

Letters from our readers

2 August 2005

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

On “Police gun down worker in London subway: another tragic consequence of Blair’s war policy”

The article on the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes is eloquent in its response to a truly tragic situation. The article isolates the seriousness of this event with the word “watershed.” The rule of innocent until proven guilty is meant to cover just such a case. No amount of fear in the citizenry should blind them to an inalienable right that has been breached by this foul deed. It is foul because it is an application of government policy. Police and government have been brazen in their hollow attempts to excuse this.

The right-wing delight in their simplistic psychological portrayal of terrorists as cowards. But this is a clear portrait of cowardice. Four men hold down an unarmed innocent man and fire point blank. Moreover, the four act under the authority of a state apparatus that supposedly is motivated by civilized principles.

I just returned from London and was in the city during a number of crucial events of the last week and a half. For all the talk of preparedness and the money invested in counterterrorism, I saw a series of events that showed total lack of coordinated response on the part of police and train officials. I am particularly sympathetic with the railway and transit workers who have tried to maintain a clear head while often being given contradictory instructions. I might be a little less critical of the state of panic if the Blair government had not made such a point of how they had the overall situation under control before the recent incidents.

For what it’s worth, union officials indicated that transit workers might not continue service if security was not improved. Kenneth Livingstone can call for unity all that he wants, but the citizens are not suffering equally under this difficult situation. Workers should not bear such risks for the international treacheries of Tony Blair and his supporters.

More than ever, it is critical that we do not get caught up in the panic of the moment. It is significant that

WSWS is so sharp in its commentary.

Thanks!

KC

Atlanta, Georgia

25 July 2005

On “Britain: media defend state killing, police chief warns more to come”

With the British government and media defending the murder of Jean Charles de Menezes by police, I can’t help but ask: “What is the difference if a terrorist kills me or government thugs do?” The end result is the same. How can anyone believe a government when it says that they are willing to kill people to save them? This only proves that the “War on Terrorism” isn’t about protecting people; it’s about something else entirely.

AB

Alaska

27 July 2005

On “An exchange on ‘One hundred years since Albert Einstein’s annus mirabilis’”

I just wanted to compliment you on your excellent article; it was a pleasure to read! Astoundingly well written, very intelligent, and with an important point to convey—these are rare qualities to find together.

Thank you!

KP

28 July 2005

In your reply to CM you wrote: “The most humane and thoughtful scientists will recognize the natural affinity between science and socialism.”

With Einstein’s elegant $E=mc^2$ all matter is/can be a form of energy. In the economic and social realms (considered by most people, other than a few bourgeois and religious thinkers, to be a subpart of the physical universe), there is also a dynamic relation and transformation between matter and energy. If someone were to innocently ask where wealth comes from, it would be hard to dispute the findings of materialists: all wealth derives from nature—both ecological and human. Capitalism is simply the most advanced machine for

transforming nature into wealth. Unfortunately, in its drive to transform nature into wealth, capitalism ultimately obliterates nature and thus the possibility of sustaining itself.

As your comment which I quoted above implies, it is impossible for thoughtful scientists not to recognize the connection between science and society and the implications of capitalism. Depending on their class orientation, they may see the current distribution of human and ecological matter transformed into wealth as admirable or exploitative. But if they are truly conscientious materialists they would have to question the consequences of the current distributional arrangement for the future of humankind and the environment.

The fact that most advanced science, as well as most other cultural and intellectual production, occurs in capitalist societies (as CM crows about), is not a justification for capitalism itself. A contradiction of capitalism is that it requires the most advanced means for extracting and multiplying wealth. But those very mechanisms that rationalize production also have the “troubling” (to the bourgeoisie) consequence of exposing the invalid authority and very self-destructive consequences of the capitalist social order.

Thanks again for this very informative series of articles and the ensuing debate.

MC

28 July 2005

On “US military exonerated tortures of John Walker Lindh”

I’ve been thinking of this young man since reading about him in 2002, and wondering if there is anything that can be done to rectify his incarceration. I’ve been told that his experience might have been worse if he had not proved to be an American citizen—i.e., ending up in Guantánamo—but in reading of his trial, it seems obvious that he was railroaded into prison on specious charges. When this horrendous administration of lies is gone (if ever), and the fever of misplaced “patriotism” has been vastly reduced by the true knowledge of the “war,” is it possible that his situation can be rectified—or reduced?

CS

Kennebunk, Maine

23 July 2005

On “‘I am in the world to change the world’: The art and life of Käthe Kollwitz”

Thank you for providing an extremely inspiring article of this artist that, as an “artist,” I have never heard of. Through my schooling, I have been taught the useless

brand of self-indulgence that manifests itself through paintings, drawings, and any other medium that takes a really long time to make something out of. Recently, I’ve decided that I would actually like my art to do something, not make money, so I’ve been searching for solutions. Recently, this has found me making stencils, which, like lithographs, are quick, effective, and actually available for masses of people to see. Your section on art for art’s sake vs. art as a reflection of the world and its struggles shows the conflict I have already had with art teachers and is likely going to continue as I begin to study art in college. It already seems as if the college is only a tool to get me the high-paying job, so I likely will switch majors to economics/world politics in hopes of actually learning something. Funny thing is, in that case, my best textbook is probably here or many other writings that won’t be in the classroom.

However that turns out, it is inspiring to find an artist who actually cares to reflect the struggles of people, as I am trying to do now. Please continue with the articles of such quality and interest!

JL

26 July 2005

On “Homeless die in Arizona heat wave”

I live in Tempe, and you hit the nose on the button. Tempe and Phoenix have pushed away the problem of the homelessness for years now. Tempe is planning on building a community building where the homeless can go during the day, but not to sleep at night. Thanks for writing an article on the situation, as our local paper seems not to take a critical view of it.

MB

Tempe, Arizona

26 July 2005



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