

Letters from our readers

20 December 2007

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

On “US: Baseball steroid report—reflection of a diseased social order”

I thoroughly enjoyed reading your article on the Mitchell Report concerning performance-enhancing drugs in baseball, especially since I loved playing the game myself up to the semi-professional level. Many fans idolize sports figures and then react with disgust toward someone like Barry Bonds who, in a culture riddled with drugs, falls from grace using any opportunity to get a competitive edge and become the best in the game. I don't agree with the use of these substances, but I'm beginning to better understand why many players make the mistake of taking them.

The reporting on the WSWWS reveals genuine compassion because it is objective and true. Your support for the world's masses dictated by the cause of social equality allows you to focus on the socioeconomic roots underlying the actions of individuals such as baseball players who become caught up in the competitive drive for money, excellence and survival in the major leagues. This type of partiality for the non-owners, based on a scientific socialist method of analysis, is a thousand times more impartial than those liberal and conservative media comments that subjectively attack and blame individuals from an absolutist moral standpoint. The government and much of the media direct the same kind of negative attitude towards the millions of working class individuals ensnared in the US prison system in order to distract attention from the ultimate responsibility of the dying, profit-market system.

BL

15 December 2007

On “Miami: Collapse of Liberty City 7 case exposes fraud of ‘war on terror’”

Thank you so much for writing such a wonderful and detailed article about this case. It is a really sad story about poverty. The so-called leader was trying to feed and shelter his family. He had moved them into a warehouse without any windows because they had no money for a proper dwelling place. Part of the reason why he was doing so poorly financially was because he had only recently arrived to Miami. Apparently, he and his wife and kids had moved

from Chicago perhaps in the hope of a better life in South Florida. Haitians of various generations are misled into thinking that South Florida's large Haitian community will provide the necessary support and social capital that they need to make it, or to at least survive and manage daily life.

I personally fell into that trap when I willingly moved there from the Northeast in the 1990s. I quickly learned that it was not to be a place full of opportunities and that the so-called Haitian community only existed in statistical analysis. The small numbers who have made it into the middle class work and fight hard to protect their positions. And unfortunately, those like Mr. Batiste who wanted to come and start something new and fresh are often seen as a threat to these folks and they are subsequently shunned, alienated and isolated. And cases like the Liberty 7 are the direct result of this kind of social stratification.

Poverty is at the root of this. Miami is full of Haitian immigrants with various generational statuses who are forced to live in the shadows and in inhuman conditions. The housing conditions of these folks are deplorable. Most of the dwellings in these poor neighborhoods like Liberty City, Little Haiti and Overtown and even in North Miami and North Miami Beach (not to mention Opa Locka and Carol City and so forth) are infested with rodents, and they are leaking and possibly polluted with lead and mold. (This exists while construction is booming and new and post-modern edifices are being erected.) These folks put up with those conditions because for better or worse that is their lot.

Often, those in the shadows who are forced to live in these conditions have nowhere else to run to. Haiti does not provide double citizenship, unlike other nation-states in the Caribbean with large Diasporas. In addition, in Haiti, their situation would be even worse. In fact, upon return they might be imprisoned just because they returned empty handed and without any contacts or money upon arrival. This is of course a direct result of global trickonomics (economics) and US, Canadian, French, Italian, German, British and of course Chinese and Japanese foreign policies (the noted G8).

I will pray for them every day until this situation is resolved. I feel that the powers that be will make a decision before the voting starts next year.

Thank you also for your article about the steroids scandal. This is typical of capitalist society. They make you and destroy you. Or perhaps they make you just so they can destroy you for their own gains at a later date. I am thinking of the various so-called leaders around the world like Saddam Hussein, Francois Duvalier, Osama Bin Laden, Noriega and many others whom the US and other governments have put in power only to take them down later for their own gain. It is kind of like the subprime mortgage situation as Bill Van Auken so aptly pointed out.

Bush's photo-op with the subprime victims a few years ago boosted his numbers and I wasn't fooled. I was waiting for the other shoe to drop. And now it has. Isn't it time for the housing secretary to turn in his resignation? When I lost my home a few years ago in Miami (where the problem is acute) I was blamed by the same folks who benefited from subprime borrowing. They accused me of not working hard to sell my home. They accused us of not fixing the place to make it sellable. All of this when they knew we had no ways and means of doing this, and knowing all too well that the market was not conducive to selling at the time.

MNP

Eugene, Oregon, USA

15 December 2007

On "The Golden Compass and the religious right"

I have the impression that your review of *The Golden Compass* was heavily influenced by the positions of the religious right. Not because you agree with them, obviously, but because you don't. Their arrogant and disgusting attacks on anything deemed "atheist" are ridiculous and undemocratic; unfortunately, just because the Catholic League dislikes something, that doesn't mean it has to be good.

The Golden Compass is, simply put, a terrible movie. The script is painfully bad and clichéd, the story hacked up and lacking any depth, logic or structure, and the acting mediocre at best, ludicrous at worst. As an adaptation it is equally bad, butchering the original story and removing everything that gave the original novels depth and complexity.

The *His Dark Materials* trilogy really is a masterwork and absolutely worth reading. It contains thought-provoking ideas and extremely good writing. Its allusions to Milton and Blake are quite fascinating to those who get them; but even for those who don't, it's a touching and mesmerizing story. The movie, however, is forgettable and embarrassing.

Best,

JK

15 December 2007

On "Britain: First woman convicted under Terrorism Act"

A very enlightening and alarming article, especially as

pertains to the British anti-terrorist laws as against those in the US. I am a former investigative reporter. I could come into all sorts of published materials and any confabulator could contrive any number of scenarios under which I might do X, Y or Z with them. There is a vast difference between contemplation and volition. Your article indicates a British jihad against any extremist thought (however the government defines it), which must certainly be of interest to academia. Given the hysteria, I thought the judge made a moderate ruling.

Thanks for your most perceptive article.

DS

West College Corner, Indiana, US

15 December 2007

On "Australia: Police attack African youth at public housing estate"

Very good report. Lots of angles, and it is great that you cover the systemic issues. The depth of racism and violence in policing here in Victoria is very shocking. There is a lot more to cover on this if you are interested in keeping the issue alive. Did you see the report of the death of a person in Carlton yesterday after police attendance?

We are facing a very huge problem that demands international attention. Too long the terrors committed within First World countries against minority groups have been swept under the carpet. I have been speaking to people about how the level of denial here, in contrast to Somalia, is massive. The First World loves to talk about brutality in Africa. Here? No, of course not. We are a democracy.... This denial impacts the lives of people on a daily basis. People cannot walk safely on the streets here in Melbourne if they are black. This is a damning travesty.

TH

16 December 2007



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