

# Letters from our readers

25 August 2012

*On “South African platinum miners’ strike spreads”*

Workers have taken an inspired decision in bypassing the National Union of Mineworkers and presenting their demands directly to mine bosses. Mining was the spur to South Africa’s industrial development. Accordingly the Chamber of Mines, historically a club of English-speaking gentlemen, long ago saw the value of co-opting the leaders of working class movements, specifically those leaders in the NUM.

Cyril Ramaphosa, senior African National Congress member and today among the richest South Africans, is one product of this strategy. Kgalema Motlanthe, Zuma’s deputy president, is another. He became NUM general secretary in 1992, having earlier been instructed by the ANC to “strengthen” the workers’ movement.

According to the web site of the South African Presidency, “[h]e was involved in the establishment of the Mineworkers Investment Company (MIC), which was wholly owned by the Mineworkers Investment Trust, with seed capital of R3 million. This has proven to be one of the best examples of effective economic empowerment in the country.”

This is the man that right-wing populists like Julius Malema are holding up to workers as the alternative to Zuma, because of his having, in ANC language, greater “presidential” qualities than Zuma; that is, fewer personal scandals and court cases dogging him.

Thabo  
23 August 2012

*On “A case of political hypocrisy: An exchange with the French Communist Party on the South African mine massacre”*

The Marikana massacre is surely a turning point in South Africa. You are right to castigate the hypocritical stance of the Stalinists and their hangers on.

They wring their hands and speak of a tragedy while calling for unity between the miners and the unions that betray them. Another example of this is the statement (Aug 21st) from the Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trades Unions.

They say, “We are not here to judge who is more at fault for these deaths”... “No worker should ever face death or injury during a strike. That includes police officers who should not face death while policing strikes ... All we can do now is extend our sorrow and solidarity to our comrades in the South African trade union movement.” (Quoting from statement published on “The Cedar Lounge Revolution”)

Mike M  
England  
23 August 2012

*On “Obama threatens to invade Syria”*

Assume that is true that Syria has chemical and biological weapons. Then disintegrating the Syrian state by military means will inevitably lead to the disappearance of many of these weapons, since they will be extremely valuable. The final destination determined by their purchasers may be the streets of London or Paris. If Western regimes really believe their own anti-Syrian propaganda they will certainly not invade Syria. Here again, the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Chris  
Ireland  
21 August 2012

On “Venezuelan TV cuts broadcast after workers challenge Chavez” 22 August 2012

As someone who came into political life on the notion that Chavez represented something different, that Bolivarianism was the last in the line against imperialism, I can say that his exposure strikes me as especially profound.

Not to say that Chavez is a no less ruthless defender of the capitalist class, but to see his “curtain come down” is an indicator that we are in a period when political parties and programs are going to be tested by the weight of objective events and all the “theories” and cynical excuses for allegiance to this or that savior-faction of the bourgeoisie are being exposed, and must be exposed—for everyone’s sake.

Nick  
23 August 2012

On “UK media lines up behind campaign to extradite Assange and silence WikiLeaks”

It’s no surprise that Luke Harding is leading the *Guardian*’s charge against Julian Assange as he is one of the two authors of a book on WikiLeaks in which the password to the encryption software for a file containing 250,000 US diplomatic cables was revealed. As a result, Assange was forced to make all the cables on the file public and this of course led to his being reviled for having placed people’s lives in danger.

You may like to know also that the *Guardian* recently took on as part of its US commentary team Joshua Trevino, who last year urged Israel to shoot all participants in the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, who was formerly George W. Bush’s speechwriter and who supports genocide. Initially he joined the editorial team but after a public outcry he was demoted—or was supposedly demoted. In its quest for a wider and more global readership and to keep solvent—it’s no secret that the *Guardian* is losing money and its parent company could be facing bankruptcy in a few years’ time—the newspaper has lowered its standards, resorted to dishonest reporting and is catering to neo-con elements in the US.

Jennifer H

On “Colombo press conference announces US SEP presidential candidate’s visit to Sri Lanka”

It is good news that the SEP in Sri Lanka gets Jerry White to speak to our oppressed masses at this juncture of global politics. As it has correctly presented at the press conference, Sri Lankan polity has become very vulnerable by being sandwiched between main rival groups. Without mobilizing the Sri Lankan working class jointly with its international brethren, pushing the neck of our populace to the guillotine by current politics cannot be avoided. What happened to Libyan people could happen to us if we fail in mobilizing our people against the warmongering global establishment. Victory to Jerry White’s endeavours to take the message to the centre of the US working class and thereby wiping out the threat of war to save the humanity in this third millennium.

IVE  
Sri Lanka  
23 August 2012



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