

Letters from our readers

26 January 2013

On “FBI provocateur ensnares Cleveland protesters in ‘bomb plot’”

I recently read an article, “Life Interrupted,” which is about the verdicts of some of the men charged for “Cleveland bomb plot” in *Z Magazine*, and I just want to share with you.

Though the time they need to stay in the prison was largely reduced comparing to the 25+ years proposed by the prosecutors, I still feel so uncomfortable about the sentences—Connor Stevens: eight years; Douglas Wright: eleven and a half years; and Brandon Baxter: nine years, nine months.

How can people fished be punished so severely while those FBI agents who carried out fishing remain free outside? It is those FBI agents who should be jailed, not those young men. It’s also heartbreaking to see that the parents of Connor said they feel relived by hearing their son was sentenced “only” eight years in prison.

From the report, it also reveals the common dirty trick used by the judicial system, charging people extremely harshly, then offering them a plea [deal]. People who refuse the plea deal will be punished by endless, tiring court processes and increasing financial pressure for the fees for the lawsuit. This is what just happened to Aaron Swartz, which eventually led to his suicide. This system is disgusting.

As a foreign student studying in US, I started feeling terrified and unsafe.

WTC

Colorado, USA

23 January 2013

On “Vadim: German documentary chronicles a family destroyed by immigration authorities”

This is a very sad and heart-breaking documentary but what is even more depressing is that such cases are more common than we realise.

Just recently I read of Alexander Dolmatov’s suicide in a Dutch refugee detention centre. Dolmatov fled Russia after his involvement in an opposition protest

where there was some violence and police began investigating his connection to it. He sought asylum in Holland where the authorities attempted to blackmail him into revealing confidential details of his work in missile design. Dolmatov refused, his request for asylum was then denied and he was dumped into the centre and threatened with deportation.

The Dutch authorities knew he was a suicide risk but made no attempt to provide him with psychiatric help. That Dolmatov’s request for asylum was made dependent on giving up sensitive information, for which his life might be in danger at some point in the future, shows how cynical European immigration authorities have become in dealing with people who have genuine reasons for seeking refuge.

Jennifer H

24 January 2013

On “Israel: High voter turnout results in setback for Netanyahu”

Just wanted to point out that the turnout was 66.5 percent, 1.3 percent higher than in the 2009 elections (65.2 percent). In fact, if anything, it is lower than the expected rise following the mass protests in the summer of last year. However, one could say that Netanyahu/Likkud voters stayed at home more than Lapid/Yesh Atid voters.

Eyal R

Israel

23 January 2013

On “Lance Armstrong and the world of professional sports”

“The generation now coming into active life—in sports, art, politics and elsewhere—will, we are convinced, produce from among its midst far more widely a different sort of human personality—one drawn to principles and able to resist the corrupting pressures of the sports-media-entertainment industry.”

So ends David Walsh’s account of the fall from grace of another (sporting) icon, with a hopeful note.

However, that optimism is sadly misplaced. That saga of greed, “win at all costs” mentality, ruthlessness, intimidation and deception, is a tale of the operation of a capitalist enterprise, typical not just of sport but of every human activity that capitalism can monetise. Therefore, there cannot be a talk of “a new generation taking over” unless and until capitalism is overthrown root and branch and replaced by socialism.

This whole affair, and it is far from finished, raises more questions than it answers, for example:

—How was it possible for Armstrong year after year to be entered into Tour de France, and other prestigious (and lucrative) races, and escape the ostensibly rigorous doping controls?

—How was it possible for the media to be in constant adulation of that cyclist, despite some desultory criticisms being expressed in sporting publications and [by] fellow riders, especially in France?

—Why this sudden hysterical reaction from the various sporting officials, media and sponsors in the wake of the Winfrey “revelations”?

—In whose interests was this wholesale cover-up and deception of the wider public, performed?

Obviously, there are powerful business and political interests involved, which will, no doubt, be further revealed in time, but the key to this is the capitalist mode of production, which has the ability to debase not just its predatory activities, but the human beings involved in them.

Mirek
NSW, Australia
23 January 2013



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