

Letters from our readers

9 May 2013

On “The social crisis in America”

Great article! It really paints the social conditions that millions of Americans live in.

Jake

4 May 2013

On “Iraq war resister, a pregnant mother of four, sentenced to 10 months in prison”

Thank you for this enlightening report. I wondered how the military recruiters were able to convince folks to sign up for what would inevitably be a tour of duty somewhere in the Middle East at this stage of the game, wherein they face a cruel uncaring government upon their return, if indeed they do return, and few prospects of a job. Now it seems naive of me to have believed they had to be brainwashing them to believe they were fighting for the freedom of the socially and politically repressed populations of Iraq and Afghanistan. \$8,000 and medical insurance offered by the US military to a family with no income is what it really takes. It seems criminal. After all, in today’s economy, what are their options?

Geraldine C

California, USA

5 May 2013

On “America’s revolutionary founding document”

The reviewer states: “What Tsesis proves beyond a shadow of a doubt is the immense force that the Declaration’s statement of human equality has had. This force, which has breathed life into every social movement in US history, rises precisely from the contradiction between the revolutionary assertion of equality and the reality of oppression.” The Declaration was, indeed, a powerful statement of moral principles. Missing from the Declaration, however, was a statement that would have acknowledged the earth as our commons, as the equal birthright of all persons. Paine’s writings, particularly his essay ‘Agrarian Justice’ were far more revolutionary than anything his contemporaries were willing to embrace. Although Franklin was strongly influenced by Quesnay and the other Physiocratic writers in France, even Franklin could not bring himself to challenge property

and tax laws that extended enormous privilege to landed interests and encouraged speculation in land. These problems remain with us today.

Edward D

4 May 2013

On “Canada adopts ‘anti-terrorism’ law that tramples basic rights”

I think this and other WSWs articles demonstrate how the legal system has fully adapted to a political and financial aristocracy that cares not a whit for democratic principles and procedural safeguards. There is also an interesting legal overlap between “rape”, and “terrorism”, and other the new “crimes” being used to justify the establishment of a police state.

Rape continues to be the old reliable for justifying the exercise of arbitrary state power. Story after story demonstrates how anyone who cares about due process—the prosecutor’s burden of proof, evidence beyond a reasonable doubt, and the presumption of innocence—is vilified as a “rape denier”, “rape apologist”, or worse. Democratic norms, it seems, simply reinforces “negative attitudes about rape survivors”, and “props up sexism and misogyny.”

This rape ideology is not just the product fuzzy feminist thinking or other pseudo-left confusions—it is used as a sword to set up, punish or destroy political opponents, like say, Julian Assange. And as the WSWs noted in an earlier article, “Why stop there? In every country the principle of innocent until proven guilty is under systematic assault—from Barack Obama’s policy of targeted assassination by drones to the UK’s imprisonment of ‘suspected’ terrorists for years without trial.” (See, “British trade union mounts witch-hunt based on accusations of ‘rape denial’”)

In Canada, the question “why stop there?” was answered, on-cue, with this new anti-terror legislation. As noted in the article, Canadians are now one allegation away from losing their right to habeas corpus, the right of silence, and the right to challenge one’s accusers.

There are other similar laws coming down the pipe.

Nova Scotia recently introduced Bill 56, its anti-cyberbullying bill, in response to Rehtaeh Parsons' suicide. The media reported that, "According to Rehtaeh's mother, four boys sexually assaulted her daughter when she was 15 years old. Rehtaeh was then said to have been mocked by classmates, enduring relentless harassment and humiliation after a photo of the attack was circulated at her school and on social media."

True to form, any suggestion that these allegations need to be proven beyond a reasonable doubt, or that the accused youth are to be presumed innocent, are met with the usual shrill denunciations of "rape apologist!" etc., and the media, it seems, no longer understand the word "allegation", as it misrepresents a grieving mother's recounting as a statement of fact. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister and leader of the opposition have met with the Parsons family, as they contemplate adding cyberbullying to the Criminal Code.

In short, WSWS news coverage strongly suggests that "rape", "terrorism", "bullying", etc., are all cut from the same cloth, and all part of an internationally coordinated assault on democracy—one that can only be resisted by a disciplined, organized and internationally-conscious working class.

Dan

7 May 2013

On "The end of the Herschel Space Observatory mission"

It is not only research in space from space which is affected by deep cuts, but the search for solar mysteries from deep underground, doubling the pain.

Some 50 years ago, a very great man, Ray Davis, in a very courageous experiment, took 100,000 gallons of cleaning fluid in a tank deep underground hoping against all probability that the long predicted neutrino cascading by the billions from the sun, never touching matter, would hit an atom of chlorine and turn it, the nucleus of that atom, into a nucleus of an atom of argon. He had, in short, to find a single atom of argon in 100,000 thousand gallons of cleaning fluid. And he did this at a time when the field of particle physics could, in the words of his partner, fit into the front seat of Ray Davis' car.

Decades later it is as if the most miraculous news comes daily capturing the cosmic dance or "oscillation" of neutrinos among its types or "flavours" created by very expensive colliders which shoot them to detectors located underground to shield them from other radiation. Working for a Sudbury, Ontario, trade journal of the mining industry, I had a recent tour of Snolab and saw first hand

the astonishingly beautiful instruments of the New Physics, brought deep underground on the back of Vale Creighton's operation, and set to measure cosmic mysteries—until nickel prices hold, my business-minded editor reminded me afterwards.

Bad news. The US Department of Energy (DOE) is putting the brakes on the development of a gigantic experiment seen as the flagship project for the next decade at America's sole particle physics laboratory. There was all systems go on the Long-Baseline Neutrino Experiment (LBNE) at the Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory (Fermilab) in Batavia, Illinois, inter-linked international projects requiring years of prototyping, \$1.5 billion allocated. When bailout of stock market and banking frauds is affordable, that lab is not affordable, says William Brinkman, director of DOE's Office of Science. He asked physicists to come up with a cheaper way to do the same science, especially calling a halt to the current plan for LBNE is to build a gigantic particle detector in the abandoned Homestake gold mine in South Dakota where Ray Davis went down with a tank of cleaning fluid, and trapped a neutrino.

Unless mankind goes foreword, Trotsky has warned more than once, we will descend to stages of primitive development we thought we left behind, the mines of two centuries ago worked by human beings treated as beasts as an alternative to laboratories expanding and exercising the range of our human powers.

AL

Toronto, Canada

7 May 2013



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