

# Letters from our readers

10 July 2012

*On “The Fourth of July”*

This may be the single most articulate, historically sophisticated, compelling summary analysis of the Declaration of Independence I’ve ever encountered.

Contrasting the hollow jingoism and military triumphalism that typically surrounds this national holiday with the anti-imperial statements of the Declaration itself, and using those statements to indict the current rulers of the United States is not just bracing but a call to action for every American patriot.

Mr. White’s statement emphasizes the Enlightenment principle of equality and its role in the revolution and stands as a clarion reminder to all those who fetishize our founding documents while ignoring their content. Well done.

Robert L  
California, USA  
4 July 2012

*On “Unemployed worker sets himself on fire outside UK Jobcentre”*

This makes me so angry. With both the Labour Party and unions doing nothing, millions of workers are driven to despair with all the consequences described in the report.

Where are the militant campaigns? Even the leftist groups don’t appear to be doing anything apart from going on about the October TUC demo march around the block.

We need something, and we need it now!!

Dave T  
UK  
7 July 2012

*On “President Gauck demands more support for Germany’s army”*

Thanks to the author for providing important historical context in relation to the statements made by the despicable “man of God” Joachim Gauck.

In particular, the comparisons made with pre-World War jingoism are most apt.

My advice to the working class—next time the elites want war,

and want you to sacrifice your comforts and happiness, i.e., throw your life away, do what the working class did in Jack London’s book *The Iron Heel*: Drop tools, stop work, and go on a lovely holiday where you can appreciate family, renew acquaintances, and celebrate life.

In London’s pre-War book, this pleasant little holiday was all it took to avert World War One. For me, it makes the real-world betrayal by the Second International all the more bitter.

Anyhow, perhaps it’s time to revisit such strategies; and if any “sacrifice” is required, it should only be when workers reach out to other workers in support of building democratic worker governments around the world.

Dan  
6 July 2012

*On “Japanese report blames government/corporate nexus for Fukushima disaster”*

The whole politicians/big business collusion takes a whole new dimension with TEPCO. This is the largest utility company in Asia (if I’m not mistaken) that is provided a complete monopoly position by the government. While its shareholders and management privatized and enjoyed decades of profit, as soon as it’s needed it is bailed to the tune of \$1 trillion of public money. That is in the situation where the huge and growing public debt is being deplored and in the name of which all manners of social counterrevolutions take place—like the recent VAT hike.

Not only that, TEPCO is allowed to raise the electricity price by 17 percent for big consumers and 10 percent for households in the name of “disaster compensation” and helping its “financial position.” In other words, the taxpayers, anyone who buys anything, and anyone who uses electricity, we’re all directly helping TEPCO pay its liabilities. All this while it remains a private entity, committed to increasing profit and dividends, not to mention the political “donations”!

Sickening. No wonder the public is totally disillusioned and disgusted with both major parties, and populists and reactionaries of various kinds are gaining ground.

Meanwhile, because of the electricity hike (among other things), I can’t even afford the AC in this unbearable humidity. We will have to bail ourselves out by “expropriating the expropriators”

before we're bled white by the joined offensive of capital and its political and labor lackeys.

ML  
Tokyo  
7 July 2012

On "Pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline fined \$3 billion"

This article is very interesting. It shows in my view how our body-mind complex as a part of nature has become an excellent means of profit-making. This is a process that is effectively outside of social regulation, although it appears to be socially regulated.

What is also interesting is the relation between capital and the state.

When the state imposes a little fine on the corrupt practices of the business world, the quantity of the fine is just a fraction of the annual profit. So, the fine is treated merely as a cost of doing business (similar to the cost involved in paying workers or for technology). The fine could also be seen as a "necessary wastage" in the production process (e.g., scrap iron in metal industry).

The quantity of the fine is so limited that it is not really a fine to act as deterrent. It is just a small quantitative deduction from the money already made. It makes no qualitative difference to the way the business world works. It seems that the law of quality and quantity that Trotsky emphasizes comes to light here. The business world paying a little fine for their wrongdoing needs to be contrasted to the state sending working masses to jail and/or physically harming them for legitimately protesting against injustice.

There is an interesting class dynamics here from another angle. The timid capitalist state that, on occasion, imposes a fine on corrupt businesses is itself corrupt. It is itself not accountable to its suffering citizens, the 90 percent. It cannot possibly have enough "moral" courage to adequately punish the businesses for the crime it itself commits. The state and capital belong to the same family. The business of fining businesses signifies an internal battle in a family. More or less.

What the article discusses has very serious implications for our safety as ordinary working people (imaging taking a medicine for an illness you may not have or taking a wrong medicine for an illness).

Malpractices of the drug companies are also potentially responsible for people to distrust science. These companies seem to be producing science (e.g., the idea that a drug x will produce effect y, when in reality this is not the case) out of their profit motive. The practice of science—and practitioners of it—has been subordinated to business practice. Mistrust of science contributes to idealist thinking, which is counter-revolutionary as demonstrated by anti-science postmodernists, who equate science to the use that science is put to and thus fail to imagine that science

is possible and necessary and science does not have to be subordinated to capitalism.

The business world can make anything and sell it. It can make any dangerous thing, any useless thing (without a real use-value), and make money out of it. And if it gets caught, it just gives a tiny part of the money it has already made. This is despicable.

It is not that the working class should not protest against the malpractices on the part of drug companies and other companies. But these protests can only be a part of the fight against replacing these companies with a system of democratic control over our resources and our health, internationally.

Raju  
Toronto, Canada  
5 July 2012

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Great thanks for this article.

Just to make the obvious point, already made in the article, that, in being found guilty, Glaxo has murdered and crippled large numbers of people.

But the CEOs are not on trial for this; it is an *Alice In Wonderland* realm, a dreamtime.

Lugo T  
5 July 2012

On "Heavy hand of military at veterans job fair in Detroit"

"By the look of it, staff members well outnumbered the attendees actually looking for work."

This would be reflected in the fact that 46 percent of vets are coming home with 8-9 disabilities each. Little chances for work for them, I'd say.

Kim H  
5 July 2012



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