

Letters from our readers

27 November 2012

On “The New York Times continues its campaign: Breast cancer screenings cause more harm than good”

Excellent piece on NYT’s and NEJM breast cancer screening “recommendations.”

Given what we have seen regards the Dartmouth advisory (with the ACS and the USPSTF) for what amounts to a profoundly diminished vigilance (and then any search whatever) for breast and prostate disease, and the degradation of any notion and advantage of early diagnosis for a host of diseases, I think one is left to conclude that America’s rulers are out to markedly shorten the life expectancy of the population.

I think the ruling class wants to end life extended into the 70s, 80s, & 90s for the great majority of working people, by way of a defunding/ “austerity,” and take down of the entire modern care apparatus that results in longer life. Right across the board involving a series of commonly received care measures now occurring throughout life that until recently have been available to many, many people.

A very simple example: effective treatment of hypertension whenever found, say in the thirties and forties, dramatically reduces risk for fatal and disabling heart attacks and strokes. As I entered practice in the 1970s, the vigilance for detecting and treating high blood pressure was being really ramped up, and in my career, heart attacks and strokes really diminished in incidence and death (they still occurred, of course, but later in life)—gradually filling our waiting rooms with Medicare persons in their 80s, and quite a number of high functioning persons in their nineties.

I think this is what they are determined to end.

After all, when a human being reaches a certain age, what “use” is he or she for the markedly diminished extraction of surplus value. Except perhaps as a “greeter” at Walmart...

GS

26 November 2012

On “Israel’s war measures and the legacy of Zionism”

Re-reading and sharing, in particular the “nature of the Israeli state” section. Perhaps this is a good time for you to re-post it or something similar, to summarize what Israel is all about.

Greg S

New Hampshire, USA

18 November 2012

On “Death toll mounts from Israeli air strikes in Gaza”

Patrick Martin writes: “[Moshe] Yaalon’s remarks underscored the ruthlessness of the Israeli aggression. ‘We operate slowly, identify the target and clean the area around it,’ he said, as though he was referring to the extermination of vermin, not human beings.”

This is Third Reich thinking and Third Reich language, and this is what it has been and what it is. Period!

Michael B

Maine, USA

19 November 2012

On “Stop the massacre in Gaza!”

You quote Obama: “there’s no country on Earth that would tolerate missiles raining down on its citizens from outside its borders”. What hypocrisy! Obama’s drones are doing just that with all the civilian casualties in Afghanistan, Pakistan and elsewhere that they have entailed.

Michel

France

21 November 2012

On “Israel continues blitz against Gaza amid truce talks”

Excellent, detailed piece.

What is the strategy behind Israel’s collective punishment of Gazan civilians—to keep the whole territory in a position of fear?

Do they actually think they will stop rocket attacks?

The most hideous crimes against humanity are often the hardest to fathom a logic for.

Gabe

21 November 2012

On “Striking Hostess workers speak”

This article demonstrates quite clearly that the rank and file worker is not as clueless as many would have us believe. It is exciting to realize that the SEP is poised to assume an important role in increasing the political consciousness of these hard-working people.

Heinz S

22 November 2012

On “Steven Spielberg’s Lincoln and the historical drama of the Civil War”

Lincoln is remembered in American history as the President and Commander in Chief who preserved the Union and abolished slavery. However, two other aspects of his political career bear particular note. As David Donald and Benjamin Thomas point out in their excellent biographies of Lincoln one of “Honest Abe’s” first and most prominent goals throughout his entire political career was to champion the use of public funds for what we today would call infrastructure improvement. When he served as both a state legislator in Illinois and later as a federal legislator he was a strong advocate for the use of federal revenues for internal improvements which in his day meant canals and waterways. Modern day politicians could learn from this. Secondly Lincoln was a powerful advocate for the rights of the working man. In one of his arguments, which was aimed at illustrating that slavery

was incompatible with the economic existence of the Union, he stated:

“Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital and deserves much the higher consideration. Capital has its rights which are as worthy of protection as any other rights.”

Lincoln was also sharply in favor of workers’ right to strike. In response to Douglas’ criticism of a strike by shoe factory workers, Lincoln responded: “Thank God we have a system of labor where there *can* be a strike. When queried about the specifics of the conflict he responded: “I do not pretend to know about the matter... I am glad to see a system of labor prevails in New England under which laborers can strike if they want to, where they are not obliged to work under all circumstances, and are not tied down and obliged to labor whether you pay them or not.” ...

Peter L

Connecticut, USA

20 November 2012



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