

Letters from our readers

5 February 2008

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

On “Australia: Political vendetta resumes as David Hicks leaves prison”

Thank you for your excellent article. As a person who played a part in David’s release, I must say that the South Australia Police handled this well, and we were seen away safely for a few minutes in order to protect the public and David. (I don’t imagine any media chases on Adelaide’s roads would have gone down well!)

Unfortunately the media hounded me for three days. The *Adelaide Advertiser* in particular was extremely intrusive. They stayed outside of my home day and night. This included being present at 6:30 a.m. when I walked the dog. There were two people, a photographer and a journalist. When I approached them and said that David was not at my home and had no intention of staying there, they acknowledged this but still “staked out” my home. I asked that my home not be photographed due to family reasons and expressed concerns for young members of my family. I also asked that they pass on a message to the news editor explaining the reasons why I did not want my home photographed. This did not stop them. Then the *Advertiser* proceeded to print inflammatory stories about David which were lacking on facts and contained many errors. (The reporter also stated that she represented the *Australian* newspaper and the *Sunday Mail* as well as the *Advertiser*.)

Adelaide’s Channel 9 was even worse. I was photographed against my request, and their news reporter did not leave my property when asked. He continued to pester me, and when I made the same request in relation to my family and asked for a message to be passed to the news editor about this it was ignored. (Ray Martin take note.)

I am happy for this information to be posted on the WSWs so that your readers know how awful the media is and how many of its members hound people against their wishes.

Yours sincerely

Bronwyn Mewett

Fair Go for David Coordinator

Australia

30 January 2008

On “Fighting in Sri Lanka continues unabated as ceasefire expires”

While most of the articles printed by the southern media are totally biased, I like to mention this one is completely different

and very neutral. As a Tamil expatriate living in the West, I thank you again. You have mentioned the war is a communal one. That is 100 percent true. Each and every Tamil is a terrorist according to the government. The so-called middlemen (India, Japan and the US) are biased and are supporting the government.

BM

Toronto, Canada

26 January 2008

On “80th Academy Award nominations: a very poor showing”

I couldn’t agree with you more. I’ve seen four of the five nominated “Best Pictures” (*Juno* is still missing) and have been completely underwhelmed by the lot. *Michael Clayton* is easily the best of the group, but not a particularly memorable film.

The one that is grabbing the early awards, *No Country for Old Men*, is preposterous. Where is the sense and logic? The idea that the Josh Brolin character, after leaving a bleeding man to die, would return with water hours later is laughable. (The idea that his character, an experienced hunter, would traipse across the scorched landscape without a canteen or water bottle is also far-fetched.)

Where were the police—*anybody*—when Brolin and Bardem engage in an extended shootout in the middle of town? How did Woody Harrelson’s character locate Brolin *before* the man who had already been stalking him? What was the real purpose of Harrelson’s character to begin within? Why does Bardem’s character suddenly show up the day Brolin’s widow buried her mother? How much time passed? Bardem didn’t seem like the kind of guy who would wait around. Those are only a few of my problems with that film.

I keep reading all the critics with their self-indulgent prose and all the terms from Film 101. Doesn’t anybody stop to ask: Does this make sense? Major filmmakers seem to be telling us, “We can put anything on the screen because you’re too stupid to know or care.” Unfortunately, they may be right.

There will be Blood had no interest for me, only the sickening feeling from the gore. What happened to the more responsible Hollywood following 9/11? As for *Atonement*, here’s a couple who finally “connect” due to his mistaken pornographic note (that “accident” is also stupid) and then immediately have sex in the library. Yeah, that’s the makings of another “romance for all ages.”

DO

Greenwood, Indiana, USA

28 January 2008

I agree with you about *There Will Be Blood* and other films you mentioned (I personally never plan to see another Coen Brothers film as long as I live—gratuitous yuppie violence, inc.) I don't agree that *Atonement* was merely sentimental or nostalgic. Its politics were very good—anti-imperialist war, anti-class system—and it contained some striking visual ideas, such as when the male protagonist is staggering in front of a sentimental, nostalgic 40s film screen. I think you're pulling a Georg Lukács, being too tendentious by knocking all these films into the same cocked hat of bourgeois decadence. There are often exceptions, and *Atonement* is one of them.

TS

28 January 2008

On “Canadian university forces locked-out faculty to vote on ‘final offer’”

As a striking faculty member, I can assure you that it's even uglier here than you've reported. But thanks so much for (finally) an in-depth look at this labour struggle. Colleagues tell me at other universities that their administration negotiating teams are not showing up for meetings or coming unprepared. These were our first hints of trouble. The undermining of collective bargaining rights in university settings in Canada is under way. We are just the tip of the iceberg. The US outlawed the “final offer” divisive strategy after the General Electric attempts in the '50s and '60s, I understand.

Thanks again for a great article! Keep watching!

GM

28 January 2008

The latest article on St. Thomas University, the labour legislation, and the description of working conditions is excellent. Good historical detail and analysis. It really buoyed our union members. Thanks.

CM

29 January 2008

Sympathetic walkouts are the only way to go to break the ‘strike-breakers’!! Shut the damn province down!!

AO

Wasaga Beach, Ontario, Canada

29 January 2008

On “Year Zero: Trent Reznor looks outside himself”

I want to thank you for the coverage of Reznor's new album. Your analysis is great, and I agree with most of the points you made. I look forward to reading more.

There was one thing I felt some disagreement with: both the title and the beginning portion of the article indicate that Reznor has been generally subjective and self-analytical up until this recent offering. This is only half true.

If you listen to one of the most popular singles from his first album *Pretty Hate Machine*, I think it's called “Head like a Hole,” Reznor repeatedly attacks the alienating, dehumanizing

effects of capitalist society on the individual. The chorus blandly repeats the line “god money, I'll do anything for you...” In a later more hostile tone Reznor responds to “God Money” screaming “no you can't take it, no you can't take that away from me.”

Limitations notwithstanding, the song reflects a consciousness of the exploitation inherent in society and a very genuine anger about it. At the very least, the lyrics indicate that the author finds the source of his personal angst outside himself. I think Reznor's work on *Pretty Hate Machine* was impressive, but everything since has been weak. Your analysis would have benefited from closer attention to that first album. Did he make a wrong turn somewhere? What about that first album has been missing from more recent works?

KK

28 January 2008

I thought your review of Nine Inch Nails' album was quite harsh. While I appreciate that you hold artworks up to the highest possible standards, I think you have marked Reznor down unfairly in a couple of aspects.

Most importantly, objective reality does not yet include a mass upsurge of popular resistance to capitalism. There are signs that it is approaching, but these signs were almost invisible nearly three years ago, when Reznor began the album. The album is shot through with a sense of powerlessness and isolation, something that many people can identify with. I feel that when working class people begin to disassociate themselves from the bourgeois parties, and take independent action, Reznor will be swept along with them, and make his music part of the soundtrack. I think *Year Zero* can be taken as a warning as to what will happen if US imperialism goes unchecked.

The ‘alternative’ musicians who became prominent in the late '80s/early '90s are probably the most self-absorbed ever to have existed, being as they are products of the Reagan/Thatcher era. It is certainly intriguing and encouraging that conditions are forcing musicians such as Reznor, Billy Corgan (of the Smashing Pumpkins) and Scott Weiland (Velvet Revolver and Stone Temple Pilots) to take a look at the world around them.

AF

Merseyside, UK

26 January 2008



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