

Letters from our readers

19 December 2009

On "Obama's Afghan escalation and the decay of democracy"

Some recent news from France to show that Obama is not alone.

The expulsion of immigrants has found support within the highest echelons of the French Army. A general has just denounced young Afghans who refuse to return to their homeland to help French troops fight the Taliban. He accuses them of "desertion" and says they should be forced to return.

This implies a form of de facto conscription. The assumption too is that Afghan immigrants in France must be pro-Taliban if they do not "sign up" by returning home voluntarily. One commentator has pointed out an interesting parallel: if one adopts this line of "reasoning", one could accuse of collaboration all those French who did not join the Resistance in 1940.

Meanwhile, European countries such as France and Spain are considering sending more troops, despite public opposition.

Sincerely,
Reynold H

France
18 December 2009

On "Australian government frame-up of Julian Moti collapses as court throws out charges"

Thank you, WSWs. The news of Julian Moti's release may be the best I have heard this year. Much credit to Patrick O'Connor and your staff for thoroughly cataloging the now-proven abuse of process. In a world where good news is in such short supply, it is most heartening to see there is some semblance of ethical journalism available. Thank you, again.

Rai O
Alaska, USA
17 December 2009

On "The Tiger Woods episode: Money, the media, and the 'path to redemption'"

One of the most amazing comments from the media is that Tiger was a potential future presidential candidate. On what basis would anyone say this other than the belief that "good PR" makes someone qualified for public office? What does hitting a golf ball have to do with politics? Would someone please explain that to me? Of course, when you see the source of that suggestion, the

Wall Street Journal, you realize that all our political "leaders" are just straw men; all they do is run interference and distract from the real issues facing the people of the planet.

Billy W
16 December 2009

Once again, the puritanical and hypocritical media vultures are all over a celebrity for his private business. Regardless of whether they really are concerned that he has committed a crime by being unfaithful to his wife (and I doubt very much that they are), and regardless of what one thinks of enforced monogamy, the eruption of completely nonsensical, stupid stories and immature gaudy headlines concerning Tiger Woods have appeared everywhere, all the time. Even the BBC and the *Guardian* websites have ridiculous minute-by-minute updates on this non-story. There is the lurid pleasure evinced by hack headline writers about the loss of endorsements and, as you write in your article, the howling for public contrition to provide cheap catharsis for those whose entire lives revolve around the likes of Oprah Winfrey, in hopes of witnessing the public bloodletting of yet another of the rich and famous, the better to gloat and to congratulate themselves on their imagined moral superiority.

The whole thing is enough to make one regret having eaten before reading these miserable headlines. Meanwhile, people are being murdered and tortured in Iraq and Afghanistan, war is expanding in Pakistan, jobs are vanishing, soup kitchens are overflowing with the hungry, Congress is about to give more license to steal to the banks and Wall Street, and desperately needed public services are being destroyed. But the adventures of Woods's penis are the only important news!

How much lower can the discourse descend? Enough!

Carolyn
California, USA
16 December 2009

You write, "What Woods should do is tell the media and the sports world to go to hell, but, unfortunately, that is probably his least likely course of action."

Indeed, that is his least likely course of action because he is a member and a willing participant in the selling of the Tiger Woods brand. Like all athletes, he knows the routine and his public apology is almost assuredly in the offing.

Unfortunately, it's not Tiger Woods fighting against the media and the corporate world; rather it's Tiger, the media and the corporate world teaming up together to handle the situation to their mutual benefit.

Brian M
18 December 2009

On "World climate conference: Conflict outside and inside Copenhagen meeting"

I believe it's important to see the state repression we are witness to in Copenhagen in wider context—the rise of neo-fascism in Denmark.

The "cartoon" image of Denmark as a tolerant and "progressive" nation, which supports human rights, the aspirations of the third world, and is a model welfare-state, isn't anywhere near being accurate.

The most important political party in Denmark, the crucial centre, around which almost all politics revolves, is the Danish People's Party. Because the two major factions, or political blocks, in Denmark have almost equal support, the Danish People's Party holds the balance of power. This gives it vastly more influence on the political agenda than its support among the electorate justifies.

The traditional conservative block relies on the DPP to guarantee its parliamentary majority and legislative programme, so they have cynically opened the door to ultra-right influence, bringing the fascists in from the cold.

The DPP has succeeded, without too much effort, and little real resistance from the established parties of both the right and the left, in pulling Danish politics decisively to the reactionary right. The DPP is an openly racist party and plays on the fear of Muslims and Islam. For them, Muslims are the new Jews, a golden key to political power.

But new fascism isn't merely a copy of old fascism. They are not that stupid. The old symbols have long since been abandoned. The military uniforms have been cast aside in favour of suits and ties and dresses. The masterstroke of Danish fascism is choice of a woman to lead the party.

There agenda is a form of "national socialism" on the surface, but underneath the surface the "socialism" vanishes and only the militant nationalism remains.

Why are these developments in Denmark important? Because they are model for fascists all over Europe and beyond. The Danish People's Party brags about its growing influence outside of Denmark, and how other parties on the "centre-right" are learning from the Danish experience!

How can a country as rich and successful as Denmark fall prey to the old confidence trick of fascism? Why is the tone of the debate in Denmark relating to Muslim immigrants so vicious and heated? Well, the answer is long and complex, but let's just say that nationalism has an unusually strong grip on Danish culture and politics.

Perhaps the main lesson to be gained from looking at the rise of neo-fascism in Denmark is that if it can happen there, in such a rich and successful country, then it has the potential to happen anywhere.

Michael K
17 December 2009

On "British CEO pay 81 times that of workers"

According to the *Wall Street Journal* article, "The Boss's Pay," from April 7, 2007, the CEO of Merrill Lynch makes \$79 million dollars. The average US worker would have to work 1,475 years to earn that amount. On average, an American CEO's income is 166 times greater than the average US workers.

Remedy: Workers of the world, unite.

Mike D
New York, USA
17 December 2009

On "Young mother commits suicide and kills her son after months of poverty"

I can only weep after reading this story, since it goes against the UK I remember and appears very reminiscent of Jim Allen's 1970s TV play "The Spongers". At a time when Blair arrogantly gives evidence to a committee that will absolve him of being a war criminal, and the vast gulf between rich and poor both here in the US and in the UK, things really have to change to stop further incidents of this kind happening again.

Tony W
15 December 2009



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