

Letters on the Paris Hilton case

12 June 2007

The following is a selection of letters sent to the World Socialist Web Site in response to "The campaign to keep Paris Hilton in jail: nothing healthy about it" posted on June 9.

You have a warped view of the treatment of Paris Hilton. Most people, who don't have money or notoriety, would serve the sentence given.

The sentence was for repeated probation violations, not traffic violations, as your article stated.

WN

9 June 2007

"A seething but politically confused population is fed victims, sacrificial lambs, so to speak, while the real criminals go about their business." Very well said. And probably over the heads of 75 percent of America.

GS

9 June 2007

Your portrayal of Paris Hilton as not only a victim of a hypocritical political system, but also of the cynical media is completely laughable. And it demonstrates your inability to grasp the simplest of points. Yes, our government is hypocritical and, yes, the media is often ridiculous.

But that doesn't make Miss Hilton the innocent victim of some evil government conspiracy. Most of our so-called justice is pretty much random. It has just now been exposed in a very public way. Regular people recognize it, suck it up and learn to deal with it. Her tearful return to 45 days of solitude are insulting to people that have actually been through real tragedies. In my opinion, your viewpoint lacks perspective. I simply cannot have sympathy for her when the original sentence was not that difficult an ordeal to bear. Millions of regular Americans must deal with considerably worse and do so with dignity.

MM

9 June 2007

Our attention shouldn't be on Paris Hilton's jail term, but on the prison system. We in the USA have the largest prison population in the world. We keep building more prisons and hiring more police. The problem we are not facing is—why do we have such a large prison population? The general population isn't making enough money to survive. People who live in poverty are turning to drugs, alcohol and crime to solve their problems.

The facts are we are facing a social imbalance of justice. The prisons are becoming too overcrowded and our social structure

is failing.

PM

Richland, Washington, USA

9 June 2007

Well put, David, I'm in full agreement, Paris has the potential & wherewithal to do a lot of good in the world, seems stupid & vindictive to alienate her so early in life.

RJ

Auckland, New Zealand

9 June 2007

Hilton's crime was not driving on a suspended license. She was found guilty of driving under the influence and as a condition of her probation her driver's license was suspended. Subsequently, she was stopped and cited three times while operating a motor vehicle without a license, thus violating her parole. She is a multimillionaire who thinks she can buy justice and flaunt the court's decisions. She is paying for her arrogance. Further, the sheriff exceeded his authority and showed disregard for the court's instructions: that she serve her full sentence and that electronic monitoring not be allowed.

SJ

9 June 2007

Heartiest congratulations on your PH piece. Marxists must always be prepared to defend the wealthy when they are the object of an injustice, witch-hunting, etc., when it is clear that other hidden interests of infinitely greater danger are at stake. They must also be ready to explain WHY such things happen and your comments on the obscene antics of the media are timely indeed.

Sincerely,

RH

Paris, France

9 June 2007

"So when people say Paris was getting special treatment, I say, yes. She got double or triple what everybody else in LA County gets."

I might add that people consider that an average person only affects the lives of 10-20 people while Paris Hilton affects the lives of tens of thousands of people because she is a role model. Celebrity punishment should be far more severe than the average Joe.

JJ

9 June 2007

That's the most sane piece I've read about this saga.

PR

9 June 2007

I couldn't agree more and wish that you could expand on what you have to say.

Paris Hilton, at age 26, remains an icon of teenage 'rebellion.' Lost to nearly everyone are the multiple and insidious ways that ever increasing state-power of surveillance and punishment are justified for the sake of the children. The claim seems to be made that if working class children are to be subjected to such scrutiny and punishment so should the children of the wealthy without anyone challenging the unspoken assumption that petty transgressions pose such profound dangers to the public. After all driving without state authorization hardly means that she couldn't drive safely.

TM

9 June 2007

What totally unexpected reaction to the Hilton coverage! Absolutely brilliant. I wish that I could have wrote the piece.

EG

9 June 2007

You've certainly made some valid points about the media's use of "celebrities" who've "fallen" as a distraction. That's part of their "job description" perhaps.

But in the case of Ms. Hilton, I wonder if you've actually ever even SEEN an episode of her "reality show" in which she and the other spoiled debutante basically set out to MOCK the working classes in this country.

Any PLEBIAN who'd shown such utter disregard and contempt for the judicial system (which is undoubtedly worthy of all the contempt we can heap on it) would've found themselves sentenced to much longer than a mere 45 days for TWICE violating probation on a DUI.

Considering the fact that Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca has in the past been known to kowtow to celebrities—and considering the (as yet unconfirmed?) rumors that the Hilton family had contributed to his election war chest—I think any "tears" for Paris are not only ill-spent, but unfounded.

If Ms. Hilton had indeed a "serious medical condition" (and bear in mind THOUSANDS of California's inmates suffer from various medical conditions and are not deemed worthy of early release!), all her legal counsel had to do was to PRESENT written documentation of the alleged medical condition. They failed to do even THIS much.

RS

Hayward, California

9 June 2007

I was not motivated by the egalitarian aims of the campaign to keep Hilton in prison but I certainly thought that they should have kept her banged up, I don't doubt that overcrowding is an issue in the USA, it is in the UK too. But the point about this case is Hilton didn't think she should go to jail in the first place because of her ego and the illusion she is under that she is somehow special. Simple as that, putting people in a category

as belonging to some campaign because they think in this case the same thoughts is to be guilty of your own charges ...

SW

9 June 2007

I was particularly struck by your piece on Paris Hilton. The reason is how the media, both national and local (San Francisco), has demonized Barry Bonds. I feel the reasons are exactly the same as you propose. Bonds as the "bad guy" is particularly susceptible because he has allegedly "cheated" in an effort to break the sacred major league home run record; a record he is relative close to breaking. Although ironically age may actually have caught up with him and he might not break it.

Hank Aaron was subjected to a more specific racialized attack leading up to his breaking Babe Ruth's 714 mark in 1975. Although, certainly, race plays a significant role in the assault on Bonds, as you note in your piece on Hilton, the social conditions today require an even more vengeful attack. And Bonds is surely subject to that.

GW

San Francisco, California, USA

10 June 2007

While I agree with much of your assessment of the hypocritical furor surrounding Hilton's case, I'm bothered by your stated sympathy for the woman. I feel there is absolutely none deserved, and that if anything this episode should only deepen our disdain for her and those like her as human beings. Hilton is the epitome of a social parasite, an individual whose ridiculous wealth is matched only by her ignorance, stupidity and contempt for the problems of society. Where others give, she takes away, and the society that produced her not only tolerates it but rewards it.

It also deserves to be pointed out that Hilton's jail sentence is the result of not just a drunk driving charge, but being pulled over—twice—while driving with a license suspended because of it. A 45-day term in a county jail is not an unfair punishment for her repeated displays of such egregious and conscious disregard for public safety. The fact that she threw a bawling tantrum at having to face the highly predictable consequences of her actions only speaks to the incredible immaturity and poor character of an individual the logic of capitalism deems deserving of millions of dollars.

KW

Sacramento, California, USA

11 June 2007



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