

Letters from our readers

28 February 2012

On "Extreme poverty in US has more than doubled since 1996"

The \$200/month I'm getting in food stamps will end in April...the only other options I have for food will be food banks 15+ miles away...

Philip B
26 February 2012

On "The European Union and Greece"

Marx famously said that history has a habit of repeating itself, first as a tragedy, then a farce. In Greece it is perhaps, as a tragic farce for the Greek working class: in the mainstream media, for example, Greeks are portrayed as being "lazy", "living beyond their means", counterposing them to the Germans, their frugality and "productivity". And so, in the Australian ABC programme Foreign Correspondent, it is alleged Greek workers receive supplements to their pensions for 1. washing their hands, 2. coming on time, etc., and being so attached to their privileges, they riot in the streets. If this wasn't apparently a serious programme, you could mistake it for Comedy Central! This is an illustration as to how the corporate and state media try to smear legitimate protests of the working class: it happened with the Occupy Movement, Arab Spring, and lately with Libya and Syria protests. The idea is to neutralize, then co-opt, these movements to serve imperialism. What is now clear, that Capitalism, with its vanguard, Imperialism, has launched a counteroffensive, and it is being quite successful at it, against a leaderless, atomised and confused working class.

Peter Schwarz is quite right in recalling Trotsky's call for Action Committees: "Such action committees must coordinate their fight at a national level and establish contact with workers in Germany, France,

Spain, Portugal and other European countries in order to topple the EU and replace it with the United Socialist States of Europe." Let's hope that this time history will *not* repeat itself! The working class of Europe and elsewhere is due for a decisive counterattack. Failing this, the future, not just for the working class, but indeed for the whole world, is dire if not catastrophic.

Mirek
Australia
24 February 2012

On "Republican primary campaign grows more frenzied as it heads for decisive contests"

While the WSWs is correct in its assertion that the Republican primary results are highly suspect because of the extremely small number of voters involved and the lack of diversity among those voters, there is another deeply ominous political element involved. The focus on denial of abortion procedures under any circumstances and denial of access to contraceptive services for women indicates a key element in Republican primary voters' thinking: a revolt against modernity by middle class and working class voters who feel threatened by economic factors from both above and below. I invite WSWs readers to contemplate what kind of political system this has presaged in the 20th Century.

Sincerely,
Peter L
Connecticut, USA
25 February 2012

On "Obama's 2013 budget to increase corporate influence over public research"

At the same time that this news has come out, Desmogblog.com has publicly released the think-tank Heartland Institute's Climate Strategy memo and budget for 2012 which among other things show that it

has received funding from insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, philanthropic foundations, energy corporations, utility companies and others for climate change denial programs. In particular the institute has a program to inculcate climate change denial beliefs in school students from kindergarten to year 12. We may expect that the Obama government's subordination of scientific research to corporate interests will encourage further stifling of research that supports climate change evidence.

Jennifer H
25 February 2012

On "Today's social divide and the Charles Dickens bicentenary"

Dear WSWs,

Your review of *Adam Bede* and George Elliot's writings two years ago renewed my interest in quality novels and made me buy *Adam Bede*. I should say at first I found it bit dragging and slow in pace and quite hard to go ahead.

I took quite long time to finish reading it, but when I finished it I felt so happy and fulfill[ed]. Characters and the tenderness (especially Lisbeth and Hetty, I was down the whole day when I read her prosecution part) they generated still stay with me. I was reading *Oliver Twist* too in the mean time. My friends were making fun that it was 12th grade stuff, but I was arguing that those were abridged versions, reading the unabridged version is real fun. Of course, Dickens' satire can't be matched at all and choice of words by these authors; they have definitely improved my vocabulary. I have started feeling more humane in while reading these novels. Keep up with your good work. Thanks.

Regards,
Sathish
26 February 2012

On "Letters from our readers"

"I would dearly love to vote for Jerry White or any of your SEP candidates. But, alas, only the votes of US citizens are counted in American elections—despite the fact that foreign policy decisions made in America often affect everyone on this planet. In the interests of justice, we should all get to vote on these policies."

Well said, Joan. I agree with that. The rest of your letter was also very good and the links are appreciated. Also the quote from Marx on Bismarck's "anti-social socialism". I had read somewhere that Bismarck's were the first "welfare state" measures. Marx hit the nail on the head—the characterisation stands for all the subsequent schemes.

Also thanks to Thushara for comments on the "living wage"—a bogus perspective overdue for refuting.

Andrew W
23 February 2012



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