

Letters from our readers

16 December 2010

On "Ten years since Bush v. Gore: The stolen election of 2000"

This synopsis of the 2000 debacles was excellent, so good that it made me feel ill *again*. I am saving it.

Richey H
Arizona, USA
13 December 2010

On "Free Julian Assange! Hands off WikiLeaks!"

Everyone who is keen to understand the world is duty-bound to help Assange to come out of the hell created for him by rulers with vested interests in our world.

IVE
Sri Lanka
13 December 2010

Freedom of expression for you, not for me. Is Julian Assange a rapist? Has he committed a grave crime? What if he was arrested for the rape charges a year or so before? Why was the world, particularly the USA and UK, not aware of the 'crime' of Assange before the disclosures of the cables?

The arrest of Julian Assange has further exposed the imperialist face of the USA. We, in the third world countries, are very much used to such tactics as executed by the UK and USA against the single individual who has shaken sole super power with a single laptop. For instance, in Pakistan an elected prime minister was executed with a dubious murder charge by an illegitimate dictator with the help of an illicit court. So it would be no surprise if this happened in any country in the Third World. But it is a surprise, even astonishing, when such an obnoxious measure is taken by nations which declare themselves as the champions of freedom of the press and democratic values.

You are biased, the Champions of freedom. You have double standards, the saviors of democratic values. When a cartoonist depicts a revered figure of billions of people in disgrace; and when the followers of the sacred figure protest against this obnoxious act you come forward with your 'grand narrative' that it is freedom of expression, my champions of values. When somebody hurts the feelings of billions of people you come with renewed energy for the defense of the culprit exhorting him that he is enemy of the freedom of expression. Wow!

We do not know whether Assange has committed the rape or not. We are in no position to either declare him free of guilt or not. But we do know very certainly that the time of the charge suggests something else rather than the actual 'crime', if any. And Assange's crime? He has not expressed anything. He has disclosed the agenda and arrogance of the today's world super power. Can they deny what they have exchanged in the cables? Not a single word suggests that it is the manipulation of the WikiLeaks, very 'wicked leaks' for the imperialists.

And where are the advocates of the freedom of press? Have they become chameleons or gone underground? We do not want biased values on freedom and democracy. We do not want double standards for the 'First World' and the rest.

Everybody who is all for the upholding of freedom of expression and press should rise against the duplicity of the big "oppressor", and everybody now know who this Oppressor is.

Zubair T
Pakistan
14 December 2010

On "Detroit mayor plans to end services to one-third of city"

Thank you for this article which so eloquently illustrates what the new austerity will look like on a local level. The working class needs to understand that what is being proposed for Detroit, if successful, will eventually spread to every city and town throughout the US and probably throughout the industrialized world. If everyone realized this, the membership of SEP would grow exponentially within a matter of days. People need to realize how little their lives matter to those who hold all the power, and that we are all destined to suffer the fate that our Third World brothers and sisters have been suffering already for decades.

Richard W
13 December 2010
On "US: Georgia prison inmates strike"

I appreciate your bringing the information on conditions in Georgia's prisons and the strike of prisoners to light. Recently, a local NPR radio program discussed cell phones in the possession of inmates from the perspective of prison authorities who wanted the listeners to consider the threat posed by kingpins ordering hits from within their jail cells. It was acknowledged that it was primarily prison guards that supplied the contraband cell phones. With the outrageous gouging on the phone companies against the inmates' families, I'm confident the bulk of the cell phones in the prisons are to circumvent that. And with your article, I'm especially glad the inmates have cell phones at their disposal, because the prison authorities have endeavored to block the press from having any access to the interior of prisons to be able to report on conditions or other injustices perpetrated against inmates. At least the inmates have some capacity to contact the press.

I have a friend who is a prison guard in Norco, California, and he told me that there are two guards assigned for 100 inmates in a narrow holding cell, so that guards can't even see if someone is being attacked at the far end, and they dare not enter to break up a fight.

My nephew, 21, is in prison for a crime he didn't commit, and the prosecutor knew he was innocent, but got people to perjure themselves in order to obtain a conviction. At 18, he was a witness to the crime he was subsequently framed for. Even the murder victim's parents and a quoted member of the jury stated he was given an inadequate defense. California's prisons are so

overcrowded now, putting six prisoners in a space intended for one or two, because of long sentences, minimum sentencing rules, three strikes, the phony war on some drugs, run amok prosecutors, and the cut back on access to defense for the indigent. The Department of Corrections and the Department of Justice are bitter jokes.

People are surprised when I tell them about prisoners being paid 38 cents an hour to do things like make reservations for airlines, stitch swimsuits, do carpentry work. This is a stratagem for driving down wages for those who are not incarcerated. Our government and the banks are steadily at work building a dystopia.

Thank you so much for the terrific reporting and analysis that you provide.

Cynthia A
California, USA
13 December 2010

I commend you on your coverage of the prison strike in Georgia. It is said that this is the largest prison strike in American history. This strike crosses all traditional divisions of race and religion, and the prisoners are united despite their differences. If that is true, then this is a truly momentous event, yet it is receiving no attention in the mass media. It is being dealt with in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and "Democracy Now!" has done several pieces on it, including interviewing former Black Panther Elaine Brown the outside advocate for the prisoners. I hope that you continue your coverage, as the American prison system is unbelievably corrupt and oppressive, and is in need of desperate reform. With America incarcerating more people than any other country perhaps the social revolution begins not in the streets, but in the prisons.

Niles N
Wisconsin, USA
14 December 2010



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