

Letters from our readers

3 April 2006

The following is a selection of recent letters to the World Socialist Web Site.

On "France: Fight vs. "First Job Contract" raises need for new working class leadership"

Thank you for your reporting and analysis of the situation in France. This crisis is a product of capitalism as a system, and as such requires the political organization of the working class across national borders as the only truly effective response.

In Canada, the attack on working class youth has been more subtle than the current developments in France. The subtlety of these attacks may be in the process of changing, however. We have had a recent change in the Canadian national government towards the right. As noted in an earlier WSWS article by Brian Jones, prime minister Stephen Harper's new government appears to have close links to the national police and military, with the police having assisted Harper during the election campaign.

More ominous, the national police's web site lists "youth" as one of its five strategic priorities. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) web site states that, "To bring down the 'barometer of crime' we continue to focus on: ... Youth—Both nationally and internationally, it is recognized that economic disparity may increase the potential for criminality. Underemployed, urbanized young men are an especially volatile group that can be easily drawn into organized crime or mobilized for violent political action" (found at http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/priorities/index_e.htm and http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/youth/index_e.htm).

So it looks like the crisis in capitalism is forcing the RCMP to take both a national and international view of events, and to note that the system's crisis may force young people into political action outside the usual legal boundaries. In short, not only does this appear to confirm your analysis, but the WSWS's political program may be the RCMP's worst nightmare.

Keep up the good work!

DP

28 March 2006

On "Narrow victory for Kadima in Israeli elections"

Your assessment of the recent Israeli elections drew a very vivid picture indeed of the most brutal living conditions suffered by the Israeli working class, Jewish and Arab. I am especially interested in your highlighting the deep social fissures destroying the Zionist dream of my father and a great many of his generation. They trusted in Zionist collectivism, and once had in mind an Israel where the very limited resources of the land are shared through various collective models such as the kibbutz.

Certainly they had not planned to found a state floating on gangster banking, white slavery, the superstitious hysterias of the

settlers, and the power of the Orthodox, the haredim, on government policy. And that explains the Pensioners party headed by the man who captured and interrogated Adolf Eichmann. This is a very tough generation, and very astute politically. American Zionists, Likudnik to the end, will be very shocked by this bunch that they heard about in summer camps, their heroes, starving in the promised land.

AL

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

31 March 2006

On "UN Security Council bows to US pressure for statement against Iran"

I have just read another of your excellent articles which illustrates just how loud the saber-rattling on the part of the US has become. It might interest you to know that I have just lodged a formal complaint against the Australian Federal government (at the International Criminal Court) for its complicity in war crimes in Iraq. The WSWS is a very reliable and informative site. Keep up the good work.

KW

Belmont, Western Australia

31 March 2006

On "More than a million march in Los Angeles, other US cities in defense of immigrant rights"

I'm from Coachella, California. I recently moved to Pasadena, Texas. All I wanted to say is that even if I'm far away from home I'm thinking of all who will be affected by this law. Sorry I can't travel to my hometown right now, but I will have you all in my prayers and in my mind I'm with you 100 percent. Y que viva la raza.

MC

Pasadena, Texas

27 March 2006

On "Confused, not followed through: V for Vendetta"

Near the end of your review, you write: "Taken at face value, the film neatly, if inadvertently, captures the bankruptcy of anarcho-terrorist ideology: the mass of the population is reduced to the role of a passive spectator while the heroic individual (and super-egoist) carries out exemplary, supposedly 'electrifying' operations."

This made me think of the American Weather Underground, and its campaign of selective bombings of government and corporate targets in the early 1970s. Although Weather always accompanied its attacks with explanatory missives, expressing the political meaning of a particular attack, one could be forgiven for viewing these actions as anarcho-terrorist and occurring outside the sphere of the working class or even the racial minorities whose cause

(and the cause of national liberation movements) the Weather Underground espoused. These attacks got WU a lot of media attention and were, to be sure, a thorn in the side of the Nixon administration and the FBI of J. Edgar Hoover, but they also alienated the working class of the 1960s and 1970s, whose lack of political education rendered them incapable of understanding Weather's explanatory announcements.

In the end, the members of the Weather Underground wound up either dead or in prison, where many of them remain. In the meanwhile, time has marched on and we now have the Bush administration, which makes that of Richard Nixon appear positively benign.

Anarchic attacks in the service of private (or privileged) vendetta can never be considered revolutionary in the Marxist sense. In the case of the "Guy Fawkes" character in the film, his acts of revenge are only superficially aimed at creating a better world for ordinary people in a dictatorship. In reality, they are a great ego trip on his part. When his lust for revenge is satisfied, what sort of society is he capable of building? None, it would seem, since his actions are not conducted with the liberation of the people in mind.

The Weather Underground may have had members who genuinely intended to support the struggle of minorities and national liberation movements, but these members also quarreled over issues of class in American society. This muddling of ideology, and what the purpose of their movement was, ultimately made their violent actions meaningless as a way to advance the cause of social equality or anything else.

CZ

San Francisco, California

27 March 2006

I read your review of *V For Vendetta* with interest. While I do feel that Alan Moore has, in the past, created works with certain interesting elements, I would not consider *V For Vendetta* to be one of them, and I found myself agreeing with all of your criticisms. Since I was not particularly drawn in by the original work (even Alan Moore has described much of his early work as the product of a bad mood he had back in the 80s), and since I have no respect for the Wachowskis as filmmakers, I felt no need to see the adaptation. Your review has reinforced this decision.

However, I do not see the point in questioning the ability of graphic novels to produce source material for interesting films. This seems like a pointless attack on an admittedly stunted but still promising medium. Yes, most films adapted from comic books have been quite dreadful, although if one looks at certain cases (especially *From Hell*), it can be seen that, whatever the flaws of the original work, the adaptation represents a significant dumbing-down of the material.

Examples of graphic fiction that do not descend into juvenilia or pseudo-intellectualism are indeed few and far between, and it is often not worth the trouble searching through the mud for a few gems, but I hardly think this makes the case for an "inherently limited medium." In fact, if one examines the history of comics, it is plain to see that whatever artistic promise they hold has consistently been deterred by various forces—for example, cost-cutting measures at newspapers that lead to a reduction of the size of the comics page, leaving no more room for interesting

strips such as Krazy Kat. Or the introduction of the Comics Code, which restricted mainstream comic books for many years to superhero adventures, and which helped contribute to the inability of so-called Alternative Comics to expand their appeal beyond various middle class subcultures, which has in turn vastly limited their artistic scope.

However, there are enough serious comics out there to give one hope for the medium, and while something like Persepolis may not reach the level of a Kiarostami film, it certainly strikes me as something to be encouraged, not discouraged.

JN

28 March 2006

On "*US home foreclosures on the rise*"

This is one of the finest articles describing the current condition of the housing financial situation that I have read. I am going to pass this along to others ... especially some of the banker and real estate persons I know, that are continuing to press some of these "crazy" finance plans.

LC

Barry, Texas

29 March 2006

On "*Amnesty International reports 152 taser-related deaths in US*"

Thank you for the timely article I was astonished at a segment on CNN broadcast yesterday in which the television station appeared to favor the electrocution by taser of a difficult teenager. I'm aware that the powers-that-be are incrementally building a more authoritarian government, but I trusted CNN to, at least, give the appearance of supporting the rights of the individual. Your article gave me a more complete picture of the tools law enforcement is using to clamp down on the population. The article revealed an important dynamic—Americans are now less compliant, and the police are ramping up the intimidation tactics. I didn't realize this, even though I'm aware of the many encroachments on the social safety net.

Because of the incremental but constant repeal of our rights and liberties, it is essential that we stay well informed. The mainstream press is usually not particularly helpful in this manner, but the New Fascists were so bold as to promote their terror tactics on one of the most widely watched news channels. This indicates that the deterioration has advanced much further than I understood. Because no one has officially announced that the Patriot Act and other repressive legislation have annulled many constitutional rights, it's difficult to assess where we are on the scale between liberal democracy and police state. Your article has helped to make this assessment more precise.

YC

31 March 2006

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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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