his close familiarity with not only Volume 1 of *Capital* but all of Marx's work, he frequently introduced a lot of ideas which, I think, are fundamentally alien to the text and to the Marxist mode of thought. He often dwells on "conceptual apparatuses," "time-conceptions," and "administrative apparatuses." Getting to the heart of the matter Harvey essentially classifies historical materialism as "reductionist" and too simplistic. He refrains from making use of words like "socialism," preferring instead "some future society."

I am not familiar with any of his books, although I have been interested to read his works on geography, I imagine that a similar sort of uncommitted eclecticism is the norm there as well.

There is a conception, especially among students as you point out, that Harvey offers some sort "school in Marxism," which is certainly very far off the mark. Nevertheless, amidst the general poverty of knowledge and understanding about Marxist political economy, I found his lectures very helpful in grasping the main points of *Capital*, as I tried to critique, to the greatest extent that I could, what are some very fundamental incorrect conceptions on his part.

Much like Howard Zinn, I feel that despite his rotten politics his work on *Capital*, if approached critically, has at least given me a stepping stool upon which to build a more serious understanding. Again, however, comes the obstacle that there is an appalling lack of expertise available on which to base a critique.

You write: "This is not the place for a full-scale review of Harvey's work." I hope that at some time you do undertake a more comprehensive evaluation of Harvey, which would in the process clarify and open up to real discussion a great deal of material of Marxist political economy. I can only speak definitely for myself, but I imagine that such an evaluation would be illuminating to no small number.

I have always followed your work on the WSWS with great interest, and I'd be very interested to hear your expanded opinion.

Keep up the good work.

Julian Q
23 November 2011

On "*Mother of Julian Assange, WikiLeaks founder, speaks with the WSWS*"

Thank you for this article. It is terrifying to think about what is going on in the world at this time. My thinking is that the American people have to fix this because it is their government that has changed our world. Their Occupy Wall Street movement has begun and looks like it will continue. It is up to them, others will follow, as usual, but they have to lead this

because their country is to blame for "all" of it.

Dawn
26 November 2011
On "*Renewed calls for Medicare cuts*"

Your article omits the third part of the effort to weaken Medicare, which is malpractice/lawsuit "reform". With this initiative it will be easier to cut reimbursements to doctors, as the doctors won't have to worry so much about whether or not they denied a patient services later deemed essential. What needs to be emphasized is that all persons age 65 have a pre-existing condition—the fact that they are age 65. No profit driven system will seek to decently insure them at an affordable rate. The plans that will be offered will only be affordable if they provide limited coverage. That's why we have Medicare in the first place. Combined with business' ability under Obama's health care reform to easily avoid providing health care to workers and their families, the health of the many are being put needlessly at risk in order to satisfy the insatiable drive for profits for the few. The US needs a comprehensive system of national healthcare and there's more than enough money to pay for it. We just need to elect real leaders who understand the needs of the average citizen and respond accordingly. This won't be done inside the current system.

MZ
Maryland, USA
26 November 2011

On "*Anonymous: An ignorant assault on Shakespeare*"

Misplaced hostility and blatant polemicism. Nobody ever claimed that a tradesman's son could not write great works. This tradesman's son, Gulielmus Shakspeare, could not write and was not in the least interested in art or knowledge. The point of the movie, garbled as it was, was that Edward de Vere, recognized as the genius of art and learning in his time, concealed his playwright identity through a succession of proxies and pseudonyms, or anonymous publication. Shakspeare happened to have a similar name, was associated with the theatre, and when the time came, made for the perfect foil to transfer attribution of 'Shakespeare's' works to a harmless unpolitical source. You could have used the real story to show the manipulations and lies of tyrannous government. Instead you got fooled into endorsing the original ruse, that Shakspeare of Stratford was the author. Execrable research and criticism.

William R
California, USA
24 November 2011

"Professor Syme points out a few. He observes when we first meet the crowd of playwrights in 1598, 'Marlowe makes fun of [Thomas] Dekker for the failure of Shoemaker's Holiday and claims preeminence among historical playwrights. Which is funny, since Marlowe hadn't written a history play in five years at that point, largely because he was murdered in 1593. And Dekker's play wasn't written until 1599 (a fact recorded in that famous and fraudulent monument to government conspiracy otherwise known as Henslowe's Diary).'"

Thank you!! Wonderful review. I have always found the anti-Stratfordian slurs against Shakespeare to be a reflection of their class bias. They found it impossible to imagine that anyone but a member of the elite class could have had the brains, imagination and talent to create the works.

But it is also significant to note that, coming from the Victorians, this prejudice does not acknowledge what comprised a "grammar school" education in Elizabethan times. William Shakespeare's father was a man of some position in Stratford-upon-Avon and the school William attended

taught Latin and the classic Latin writers, along with rhetoric, as a requirement for producing an educated person (despite Jonson's slur about WS having "a little Latin and less Greek"). A good description of a pupil's daily routine may be found in Peter Akroyd's *Shakespeare, the Biography*.

It is a pity that such good actors are wasted in this shoddy film.

Carolyn
23 November 2011

Yes, David, the third penultimate paragraph with that revealing quote says it all. How dare people say that a self-educated upstart with a thin veneer of education wrote these plays? Rather than regarding genius as belonging to lower, as well as upper classes, we should "respect our betters" as at the Royal Wedding and bow down before that "blessed event" of an heir to the throne that fills the pages of our National Enquirer of late. Emmerich "blamed the French" for creating Godzilla rather than the Americans in the original 1954 Japanese version, so who should he not play havoc with facts again. As for the old Oxford thesis, perhaps you should have ended with an appropriate quote from the Bard himself involving a familiar tale "told by an idiot (and) signifying nothing."

Tony W
23 November 2011

On "Issues involved in the National Basketball Association lockout"

Most of the ideas Brennan mentions in his article are correct, though he misses the main point, which is that professional sports in this country (and most others I assume) are one of the *primary* ways to dumb-down the population and/or distract the population from the *real* issues at hand.

Most men that I know, and many women as well, care more about sports than they do about anything else except perhaps movies and TV. They couldn't be bothered with gaining a kindergarten-level understanding of (much less actually *caring* about) politics, government, or economics, or learning the real history that is going on all over the planet this very minute, while spending hours each week watching (or talking about, or reading about, etc.) "sports."

Professional sports are the primary weapons of mass distraction in this society (after movies and TV), and they have worked very well indeed.

Bruce
24 November 2011



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