

Letters on Iran and the US media

27 June 2009

On "The propaganda war against Iran"

I have sent the following letter to the *Nation*, and I urge other readers to do the same:

The *World Socialist Web Site* (www.wsws.org) has quite fairly asked the *Nation* to explain to the nation "Who is Robert Dreyfuss?" Please allow me to repeat the question, and to ask for an answer.

Dreyfuss's astonishing whitewash of the brutal dictatorship of the Shah of Iran, who was maintained on the Peacock Throne by the tender mercies of the CIA-trained SAVAK secret police, appeared in a column in your June 17 issue, in which Dreyfuss invents a completely new history of Iran and the Reagan administration in the past 30 years, largely, it seems, to justify the *Nation's* editorial policy in regard to another pro-US "color revolution" now allegedly going on in Iran.

The WSWS has noted that Dreyfuss's 1980 book on Iran, *Hostage to Khomeini*, which sought to damn Jimmy Carter for his role in the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis and speak in favor of the incoming Reagan, was published by the Lyndon LaRouche-connected New Benjamin Franklin House Publishing Co.

Dreyfuss also, according to the WSWS, "held the title of 'Middle East Intelligence Director' for LaRouche's Executive Intelligence Review, the flagship publication of what the *Washington Post* described in 1985 as a network that 'had more than 100 intelligence operatives working for it at times, and copies the government in its information-gathering operation.'"

So we have the spectacle of the *Nation*, the nation's "foremost" liberal magazine, presenting a LaRouche-connected neofascist as a liberal commentator to its readership.

No wonder the American public is so confused. I think it is time your readership said goodbye to the absurd petty-bourgeois hypocrisy that runs nonstop in the pages of the *Nation*.

CH

24 June 2009

Between the Obama Administration and the current crisis in Iran, the contradictions of middle class radical groups are really being laid bare. The uproariously named "Socialist Worker" currently has a "reading list" for Barack Obama on its Web site. Because, y'know...the problem with the people in the current administration is that they just haven't read the right

books.

It seems that the left is, at this point, isolated, decaying police cults (SWP, SL), nakedly reformist organizations (CPUSA, ISO) or some combination of the two (WWP).

I used to have illusions about these groups, particularly the more "erudite" of what might be termed the "anarcho-Stalinist" milieu. No more. This is what they want to do—beg capitalism to be more nice. How craven. How disgusting.

Nick P

22 June 2009

While on this topic, another very questionable person of note whose disinformation output the *Nation* has published throughout the years is Max Holland.

Stu

24 June 2009

On "The Nation's man in Tehran: Who is Robert Dreyfuss?"

Hi Bill,

Disappointed to hear about Dreyfuss's fascistic background. His 2007 book *Devils Game: How the United States Unleashed Islamic Fundamentalism* reveals how Zbigniew Brzezinski told a lie to cover up an even bigger lie regarding American support for figures like Gulbuddin Hekmatyar in Afghanistan. In this book he reports how Brzezinski made the recent confession that, yes, Carter's administration actually started backing Afghan Islamists months prior to the Soviet invasion in 1979. However, as Dreyfuss notes, this supposed revelation was in fact a lie to cover an even bigger lie. Namely, that American secret services actually started financially backing Hekmatyar (who pioneered the throwing of acid in unveiled women's faces) as early as 1973, in order to undermine the Soviet Union. You may be surprised to learn that this book is well worth a look.

Great article once again; keep up the good work.

Comradely regards,

Simon

Sheffield, UK

22 June 2009

One qualifier that might be added. Though I wouldn't put much faith in Dreyfuss on these things, he may have a point about the Carter administration having played some role in bringing down the Shah. Carter did press the Shah for the release of at least some political prisoners and this probably did

encourage the rebellion, which led to the Shah's overthrow. I think the real question here is if the Shah was in part overthrown because of the intervention of the Carter administration, then what was the motive?

The best explanation I've seen hypothesized so far is that it was a chess play in the Cold War, with Afghanistan as the real target. Probably everyone has seen the transcript of the Brzezinski interview where he acknowledges that the Carter administration began aiding the Afghan Mujahideen as early as July 1979. Fewer people are aware that the man whose government stirred up so much turmoil in Afghanistan that the Soviets intervened, Hafizullah Amin, had once been the president of the Afghan Students Association. This had been exposed in the 1960s as a CIA-funded group. Charges have been circulated about Amin as a CIA agent, and one must be wary of old Soviet propaganda, but the idea isn't really so strange. Amin did effectively enflame the situation in Afghanistan, which drew the Soviets into a war.

But what about Iran? One of the biggest factors contributing to the Islamic war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan was the fact that in Iran an Islamic fundamentalist government had just come to power at the head of a revolution that defeated US imperialism. The credentials for Islamists leading an uprising against the Soviets were very strong after their defeat of the US. It's not out of line to wonder how much of this the Carter administration may have anticipated when pressuring the Shah to release some prisoners and to wonder if this may have simply been the sacrifice of a pawn for the sake of checkmating the Soviet queen. I doubt that Dreyfuss has ever suggested this, but if he does then there may be some truth.

Patrick M
23 June 2009

On "The New York Times and Iran: Journalism as state provocation"

Hello,
Thank you for this outstanding article on the *New York Times*. This is one of the best left analyses of the *Times* that I have ever read.

I commend your rigorous research and detail.
Cheers,
Chris K
California, USA
22 June 2009

I'm not a socialist or a Marxist. I saw your site while web surfing. Your pieces on Iran have been pretty good in terms of neutrality. I agree that for some reason the press seems to just be convinced, without evidence, that this election was rigged. I've never seen anything like it. One exception, the *Washington Post* has shown some restraint. Keep it up.

Todd
21 June 2009

On "For a socialist, not a 'color' revolution in Iran"

Peter Symonds,

Finally a report that sees the sinister American hand involved in what goes on with the recent election in Iran. Well done, Peter Symonds; at times you come up with surprising insights.

I lived and worked two years in Iran with the National Iranian Oil Exploration and Producing Company during the Mossadegh era and later again four and a half years with the Iranian Army Aviation Helicopter Depot Overhaul during the Shah era.

America and Britain overthrew the Mohammad Mossadegh's democratically elected government in Iran and installed a ruthless puppet, then for a decade robbed Iranian oil to their hearts delight. During the revolution the CIA tried to organize a military takeover. The West has committed untold evil acts in Iran, so how can it now blame Iran? Even lack of shame has its limits.

Once again Iranians have something to cling onto not to face the true reasons for the pandemic incompetency running within their nation. More than anything else, two things have set Iran back: hatred of elites and citizens' complacency. Had Iranians not been paralyzed by these two idiosyncrasies, none of those foreign interventions would have had a chance to materialize.

As always,
Frans
Thailand
22 June 2009

I agree that Moussavi is little different from other candidates, but why do you state no proof has been presented of fraud? There have been several arguments presented in favor of the results being fabricated, such as the lack of regional variations in vote percentages, the unlikely low numbers for some candidates in their home towns and provinces where they are known to have large support and strong results in previous elections, and even a statistical analysis showing that exact vote numbers seem not as randomized as they would be in a real election.

According to the election figures, the two minor candidates lost 80-90 percent of their support in previous strongholds, for seemingly no reason, as they had not been implicated in mayor scandals or changed political orientation or such. This seems extremely unlikely.

Jon W
25 June 2009



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact