

Letters from our readers

23 June 2012

On “Greece: WSWs interviews Athens workers and youth”

Dear WSWs—I’ve put together an exam for your readers—it’s quite simple. Just read the following commentary carefully, offered by students and workers recently in Buffalo, New York (USA) and Athens (Greece). See if you can identify the source (i.e., the nationality) of each quote.

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2012/jun2012/buff-j15.shtml>

<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2012/jun2012/athe-j16.shtml>

(Answers provided below)

1. “Young people are afraid that they won’t get a job when they leave school.”
2. “This country needs a little revolution, don’t you think?”
3. “Our country is just getting worse. We have no future, especially we, the youth, will never find any work.”
4. “I have been unemployed for three years. I have worked a week here and a week there, but nothing steady. I have two young children and it is very hard when you can’t buy them things and take them places.”
5. “These politicians don’t care about education, they just care about their rich friends.”
6. “People just get to 50 years old and are thrown out of work.”

“Scoring” your “test” results:

Scoring your exam is impossible. Why? Because the observations by these people are absolutely indistinguishable. The students and workers in Greece and the United States are facing the same assaults on their jobs and education. These are not national issues,

but global issues based on the same crisis of capitalism. It stands to reason that the solution will be the same for all these people, and that’s a socialist solution. More exams to come.

1. “Despina” (18-year-old student), Athens, Greece
2. “Doug” (worker), Buffalo, New York
3. “Dimitris” (unemployed young worker in his early 20s), Athens, Greece
4. “Don” (jobless construction worker), Buffalo, New York
5. “Katy” (visiting worker from Texas), Buffalo, New York
6. “Eleni” (low wage worker), Athens, Greece

Randy R
Oregon, USA
19 June 2012

On the need for a general strike

I just watched the PBS special on the NWA Union, and as someone out of a job too, it made me realize that the only way we will ever see a solution to the outsourcing of jobs, ridding ourselves of the CEOs of big corporations, is to have a universal strike, where every blue collar worker went on strike, leaving the CEOs, CFOs, and all those like them to fend for themselves. Let them see who really keeps their prospective corporations running; not that I believe this type of organization is possible.

However, if it would happen, it need not last very long because if every worker went on strike everything would stop, goods would not come either in or go out, offices would be empty and no work would be done anywhere, grocery stores will have to close, deliveries would stop, oil plants would not produce, goods would not be produced, literally everything would stop until negotiations and demands are met.

This would definitely have positive effects for those of us who truly keep this country and others running.

The CEOs and their minions would be scrambling to meet the demands of the workers on a large scale and very quickly. And wouldn't it be nice if this happened during an election year. We as workers have the power to make changes but we have to be committed to do this all in unison and sadly I don't see this ever happening. How would we get that many people to organize and get the word out for everyone to walk out on their jobs on a specific day and stay out until demands are met?

So we muddle through and the CEOs keep getting richer and those who keep them in their position of power will continue to keep their boots firmly planted on the workers' necks, choking out our livelihood and destroying families.

Linda G
Texas, USA
20 June 2012

On "Australian unions block fight against media job destruction"

These moves by Fairfax Media and News Corporation to cut printers' jobs are part and parcel of the media groups' push to gut quality journalism in Australia. Mining magnate Gina Rinehart now has a 19 percent ownership share in Fairfax Media and is aiming for three positions on its Board of Directors. The ultimate aim is to impose a regressive editorial policy that favours the interests of the mining industry, and Rinehart's in particular, on journalists.

Jennifer H
20 June 2012

On "Science fiction writer Ray Bradbury: 1920-2012"

I was pleased to see the two tributes on your web site to Ray Bradbury, who has always been one of my favourite writers.

It's true, as Christine Schofelt and Hector Cordon write, that there is often a complex relationship between "the conscious political views of an artist and the sense he or she makes of the world through his art."

Nevertheless, there was a time was Bradbury was more outspoken, as an individual as well as in his works, before his apparent conservative shift in his later years.

In 1967, in a new introduction to *Fahrenheit 451*, he didn't downplay the issue of censorship, writing that "when Hitler burned a book I felt it as keenly, please forgive me, as his killing a human, for in the long sum of history they are one and the same flesh. Mind or body, put to the oven, it is a sinful practice, and I carried that with me."

In the same introduction, he commented on the novel's continuing relevance: "For while Senator McCarthy is dead, the Red Guard in China comes alive and idols are smashed and books all over again, are thrown into the furnace. So it will go, one generation printing, another generation burning, yet another remembering what is good to remember so as to print again."

It is noteworthy that in 1968 Bradbury's name appeared in a statement of science fiction writers in *Galaxy Magazine* in opposition to the Vietnam War, joining Isaac Asimov, Philip K. Dick and Ursula K. LeGuin, among others. (There was a pro-war statement by other SF writers on the facing page.)

Whatever the reason for Bradbury's later move to the right, his best writing represents the best of fantastic literature, including powerful social commentary such as the works mentioned in your two articles, as well as other stories such as "The Pedestrian," several stories in *The Martian Chronicles*, etc.

Carl R
Vancouver, BC
20 June 2012



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