

Letters from our readers

22 June 2013

On “No to war in Syria!”

Bill, you are so very correct in saying the imperialist plans of Washington go back decades. While a Senior NCO in the US Air Force in the 1980s we were taught, without even a wink or a nod from our materials written by the Air Force, that the next wars would be in Africa and the Middle East for minerals and oil. Of course they justified these wars in the name of “national security” and “maintaining our way of life.” Wave the flag, damn the torpedoes as the way of life of the rich and ruling class in the United States and Europe are the only lives worth maintaining!!!

Ken S

Wisconsin, USA

18 June 2013

On the WSWs Podcast

I have just listened to my first ever WSWs podcast. It was a magnificent production and extraordinary punching performance. We are strong because we are telling the truth and have moral values. They are weak because they are full of lies and violence and have no moral values. Every word spoken on this June 18th podcast puts a brick in the wall of a future prison cell where we will put the gangster leaders of capitalist states who are conducting a worldwide war against the human race. Thank you to WSWs.

Elijah T

18 June 2013

On “US inflames sectarian tensions to escalate war in Syria”

Monday, Russian foreign ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich said of the possibility of a no-fly zone over Syria: “I think we fundamentally would not allow this scenario.” This is a public declaration of Russia’s intention to oppose a Western no-fly zone over Syria militarily. And cannot be spun in any other way. It now depends on what the US regime does next. They will now have to face the reality of a military conflict with Russia as the price for destroying the Syrian regime. It is already clear that the British political class is not going to join in whatever the US does.

Chris

Ireland

17 June 2013

On “At least one major UK museum faces closure”

I cannot believe the British would consider closing the Museum of Science & Industry in Manchester. I visited this museum at the conclusion of a literary tour of England in 2010, and it was one of the highlights of my trip. One does not have to be a scientist or technical person to appreciate it.

In fact, it is the perfect complement to a “literary” tour because it shows you the nuts and bolts of real life, the technology which drove civilization in a city so important to the industrial revolution. There is so much here which challenges the imagination.

I particularly enjoyed the textile galleries, and the incredible machines on display for processing cotton at various stages (the museum schedules demos for visitors). At the time of my visit, there was a special exhibition, “Da Vinci: the Genius,” highlighting his inventions, and featuring a “Secrets of the Mona Lisa” display, using scientific techniques to better understand art. I was one of the last people to leave, at closing time.

Manchester was the only UK venue for this spectacular exhibit. The British should be enlarging the science museum, not reducing its budget or closing it.

Lesley J

Ohio, USA

20 June 2013

On “Panic deepens on world financial markets”

Thank you Mr. Andre Damon, for your lucid analysis of what is happening in the global economy at the moment and its grievous implications for the working class, youth and oppressed masses across the planet. The only hope for humanity is the SEP’s tireless campaign to build organizations at each and every level of the society and ultimately to co-ordinate them at the international Marxist organization at the global level.

This reader has high hopes for the SEP’s endeavours. If bourgeoisie can join into an international cartel to usher in misery for the oppressed class internationally, why can’t the working class counter that vicious act through their efforts and change the world to ensure the defence of their basic rights when there is a core of a international Marxist party? Victory to the SEP. Down with the bourgeoisie.

IVE

Sri Lanka

21 June 2013

On protests in Bulgaria

Important to have Anna Rombach write an analysis of the current ongoing June street protests in Bulgaria from a socialist viewpoint.

These protests may express “popular discontent” with the electoral system and the poorhouse Bulgaria has become for most, but they are clearly in part orchestrated by—and very substantially in the interest of—nationalist and pro-neoliberal parties of various stripes that failed to enter the parliament on May 12, along with the main center-right formation GERB.

GERB has been trying since the day after the May 12 elections to have them declared invalid and to move to still another round of snap elections. I have done everything to upend the coalition cobbled together by the BSP. The current protests are made to order for GERB; that is more than evident.

The excesses here (Plovdiv and Blagoevgrad) on June 17 against Sofia-appointed regional governors of ethnic Turkish background were openly racist.

Rombach and Dreier on Bulgaria (from WSW/Deutschland) have been about the only Marxist analyses of the crisis here since February 2013 in the international progressive media.

Bill T

Bulgaria

18 June 2013

On “Hannah Arendt: Margarethe von Trotta’s film revisits debate over Eichmann trial”

I think what you criticize as an “ahistorical” quality in Hannah Arendt’s thought may not have the “quasi-psychological” roots you propose, but rather an extraordinarily corrupt and base idea of “historicity” which derives from Arendt’s old teacher and lover, Martin Heidegger, who spent the ’30s lecturing in a cute Brownshirt uniform on history as a history of Being with a capital B.

Like pimples, this thinking pops up in the least likely places, certainly today’s post-modernist re-thinkers of Marx in Derrida’s circle, but as early as the late ’20s Herbert Marcuse spent his Frankfurt School days as a supposed Marxist working on a thesis to wed Heidegger’s “historicity” to Karl Marx’s, would you believe.

The “banality of evil” has interesting roots too from Hannah Arendt’s earliest essays in the ’30s, just when the Brownshirts went from negligible to commanding presence in Weimar’s democracy. In 1931, she attacks the sociology of Mannheim’s “Ideology & Utopia” sounding much like Heidegger, who felt the call of being particularly strongly rising from the soil of his Black Forest home and among his

“Volk”. And so, writes young Arendt: “Only when people no longer see their existence in community, only when, as by means of economic advancement does something like ideology arise as a justification of one’s position against the position of the others.”

By this token, the feeling of “homelessness” which crops up in her articles on Nietzsche and Kierkegaard in this period belongs again to Heidegger’s view that, lacking God, Nietzsche having killed Him, if we withdraw from the hurly-burly of the modern technological world and its untidy masses with their “gossip” (real history), we may be fated to witness in a lonely heroic struggle unconcealed that Being with a capital B which speaks to us through our language, not any language, but Greek or its closest relative, German. That is why Hannah Arendt in a remarkable interview with Gunther Grass in 1964 expressed her pleasure when she returned to Germany and heard again a language which was her “home”.

There is a very nasty elitism in this view of human “historicity” as an individual quest of authenticity as far from the common man and day-to-day labour as possible, which many an egghead had found appealing over the years, in my case from John Paul Sartre’s existentialism founded on Heidegger’s thought. Again, Arendt shared with her teacher and the post-modernists a horror at “uprooting loneliness of the masses and the triumph of the kind of human being who finds satisfaction in mere labour”. Say, like my mother, the dressmaker and my father, the shoemaker. Banal they were, but quite heroic through Eichmann’s rule of Budapest.

AL

Toronto, Canada

21 June 2013



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