

Letters from our readers

3 July 2012

On “The Stockton, California bankruptcy: A warning to all workers”

Thank you Jerry for your powerful statement regarding the Stockton, California bankruptcy. Your analysis of the role of the Democratic Party in suppressing working class opposition is absolutely correct. This process plays itself out on the local level as well on city councils, with mayors, planning boards and in development offices where people with various affiliations to the Democratic Party undertake, in the most cynical and pessimistic manner, brutal and destructive cuts. The only real difference between them and their Republican counterparts is that they usually make a show of shedding crocodile tears before casting their votes or making a decision and by excusing themselves by claiming “they had no choice.”

I think this statement reads well with today’s WSWs publication of the review of Grace Boggs’ most recent book. She too exemplifies a layer that exists locally in many, if not all, American cities. Clarifying the true orientation of people like Boggs is an essential task of the revolutionary party because these layers usually attract a following of young, idealistic people (like Boggs’ association with Detroit rapper Invincible, among others) who have not fully worked out the reactionary nature of the politics of their mentor but are themselves driven by the desire to change to the world. No one but the ICFI is exposing the dead end and danger of people like Boggs and their role in smothering working class opposition to the deplorable conditions found in cities.

Janel
Michigan, USA
2 July 2012

On, “Quebec union head condemns ‘social strike’ against Charest government”

This article vividly illustrates why the world desperately needs a workers’ government.

In it, Quebec’s bourgeois government and their henchmen in the trade union bureaucracy have placed their shortsighted delusions on full display in their responses to the students’ strike.

On the one hand, we have a typical bourgeois government that is utterly incapable of addressing pressing social issues. Instead, social problems are either criminalized (as in this case with Quebec Bills 78 and 160), or else medicalized, militarized or

trivialized.

This bourgeois mental process is easily viewed in their entertainment industry. Here, capitalist society and its deep dysfunctions manifest in a plethora of stale TV/movie dramas revolving around characters who are almost invariably police, doctors, soldiers, and comedians.

(Sometimes, for laughs, the nimble bourgeois mind will mix it up a bit, and give us a funny cop, or a funny doctor; or as in their one classic TV show: the funny doctor/soldier.)

Then there are the labour bureaucrats. These people “represent” a membership that is smart, reliable and resourceful enough to go to work and keep the economy chugging along each and every day. Yet they consider this same membership too stupid, cowardly, craven and indolent to stay home in protest of the latest bourgeois outrage.

Confederation President Roy’s statement on a social strike, that “It would be too great a risk at this point,” is absolutely laughable. Risky? How? His members pretty much run everything! Roy comes to any bargaining table with the biggest possible stick, and yet he somehow thinks he’s defenseless.

So these are the “leaders”—delusional, one and all.

Humanity desperately needs more than this, however. We need workers who know how things work and how to get things done to take charge. This has to be coupled with a determined political leadership that thinks big and outside the box, especially if humanity is to reclaim its basic social rights; and especially if it is to overcome the many threats to its very existence posed by climate change, war, poverty, etc.

And if this starts with a workers’ rebellion, then so be it! Let’s rock their delusions, and make the so-called “leaders” tremble!

Dan
29 June 2012

On “Igniting the Syrian powder keg”

One element of this crisis that I haven’t seen a direct comment on is in regard to the US using Russia and the Central Asian Republics as a supply route for the war on Afghanistan. This would seem to be a particularly explosive situation; with the routes through Pakistan increasingly unstable a sudden shutting down of access through Russia would raise political tensions immensely.

Coley O
29 June 2012

On "Billionaires bid for 'trophy homes' in New York while homelessness rises"

Thanks for this piece on the New York Times Real Estate section and the Trophy Homes of the rich and infamous. Having grown up in the San Francisco Bay Area, I am well familiar with the antics of the incredibly wealthy when it comes to the securing of places to live, or "improving" the places they purchase for extraordinary amounts.

One such story was trumpeted today about a couple in Belvedere (one of the richest little cities in Marin County, which is one of the richest counties in the States) who paid millions to buy the house next door so they could demolish it to improve their view.

Recently I found some documents left by my mother detailing our move to the county when there were still working class enclaves, and laughed myself silly at finding that, in 1980, our two-bedroom house cost \$525 per month. I had had occasion to price this house before being pushed out of the area by the incredible rents and it was, in 2000, already going for in excess of \$2,000 per month! I don't have the stomach to check on it today.

There have also been stories from around the country of well-off families buying multiple-unit buildings and knocking them into single-family homes. One such story trumpeted the "green" improvements made by a family in the Los Angeles area when they "improved" a four-plex into a family compound just for them. Not only did they knock out three other living spaces for three other families, thereby decreasing the already tight rental availability, but they sent quite a bit of material to the landfill in the process. (But they have solar panels and a garden, so it's all good!)

The display of such wealth does not just disregard the rest of society, but shows an incredible disdain for we small people who cannot afford a palace in the sky, self-sufficient makeover for a mid-century complex, or view-improving "reclamation" of land.

The Marin *Independent Journal*, the *LA Times*, and all these other papers which trumpet such moves do so for exactly the same reason the *New York Times* does—to cater to the real estate dealers and the ultra-rich and hip. They are in for a surprise.

Christie S
Washington, USA
29 June 2012

On "Canadian imperialism's intervention in the Russian Civil War"

I think it would be good if this act of rebellion against Canadian imperialism, the soldiers refusing to serve in Vladivostok, were placed in a larger context implied by the reference to how Leon

Trotsky, long out of the country, could direct a successful military rebellion in 1917 Russia. The response of one scholar, that these revolutionaries studied insurrection all their lives, has importance.

Not only in Russia, but also in Germany, France and Hungary, there were military insurrections at that time. In fact a Bolshevik government of sorts was formed for three months in Hungary by soldiers who served on the Russian front. A mutiny, like on the battleship Potemkin, is a very unusual situation with very grave implications, no matter how quickly such rebellion is suppressed.

I saw that with my own eyes in two separate places. When I was 10 years old in Budapest, my family was on its way to the Turkish Bath in 1956 for our weekly swim when truckloads of students came whizzing by shouting slogans against the Stalinist government and waving old fashioned slide rules engineers used to have. On our way home, they had sub-machine guns and rifles. The soldiers handed over weapons.

Again, in the late seventies, I represented a school bringing international students to Canada. Only an idiot would fly into Teheran during those troubled times, but lacking common sense, I found myself in Teheran during the short-lived Bazargan regime. I was told that shortly before many of my students or their relatives put on funeral shrouds and challenged soldiers to shoot them. They did for a time, then discipline broke down, and the Shah, the King of Kings, fled with his generals. The rest, as they say, is history.

I think there was a moment even recently in Egypt when the corrupt generals feared to have their soldiers fire fearing precisely this eventuality.

That said, it is so nice to read aspects of Canadian history our very reactionary government would rather not remember when they are digging through the garbage looking to revive in Canada that military tradition which once served British imperialist plunder and now carries water and battleships for America's warlords.

AL
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2 July 2012



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