

Letters from our readers

18 December 2007

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

On "US stocks plunge on Federal Reserve rate cut announcement"

Call me silly, but I don't think that making it easier to borrow money is going to solve the problem of people having borrowed too much money. Just a hunch. But hey, that's capitalism at its best—believing that any problem can be solved by throwing money at it.

SM

Michigan, USA

12 December 2007

On "Suicides by US soldiers and war veterans surge"

Mind blowing article ... and sad. I posted it in my debate on MSNBC's Gut Check. It's so hard for me to understand why this country is not pissed off more than it is. Actually, given the media control that the government has, I guess it really isn't so hard to figure out why we aren't burning down the White House. Thanks for the writing!

DR

15 December 2007

Even Hitler knew there were psychological ramifications to having people kill other people. He made efforts to distance the soldiers from the actual killing of those rounded up (hence the mechanical nature of the camps). There is, on the part of this administration (and I include Congress in "this administration") no such regard for the troops they so loudly claim to support. Why else would they have cut combat pay in the first year of the invasion? Or cut VA funds and made access thereto even more difficult than before?

Over the course of this war and occupation, we have seen the recruitment of blatantly unfit people (the severely autistic, those with past violent criminal records, etc.), the return of the afflicted and re-programmed who are dumped back into a society they have no means of dealing with, and now their self-destruction.

It has never been easy to find mental health for those in the services. Any attempt is discouraged as being a sign

of weakness. Careers are threatened by such simple things as marriage counseling. Of course, this will give rise to a denial of coverage for actual combat-related stresses. I suppose some within the military will see these suicides as a natural weeding process that will ultimately leave the forces with those who can "take it."

To what uses will these people be put? Those who have no guilt, no remorse, no pain over their killing of children, women, and men? As the "healthy" ones kill themselves off, we will be left with a very dangerous layer, indeed.

CMS

Portland, Oregon, USA

13 December 2007

On "Former CIA agent acknowledges use of water-boarding in interrogations"

Waterboarding is not simulated drowning. It is drowning. It is worse, since you cannot flail about because your arms and legs are bound. Every once in a while the tortured gets to bob up for air. It is still drowning. Nothing simulated about it.

AC

11 December 2007

On "An evening with the Cleveland Orchestra"

Whew, what a marvelously informative review of an orchestral concert. You just don't see such in mainstream sources, such as the *New York Times*. Since American orchestras, such as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, are not recording any more, I hope that Mr. Lantier would review some of their concerts, especially the BSO so we can get an opinion on Levine's conducting of the orchestra. I also liked the context material for the music reviewed; it really enriched the meaning of the scores performed. I hope that we see more of Lantier's reviews.

RLB

Bradenton, Florida, USA

12 December 2007

Workers need bread *and* roses. This review is as striking and delightful as a well-done flower arrangement. The author's delight at the concert was most evident. The

frank words were both bold and beautiful. It is almost like hearing the concert to read these words of an appreciative author. Both the author and WSWS deserve praise for bringing this episode of grace and beauty to us.

LL

12 December 2007

Thank you for your recent review of the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra. Americans should realize that some of the US local/regional orchestras have been among the best in the world, especially the CSO.

It is worthy of note that at the premier of Beethoven's 4th piano concerto in 1806, the program consisted of the following: 5th symphony, 6th symphony, 4th piano concerto, Mass in C Minor, and some songs/arias. Right before the performance, Beethoven decided there was not enough music on the program (times have certainly changed!), and composed the Chorale fantasy, to make use of the chorus present for the Mass. The fantasy, of course, is a prelude to the 9th symphony, but proved an infelicitous ending to the night, as the performers were not ready.

As for the piano work of Beethoven, for the aficionado/student/performer, his sonatas are essential. The Hammerklavier Sonata is one of the most important piano pieces ever written. Its slow movement is a foretaste of Chopin, and there are shades of atonalism in the sonata. Early Beethoven piano music (e.g., the Pathétique) also shows experimentation in expression that would later bear fruit in the orchestra works.

Finally, the concertos (including the triple concerto, and other smaller, less familiar pieces) show the interplay of influences from Haydn and Mozart. Beethoven is most influenced in much of his music by Haydn, especially the early symphonies, except in his concerto piano music, particularly nos. 1-3. Mozart's undisputed mastery of the piano concerto cast such a shadow over composition in this area that Beethoven struggled to find "his" voice, really until concertos 4 and 5.

Thanks for the family and historical background on both Debussy and Ravel. We would do well to remember the immense popularity in its day of what is now termed "classical" music. Though attendance may be in decline in the US, "classical" music still thrives in Europe, Russia, etc., and is exploding in popularity in Southeast Asia, especially China.

RB

Arlington, Virginia, USA

13 December 2007

On "US-Mexico border fence almost doubles"

The typical response of simple minds to complex social problems is to increase security (read: police state) measures. Building fences will not, of course, address the cause of massive migration: third world dependence on the core, and the willingness and ability of US businesses to exploit cheap Mexican labor.

What we have here is the inability of policy makers and public to see the complexity of a large-scale issue. Instead, we just build fences as if the problem was a neighbor's dog sneaking into our backyard. This kind of strategy reveals massive ignorance, but also a knee-jerk reliance on force and security to solve social problems—like installing metal detectors in a school in response to a shooting.

Even if the goal is to reduce illegal immigration (and it shouldn't be), there are better ways. Of course, such measures as strengthening the labor movement to make wages appealing to domestic blue-collar workers, or taking steps to help Mexico develop better working and living conditions, are out of the question for the American elites who decide policy for us all.

BB

Oklahoma, USA

12 December 2007

On "France: One-day rail strike in defence of pensions called off"

Wonderful article. Please continue to keep me informed. I only have one vote and can guarantee three more from my family, but we will do whatever we can to rid France of Sarkozy.

JKR

Neuilly sur Seine, France

14 December 2007

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>