

Letters from our readers

24 September 2007

The following is a selection of recent letters sent to the World Socialist Web Site.

On “Media, Democrats silent on police attack on University of Florida student”

As a small footnote to this shameful occurrence, CNN had a spot about it, reported by Jeannie Moos, who usually reports on rather quirky, odd events of no great moment. The whole thing was handled in a comedic, “light” way. The moral at the end of the story was: “I guess one thing we’ve learned—don’t call the police ‘bro’!” The disconnect between what the media show and what the facts actually are is getting wider almost daily. And even though this took place in the US, it affects all of us since most of the world, with a very few notable exceptions, seems disposed to follow the Americans down the same road. Woe is us!

DC

Athens, Greece

20 September 2007

Some of the articles I found on mainstream news web sites tried to depict Andrew Meyer as a crank, a jokester, a publicity hound, and one even made out like he shouldn’t be taken seriously because his own web site complains about the mainstream media’s poor coverage of the war in Iraq and excessive coverage of celebrity “news.” And they misrepresented what was on the tape as the audience applauding the police attack on Meyer, when it sounded much more like the applause was in agreement with his statement.

Tucker Carlson and his cohort on MSNBC were practically gleeful that the student had been shocked and joked that that’s what it takes to make a John Kerry talk interesting. It was astounding how many comments I read on sites such as MSNBC where claims were made that he deserved this Tasing for being disruptive. Also bizarre were a few readers’ posts labeling Meyer “right-wing.”

Kerry’s statement regarding the incident contains lies easily refuted by the video, including a claim that Meyer “barged” in front of others. Were that so, why did Kerry address Meyer as “sir” and not direct him to stand aside for the person(s) Meyer had allegedly displaced?

I watched the video on YouTube.com on Tuesday afternoon, and by Tuesday evening, when I went to show it to a friend, YouTube.com had altered the video with beeps, and in doing so had apparently put the voice of Meyer out of sync with his image, which made me wonder what else YouTube’s overseers

would be inclined to alter. YouTube blocked comments being made on this video on its web site.

Democracy Now! covered this story briefly in Amy Goodman’s summary of news that she leads with, but she reported that Meyer was removed from the room and then Tased. In actuality, he was in the back of the room where everyone, including Kerry, should have been able to see or grasp what was going on, though Kerry claimed he didn’t know the student was being Tased. As the police were kneeling on Meyer, you hear Kerry say some paltry joke about how the student isn’t available to swear him in as president.

One video, which I saw, but can’t relocate, showed Meyer after he was removed from the auditorium and hauled down some stairs by officers while in handcuffs. He appeared astounded that he was being accused of starting a “riot.” His use of the term seemed to reflect prior use of the word “riot” by police, and he sounded frightened that he would be “disappeared.” He asks, “Please, can I sit down?” repeatedly, but is pulled around by officers instead. An officer was quoted in one mainstream source claiming that Meyer’s mood had changed after removal and he was laughing and indicating he understood the cops were just doing their jobs.

Oddly enough, a number of the mainstream sources provided links to video that contradicts the stories and quotes they published on this.

Thank you for your coverage of this event.

CA

Pomona, California, USA

20 September 2007

Thank you, Mr. Grey, for your always excellent reporting. I was surprised that you didn’t include in your article on Andrew Meyer the recent “calling of the cops” by Democratic Congressman John Conyers so as to arrest Cindy Sheehan and those with her.

Yours in solidarity,

TF

22 September 2007

On “ISSE condemns police assault on University of Florida student”

The press release by the university’s president, James Bernard Machen, points to the likelihood of a cowardly whitewash by the university regarding this disgraceful incident. The president’s main concern is that open and free debate can occur freely and safely. He doesn’t make clear whose safety is

being referred to, and he has reserved his opinion on the incident until a raft of so-called independent investigations is carried out—including the police investigating the police.

The available footage demonstrates incontrovertibly that Andrew Meyer at no time behaved in a threatening manner in exercising his democratic right. It also clearly depicts incontrovertible acts of police brutality against a man who did not represent a threat in any way to any persons attending the forum. The university also accepts the use of Tasers as legitimate weapons of law enforcement on campus.

I also want to draw a parallel with the recent APEC conference in Sydney. One of the reasons stated by the Australian government for the excessive security at the APEC conference was the bogus claim of the perceived danger that potential violent protesters presented to the safety of the community at large and how the protest could also impinge on the democratic freedoms of others.

The fact that the University of Florida's president did not unequivocally condemn the use of such extreme excessive force in the Tasing of a student who represented no threat to the safety of others is significant in itself. I am concerned that his ambiguous comments regarding so-called safety concerns are setting the foundation for blaming the victim, whereby it could be argued that Meyer compromised the safety of others by not yielding the microphone when instructed by security.

Even if charges are dropped against Meyer, this incident can still be used as a pretext for condoning future police brutality, setting a precedent for suppressing the expression of the widespread hostility toward both major political parties at future events.

DD

Melbourne, Australia

19 September 2007

On "From the horse's mouth: Greenspan says Iraq war was for oil"

Greenspan states the obvious in his book. What is dubious and highly suspect, however, is the stalling of this statement as a deterrent to losing his job at the time. Greenspan is no longer of any influence or significance to the Bush administration. The obvious will doubtless promote his manuscript among certain sections of the "doubting Thomas" populace. The "what we knew then" brigade presumes the fashion of ignorance extends fully across the public spectrum.

PT

Switzerland

19 September 2007

On "Iraq suspends license of Blackwater USA: US mercenary firm denounced after civilian killings in Baghdad"

British TV on PBS last night reported the US secretary of state was getting embroiled in this business with Blackwater being expelled from Iraq. If that is true, that is the first we have heard about Condoleezza Rice in months. Does she now handle contracts for the State Department Security arrangements in

Iraq?

CC

18 September 2007

On "A deafening silence on report of one million Iraqis killed under US occupation"

Was it Stalin who said one death is a tragedy, a million a statistic? This seems to be the thinking of those in charge: death means absolutely nothing to them, is a complete abstraction. It's not their kids who are coming home in a box, or missing limbs or arriving psychologically wounded for life, while the idiot in charge cuts funding for VA facilities and greases the skids for his oil buddies in Iraq. How can they imagine the devastation in Iraq from their gated communities, at every turn shielded by their money—the Green Zone in Baghdad the perfect metaphor for their whole way of thinking—the protected bubble in which they always find themselves. This must change. What a true crime of historic proportions. The whole government-media complex is complicit, and, of course, they all must answer.

RM

17 September 2007

On "Israel's air raid on Syria: another threat to Iran"

In reading Syrian responses to the incursion of their airspace, they repeatedly claim that they detected and turned back the IDF planes, forcing them to "dump" their bombs in the desert. I believe that the IDF planes were actually on their way to Iran, and the Syrian detection forced them to turn back. Notice how quiet Israel has been. Usually, they trumpet a successful raid. That they allow all kinds of speculation to run wild may deflect from the real goal of the aborted air strike. I feel strongly that now is the most dangerous time for the World Peace movement. With the failure of the IDF strike, Bush may feel that he *must* complete the mission. We must keep a close eye on them now.

DJ

20 September 2007



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