

Letters from our readers

15 August 2009

On "Obama's Abu Ghraib solution"

Bill,

This is a fine piece of writing, with the detailed juice to arouse passions. Holder's position amounts to an enthusiastic endorsement of the collective Nazi defense at the Nuremberg trials, i.e., "I was only following orders." Replies Eric, "Okay then, that's good enough for me."

Michael G

California, USA

13 August 2009

The Army Reservists who posed in photos as ordered went to prison. Fort Bragg's Active Duty Army personnel who supervised the torture death of detainees got two Bronze Stars.

Soldiers who suffer multi-deployments with mental or PTSD issues receive no help; then, when they go "off," they are tried in civilian and military courts and sent to prison.

Injustice doesn't cover it.

I am sick of newspeak that wants us to believe a few bad apples (Army Reservists) are responsible for the torture in Abu Ghraib. The *real* videos and photos of absolute torture were hidden by Rumsfeld, and the soldiers involved remain on duty, unnamed, uncharged, and rewarded.

The Interrogation Room in Tier 1A was off limits to Gen. Karpinski and her Reservists. She was fired. The Active Duty Colonel in charge of interrogating to death detainees got his hand slapped.

Myra K

North Carolina, USA 13 August 2009

Bill Van Auken has stated what the USA and President Obama must do to be considered as a civilized nation of laws. Obama is thwarting all efforts to order Bush et al. to account for the pattern of criminal acts they established. The fact that Obama is persisting in the pattern of criminal acts is one reason why Obama is hindering and obstructing justice in these lurid instances of high crimes.

Larry L

Pennsylvania, USA 13 August 2009

As I have said many times before: If the guys doing the waterboarding spoke German and wore German uniforms they

would be hanging right now.

The US Military and the CIA tortured and killed tens of thousands of Cambodians, North Vietnamese, Viet Cong and others in the 1960s and early 1970s and, apart from a few low-ranking small fry, nobody saw the inside of a jail cell. This is business-as-usual for them.

It still puzzles me that none of the soldiers in Afghanistan and Iraq have even questioned why they're over there. This cannot last forever. Can it?

PK

13 August 2009

On "What is behind the opposition to the Obama healthcare plan?"

I wonder if there is not something else that is ominous behind the folks gathering in hysterical opposition to Obama's healthcare plan. We may be seeing the formation of a genuinely fascist movement of the classic type in the United States. The word is often misused. I am specifically referring to a mass movement of "the proletarianized or so threatened among the small and middle bourgeoisie," as Clara Zetkin identified those attracted to the many fascist groups in the midst of the collapsing economy in 1923 Germany.

The passion bordering on hysteria of these people expresses, you note, genuine and well-founded fears which could have been formulated and posed to Obama in a sensible and challenging manner characteristic of town hall meetings as they were once, a wonderful expression of democracy created by the American Revolution and successfully defended in the Civil War. But a ruined economy is a bad time for open discussion of issues from the point of view of the ruling class, and your excellent website has tracked the emergence of police and gangland states the world over, not to speak of your never-ending struggle to get on the ballot and find a space to air your views during elections. You are quite right—the ruling class can no longer make profits in such a shameless way at a time of great social misery and still permit democratic forms of rule.

There is good reason why the drug companies turned to the people who are being ruined like the rest of us, but just can't see themselves in the same boat. For despite the pauperization of Germans in 1923 symbolized by photographs of people shopping with wheelbarrows or wearing clothing made of worthless bank notes, some prospered then as now, the bankers, the captains of industry and the military leaders who were often holders of big estates. Facing imminent revolution from 1918

onwards, the German ruling class first employed the Social Democratic Party and the unions in a similar way to how Obama, the Democratic party and unions like the UAW are employed today—to channel grievances along the safe path of aborted strikes and purposeless discussion.

But to hedge its bets, the German military leaders and then the industrialists turned to those like Corporal Adolf, only one step away from the working class and fearful of sinking into it, a movement of the soldiers who didn't want to go back to factories, ruined farmers and small businessman, intellectuals who couldn't find employment, hoodlums and the mentally ill. Even Hitler expressed shame at the sight of his followers marching beside the very aristocratic General Ludendorff at the time of the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923.

In 1923, the German working class in the midst of staggering inflation turned away in disappointment from the Social Democratic Party and the trade unions to rally behind the newly formed Communist Party and its Leninist program. A botched uprising gave the Weimar Republic a decade more of life until the ruling class in the midst of another economic collapse brought Corporal Hitler together with General Hindenburg, and the rest, as they say, is history.

I fear that the violent protesters against healthcare reforms are even more dangerous than the evangelical right, which was used for similar purposes. The evangelicals had a very narrow range of issues, while those who are maddened by their fear of “sinking” into the working class can be sent charging madly in any direction as long as their feelings of social inferiority can be hidden in an “elite” movement and their rage at their social conditions channeled into conspiracy theories, rather than to genuine understanding of the true cause of their miseries, the corrupt and decadent ruling class they serve and identify with. A very worrisome development, this.

AL

Toronto, Canada

13 August 2009

On “Whose recovery?”

The longest storm in American history has reached shore.

The country is heating up, and the bottom may fall out soon. The ultra-right are moving quickly, and the young people aligned with right-wing leaders are told they are insurance against fascism and socialism; and after quitting as Alaskan governor, Sarah Palin is more vocal than ever, throwing the word “evil” around to propel the cross-carrying “true Christians” to join in her Inquisition. Together, these people are mobilizing for confrontations. The fascist Christians and the fascist brownshirts of little intelligence who are loyal to grass-roots “liberty” movements are conditioned to believe they represent anti-fascism when they more resemble the army of fascism; and the Palin people told they are the true Christians when they more resemble the Anti-Christ.

Civil wars have started. The God-Guns-Grits-Gold people reduce the Constitution to fit inside the barrel of a gun. The

poor white who never saw an office of a brokerage firm is taught to hate the Fed, hate Washington, hate Congress, hate Government, hate Liberals, call everyone a “Socialist,” while championing extremist Conservative causes that serve only to disempower and impoverish them further. Obama and Congress people are in the cross-hairs of militia-minded white supremacists that claim doing so is a Constitutional right. The complacent media is aloof in high towers far from the street and do not hear the approaching drumming and marching just over the horizon. The world's largest military is about to face possible humiliating defeats in its present war zones. The largest global economy is about to burst its largest and final bubble, leaving confusion, chaos and disorder the order of the day.

The ultra-right is bringing about what they tell their faithful to fear—martial law—turning themselves into prophets and protectors—while all the time profiteering on behalf of a well-hidden oligarchy. In the end of this cycle, the rich and powerful will triumph as the swarm of brownshirts and “true Christians” are left singing American anthems and Praise music, claiming themselves True Patriots while begging for food and shelter. They will even thank God for the crumbs they gather! All of it was God's Will, they will say.

What's next in America? Anything can and will happen. This process of disintegration cannot be stopped. What can be done? Nothing. It is best to remain non-aligned and try to survive bodily, mentally and emotionally.

The longest storm in American history has reached shore.

Michael B

Maine, USA

13 August 2009



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