

Letters from our readers

13 April 2013

On the WSWS

The WSWS is telling the only plausible political story to be found anywhere on the planet. This has probably been so for a long time and I am glad that I have eventually come to this conclusion. “Better late than never.”

Robert S

New South Wales, Australia

10 April 2013

On “Thatcher’s legacy”

A fitting perspective about a monstrous and cunning example of bourgeois feminism. Her contemporary—almost forerunner—here (in India), Indira Gandhi, was seen with equal contempt by the working class, though the media project her as an able statesman.

Regards,

Sathish

9 April 2013

On “Common Core: A California kindergarten teacher’s experience”

This is such an important voice to be heard. Early childhood development is an absolutely critical component of a person’s life, and the teacher plays an immense role particularly for children in precarious circumstances at home. Politicians like to wring their hands and moralize over generational poverty and personal responsibility while eyeing the money going to social programs—I don’t see how they can speak when they salivate so much.

With Head Start and early nutrition programs like WIC gutted, the challenges confronting the Kindergarten teacher will be magnified.

Beyond even the intensification of hunger, developmental delay, and general lack of resources, what are the implications of the de-emphasis of creative, artistic thinking in early learning? Where is the research that suggests children see more cognitive benefit from reading informational texts over fiction? What is the implication for such things as the development of empathy, for example? It seems to me there is a clear connection between the “Common Core” curriculum and the “adultification” of youth that the WSWS has highlighted in an earlier report.

This will be a cultural tragedy, unless the working class makes a stand. Teachers must be at the forefront of the struggle to defend public education and the future of our society. I applaud the efforts of the WSWS to amplify such voices in its

coverage, and to develop a socialist response among the public education workforce.

EG

Michigan, USA

11 April 2013

I found this article to be troubling. It sounds as if teachers are expected to program children instead of teach them.

It sounds as if children are being conditioned to receive information and act in a certain way, rather than analyze the information and decide if it’s relevant or even true.

The “Talk Moves” posters seem insidious. They visibly enforce the idea that teachers are as exchangeable as cotter pins and worth as much. They also fix teachers (and students) as cogs in a hierarchical organization that take their orders from above. This reflects the direction of business education over the last 30 years or so; one must wonder whether the intent hasn’t been to be able to take over a company and already know its organization, policies, and procedures.

Raising the proportion of informational to narrative text is frankly dangerous. Children would be taught to process information without also being taught about things like compassion or morality. It sounds as if they are being weaponized.

In your article “What is the Common Core US Education Initiative?” you write, “Under the scheme, all children, starting as young as five years old, will be tested to see if they are ‘college or career ready.’ Those deemed unworthy of advancement to college will be channeled into a trade skill track.” It’s ironic that this is the situation that Ayn Rand wrote about in her book, *Anthem*. It’s also ironic that those learning a trade will be the lucky ones.

Eric J

11 April 2013

On “Newark, New Jersey students protest education cuts”

This is an important article and bears being used as a leaflet and distributed to high school students involved in these protests in Newark, as well as to those in the 5 boroughs of NYC and impoverished “suburbs” such as Mt. Vernon, New York. It indicates that there are serious stirrings and a proto-mass protest movement developing among these youth.

This is also a struggle that cries out for support of the associated teachers who are joint victims of the attacks on education in the name of “education reform”.

Just as in the case of all so-called reforms such as “health insurance reform” and others, when you hear about such reforms, “hold onto your wallet,” as the saying goes.

The movement among these youth—who represent a huge segment of the working class population in the United States—is, in its way, reminiscent of the rebellion of the NYC School Bus workers against the unions that supposedly represent them.

In both cases, unity with the teachers, also under attack, is only being posed by the Socialist Equality Party. I believe the Newark protests represent a serious opportunity to reach these students and their families, thereby raising their consciousness of the need for a fundamental socialist transformation of society, in the US and internationally.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s I participated actively in efforts by the Workers League (predecessor of the Socialist Equality Party) to sell the *Bulletin*, the newspaper voice of the Workers League, to workers and youth in the city of Newark. Although this was considered and was in many ways, especially among university and college students, a period of great activism and radicalization, I believe the situation today in Newark and the most impoverished regions of urban metropolitan areas, indicates a qualitatively greater potential of mass struggle among student youth and workers than we faced in those days in Newark.

DF
New York City
11 April 2013

On “No from Chile and The Sapphires from Australia”

Kudos to Joanne Laurier on her excellent article on Chile and the *NO* movie. I have been an avid follower of Chile since my university days in the 1970s. And Joanne has answered my questions as to why, after the people of Chile got rid of the murderer US puppet Pinochet, Chile changed very little in its support for the rotten corpse of US foreign policy.

It astounds me how people who suffered under Pinochet, or had their families disappeared, can now accept the continued repulsive, repressive, dictatorship of US imperialism. Are the small rich American enclaves, and the USA-bought rich Chileans that powerful that they dictate who rules Chile? Or, is it US/CIA intimidation which says, “if you try to go back to Socialism, blood will run like a river in the streets again”?

Where is Victor Jara when we need him?

Thank you Joanne.
Ray
Canada

12 April 2013

On “Arkansas Senate approves random drug testing for the unemployed”

Just a thought. Instead of requiring people to take drug tests to get partial subsistence, how about raising taxes on the capitalists so they have to maintain the reserve labor army that keeps wages down to the benefit of the capitalists? The

capitalists and their brainwashed lackeys often say there isn’t such thing as a free lunch; that is, unless you are a capitalist.

Ken S
Wisconsin, USA
12 April 2013

On “Letters from our readers”

I wanted to share a small but revealing historical vignette with contributor CH in Texas, because I, too was inspired to study the American Civil War and early US history as a result of reading the *World Socialist Web Site*.

As CH pointed out, Professor Guelzo commented on the admiration felt by the German statesman and Chancellor Otto von Bismarck (1815 -1898) and the Junker class for their counterparts in the United States: “the plantation aristocracy of the Old South.”

Lincoln had the most wonderful effect on his General-in-Chief, Ulysses S. Grant (1822–1885) and it shows in this deservedly famous exchange between Grant and Bismarck thirteen years after the end of the Civil War on Grant’s 1878 world tour:

“You are so happily placed,” replied the prince, “in America that you need fear no wars. What always seemed so sad to me about your last great war was that you were fighting your own people. That is always so terrible in wars, so very hard.”

“But it had to be done.” said the general.

“Yes,” said the prince, “you had to save the Union just as we had to save Germany.”

“Not only save the Union, but destroy slavery,” answered the general.

“I suppose, however, the Union was the real sentiment, the dominant sentiment,” said the prince.

“In the beginning, yes,” said the general; “but as soon as slavery fired upon the flag it was felt, we all felt, even those who did not object to slaves, that slavery must be destroyed. We felt that it was a stain to the Union that men should be bought and sold like cattle.”

After Grant flatly corrects him, Bismarck changes the subject... Here is the web site that has more on the exchange.

Best wishes on your research!

Randy R
Arizona, USA
10 April 2013



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wsws.org/contact