

Letters from our readers

10 November 2012

On "*The disillusioned and dissatisfied electorate*"

We've had four years of carefully marketed politics/policies pandering exclusively to a shrinking segment of the population, "middle class workers." The media rambles on, 24/7, about the concerns of the middle class. Meanwhile, an entire Third World country continues to grow in our midst. It has been all about, only about, the middle class.

By now, many of the rest of us have said, "To hell with it."

DHF

Wisconsin, USA

8 November 2012

On "*Resolution of the SEP Conferences: Build the Socialist Equality Party!*"

Thank you for publishing the summary resolution of the SEP Conferences. I would like to have had a leaflet copy to exchange with every campaigner who came to my door this fall. The positions are argued very well here.

PT

5 November 2012

On voting in the US election

Hello,

I am a voter from Kentucky. Tuesday I went to vote for Jerry White and Phyllis Scherrer and was told by two different polling officials that Kentucky did not have any write-ins for president. I wrote in both names anyway in the very small space. The voting booth was simply a black plastic box with no instructions at all posted about how to fill out the ballot. When I asked an official if I had filled out the ballot correctly, he refused to even look at it, saying he was not allowed. All I wanted to know was if I had filled in the box correctly, but he would not assist me. He said "Insert your ballot into this machine and watch the screen," which said my vote had been registered.

Is there any way of tracking write-in votes? Thanks for your time.

Chris M

7 November 2012

On "*US-backed Syrian 'rebels' in disarray at Qatar conference*"

Dear Mr. Van Auken,

Thank you for another wonderful article. This recent development has brought into the news what has been obvious for quite some time. Among academics, the degree of ignorance about the history of US intervention in the Middle East in general, and the Syrian Opposition in particular, is astounding. Your writing, as usual, puts the issue in clear focus.

Regards,

A

6 November 2012

On "*London Fire Brigade proposes closing a quarter of its stations*"

The report concerning the proposed closures of a number of London's fire stations alongside the loss of jobs highlights the cheap rhetoric of not only the FBU but also other unions in opposing the devastating austerity programme of the capitalist class.

It was only a couple of weeks ago when "left" union leaders were talking about looking at the practicalities of calling a general strike and now here they are watching even more dismantling of social provision without a finger being lifted to stop these attacks.

The only way we will stop the austerity attacks is by bypassing our union leaderships and build a fighting rank-and-file enthused by a socialist programme. Central to this is the building of a Marxist Party whose

members are intimately involved in the struggles taking place today.

Dave T
UK

6 November 2012

On “*Interview with historian James McPherson: 150 years since the Emancipation Proclamation*”

Dear Tom,

McPherson, as a student of the American Civil War, came of age, historiographically speaking, in an era that rejected the reactionary arguments of the “Progressive school”, which denied slavery was the central element leading to the Civil War. This “revisionism” portrayed the Southern planter class as victims of Northern aggression, especially Northern abolitionist agitators, arguing that the conflict could have been resolved amicably and reasonably, as long as the Slave Power had been accommodated.

In this academic milieu was written Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind*, as well as the film version in 1939. McPherson discusses these matters in his book of essays *This Mighty Scourge: Perspectives on the Civil War*.

The early period in McPherson’s career, in the years leading up to the 100th anniversary of Civil War, is graced with hundreds of fine essays from many excellent historians of that conflict—Arthur Bestor, Grady McWhiney, Eugene D. Genovese, David Donald and C. Vann Woodward come to mind, and there are many, many more. These are some of the historians upon whose shoulders McPherson stands, and we should be grateful to him for conveying so perfectly the historiography of that social and political period to us in the early Twenty-first Century.

To those of your readers who wish to understand the historical significance of the American Civil War during these sesquicentennial celebrations, I suggest McPherson’s *Battle Cry of Freedom*, the Pulitzer Prize-winning history of the American Civil War and its causes. This, and the fine essays by Tom Mackaman at the WSWS will do.

Randy R
Arizona, USA
7 November 2012



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