

Letters from our readers

17 April 2008

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

On “Amid mounting food crisis, governments fear revolution of the hungry”

Great explanation and analysis of the food crisis. I felt the impact of this global catastrophe the other day as I listened to one of my students, a native of Burundi, as she told me of the plight of her family and community in a refugee camp. She has sent most of her college loan money back to support her family over the last few years, and constantly receives messages from them begging for more. Small children go without eating for days at a time, while Americans pay thousands of dollars for gastric bypass surgery and liposuction because food is too easy to acquire here. There will be a reckoning, I think.

And what is the solution, she asked me? I suggested several ways she could raise funds for the immediate future, but emphasized that the problem is one of power and politics more than anything. She is well aware of this—her family lost their land and jobs due to wars, corruption and genocide in sub-Saharan Africa.

The establishment looks at the masses of poor as a cost of doing business, to be thrown a bone or slaughtered as the situation demands. They are not to be considered as human beings. Marx correctly pointed out that capitalist alienation includes this element—seeing people as nothing more than a pair of hands to be fed, jailed, employed or shot as determined by rational efficiency. As your article pointed out, the best received argument at the well-catered G7 meetings is likely to be the warning that hungry people may just go red (and so they should)!

BB

15 April 2008

This is the start of seismic changes that are going to take place in the world. In the short term we can only hope we can get the food supplies going again for all these countries that are hit, but this is it. Throw in global warming, irregularities in weather patterns and we will see vast numbers on the move seeking food. In Europe we will see them coming across from Africa and then they will be thrown back into the sea as Europe becomes a fortress. What a prospect!

TA

Teddington, UK

15 April 2008

On “Sixty-five years since the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising”

This is an excellent article and the conclusions it draws about present-day tyranny and atrocities are important. Thanks for reposting it with the new introduction. Unfortunately, it is all too true that those who are ignorant of the past are doomed to see it repeated with themselves in the role of victim. Look around. Do you see a “free world”?

CZ

San Francisco, California, USA

16 April 2008

I read with fascination the detailed recounting of the Warsaw uprising. It brought back memories of the movie *Kanal*, which I watched on TV in the 1960s. The picture had the same photographic effects seen in Schindler’s List—gray, grim, life and death in intimate contact. It depicted in pictures exactly what this article describes in words—a great nexus! Any comments about this film?

RG

16 April 2008

On “Letters on the American Axle strike”

First, I would like to thank you for printing my letter. It is always nice to see someone is listening to our struggles.

Second, I would just like to tell Mike in NY, that his plant sounds exactly like my husband’s here in Detroit. It really makes you wonder where all the common sense has gone. As my husband stated, in a letter to AAM,

“It has been said that you are purposely ignoring these issues because you want the Forge to fail. We know you want to shut it down. And who better to blame than the hourly employees that manufacture these products? I don’t want to believe that. Who in their right mind would want any part of their company to purposely fail? But how can such a shrewd businessman let all of this go on under his nose and be none the wiser?”

My husband wrote his letter just a few days after the strike began. Eight weeks later, I think that is exactly what Dauch wants. I believe this has been his plan all along.

It’s a shame that this man is so heartless that we are forced to take a stand against a man who, clearly, has no intention on compensating these men and women fairly for their dedication and years of service.

JG

16 April 2008

On “Court proceedings begin in Texas polygamy sect case”

This is indeed a tricky case. While, as you say, there is no reason to implicitly trust the Texas State Police, nor the FBI,

given the history of the group involved, there is also no reason to trust the church officials.

While it is within the rights of people to live in different ways, many of which most people would neither understand nor agree with, it is not in the rights of people to force young people into marriage and pregnancy, which is something which happens all too frequently in the breakaway sects from the LDS [Latter Day Saints] Church (which, as you note, does not condone nor require such unions). There is far too much documentation, far too many individual accounts which do bear witness to such activity (most recently, *Escape*, by Carolyn Jessup, though there is a long line of such books).

The isolation in which most of these sects live—due in large part to the illegal nature of the marriages—gives rise to horrific abuses in many cases. Those raised in the compounds and small towns have no idea of what rights they do have, and very little recourse if they find out. The recanting last lines of the caller to the hotline indicates to me that she was interrupted while seeking help. That she has not come forward to identify herself since the raids likely has to do with the knowledge that if the ultimate end is her being given back to the community she will suffer severe punishment, and/or the idea that she has betrayed the family. It is not uncommon in abuse situations for the abused to attempt to shield the abuser. It does not make sense, sure, but it is a widely known and recognized dynamic. There are many complexities involved here—beyond determining whose children are whose.

As a long-time former resident of Salt Lake, I had opportunities to meet a number of polygamists—grown-ups who entered the marriages willingly, though the legal status of their marriages was nil. Unlike the residents of compounds and small, isolated towns, these women walked freely around town, able to come and go as they pleased, read newspapers, held jobs, could seek help if there was domestic violence, etc.

I also saw—but never spoke with, because I was an outsider (as I found out when I attempted a simple “hello”)—a number of women who traveled in groups on the rare foray into town for whatever purpose. They held themselves apart from society, were never allowed to go anywhere alone, and, as I found, not allowed to talk to unapproved people such as myself. According to an “approved” genealogist with whom I worked in my bookstore, many used false names so that as little could be traced back to them as possible. They always paid cash, and after their somewhat peculiar appearance was made, they left no trace.

There is a huge difference between consenting, informed adults making a choice and children being put into a situation over which they have no control.

While it is very important to question the treatment of the children—medical exams, living conditions while being held away from the compound, to immediately invoke Waco, when the only real similarity is that they live in an isolated religiously-based compound, is premature.

I am curious as to what future awaits these children—and fear equally at their possible treatments in the foster care system and that of the idea of their return to the compound.

CMS

Portland, Oregon, USA

15 April 2008

On “US media, Clinton assail Obama for ‘bitter’ truth”

To the extent that the ruling establishment and its media see Obama as too populist and as a threat to their status quo, it’s inevitable that they would pull every dirty trick at their disposal to do him in. First they expose the Rev. Wright “scandal” to the “24 hour news cycle”—a euphemism for non-stop looped coverage by cable news enhanced by fascist pundits of the Hannity/Beck type. When that fails to achieve the desired results, they turn to the latest.

While the media pretends to simply report the story, there is a clear division of labor. Right-wing Republican operatives pour over hundreds of hours of video and local media coverage (or in this case, pocket-recorded closed door events), knowing full well that the media will take it from there.

In both of these recent manufactured scandals, the offense was the perceived challenge not just to religion in the traditional sense, but to the religion of guns, patriotism and nationalist xenophobia. Once again, on cue the Republicans use wedge issues to divide and conquer, while the gutless Democrats (at best) can be counted on to tiptoe around these untouchables or (at worst) to pile on.

Clinton reveals herself more clearly than ever as an unrepentant opportunist pig, who would rather destroy the electoral prospects of her party’s leading contender in November than pass up a chance to pander to the worst aspects of the American political consciousness.

AR

14 April 2008



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