Letters from our readers

14 January 2010

On "Solomon Islands' parliamentarian denounces WSWS during debate on Australian intervention force"

So glad to see that you managed to upset a legislator in the Solomon Islands. Would that the time would come that someone starts to denounce the WSWS in the US Senate! How about Sarah Palin giving your grief! Now that would be something!

Franz A
9 January 2010
On "US-China rivalry intensifies"

You write, "The same global processes that are exacerbating international tensions and leading to conflict have enormously strengthened the proletariat."

Great and powerful observation, John. By George, I think you've got it!
Charles K
9 January 2010
On "Cold snap in Europe takes hundreds of lives"

I think it would have been useful to mention that a colder Europe is consistent with global warming. I'm sure that many more people are now doubting global warming, and telling them why Europe will be colder as the planet warms would have been useful.
BF
Vancouver, Canada
11 January 2010
On "The Northwest Flight 253 intelligence failure: Negligence or conspiracy?"

I disagree with your analysis of the Northwest chain of events. I think it's more useful to compare it to the White House dinner party crashing, where extraordinary lapses led to a breech in security. Too often the left give more credit to the state's ability to carry out a unified response than the evidence warrants. Conspiracy theory is the new socialism of fools.

Tony
7 January 2010
On "Letters from our readers on the airline bombing attempt"

I notice that one of your recent letters says, "WSWS is not given to 'conspiracy theories' as a rule." I'd like to note that the use of the expression "conspiracy theory" has to be one of the most astonishingly successful pieces of psychological warfare of modern times.

Five points:

(1) The mechanism being used is that, instead of trying to hide information away, it is brought out into the open but in such a way that no one takes it seriously. This can be done by, e.g., "contaminating" the info by mixing in stuff about UFOs, lizards from Mars, etc., or by linking the info relayed to a dubious informant—self-proclaimed messiah, anti Semite, or by exaggerating aspects of the info to create a straw man. All of these tactics feed off an encouraged Either/Or approach to info—i.e., after various threads are indiscriminately piled into one monolithic chunk it is assumed that Either it is all true Or it is all false. And once the basic info has been discredited it can be permitted to circulate endlessly. In a society that prides itself on permitting freedom of information, the attraction, perhaps even the necessity, of this mechanism is obvious.

(2) Controversy over such artificially discredited info can divert attention away from the defects in any officially sanctioned account. It may even be assumed that the easy demolishing of a straw man alternative somehow proves the validity of the official version, i.e., reversal of the burden of proof.

(3) The expression "conspiracy theory" is always used in a highly selective way. As has been frequently noted,

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the mainstream or official account of 9/11, i.e., Al Qaeda's nineteen hijackers, etc., *is* in fact a conspiracy theory but is never described as one. The only conspiracy theories described as such are those that involve *our* governments, *our* intelligence agencies. etc. This is so because….

(4) The expression is always assumed to denote stupidity, gullibility, insanity, immaturity, etc. Either this or the expression is trivialised by reference to "conspiracy buffs" or "conspiracy fans." (As Michael Parenti noted: Is it possible to have Holocaust buffs?) The very notion that "our side" could themselves implement such a thing as 9/11 or JFK'S assassination or whatever, is considered to be simply ridiculous. Considering everything that various Western administrations have done over the decades, I have no doubt at all that they *would* implement such things. What we should be concerned about is whether they COULD. A conspiracy theory should be treated like any other theory, i.e., the only valid question is: "To what extent is it true?

(5) The alternative to a conspiracy theory is usually a theory involving coincidence, incompetence or even chaos. Thus the rejection of conspiracy, taken to an extreme, results in the usual sentiment that, "We just don't know anything. The world is a weird place. Only the immature and psychologically weak think that everything can be explained," etc. Ultimately this leads to a denial of rationality itself. We have here a typical Orwellian reversal: It is infantile to want evidence-backed causal chains, whereas we are being grown up if we simply accept that "stuff just happens."

I don't know and probably never will know if, e.g., 9/11 was a fraud. But the knee jerk reaction that compulsively assigns such a speculation to the mad house seems totally unwarranted to me.

George M
Scotland
7 January 2010

On "The airplane bomb plot: Obama continues the cover-up"

Those who question authority have probably asked themselves a few questions about the incident of the young man, with explosives in his underwear, tries to light the fuse and passengers jump him and hold him until the plane lands in Detroit.

Here's how impossible this whole scenario is:

Dad warns the US that his son is "hot." *No Questions.*
Close to $3000 cash for a ticket: *No Questions.*
No luggage or carry-ons: *No Questions.*
To a freezing place without a jacket: *No Questions.*
Leaves private toilet to publicly try to set shorts on fire: ?

Ask yourself, "How screwed up, or conspiratorial, is this terrorist to leave the privacy of the toilet, where he could have taken his shorts off, got a good fire going, opened the door to yell something stupid like 'Mission Accomplished!' and blown the plane out of the sky?

Come on people. This was a set-up. A stupid set-up. It has US spy agency written all over it.

Joseph G
Kansas, USA
8 January 2010

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But the real explanation for the lapse in airport security is so simple: Whoever entered Abdulmutallab's name in the terror watch list misspelled his name, inadvertently dropping one letter. One is reminded of Maxwell Smart's catch phrase: "Missed it by that much."

It's just a shame Homeland Security did not use Google to search for matching names. Every time I mistype a name or phrase it asks me, "Did you mean to search for…" and offers up the correctly spelled term.

Perhaps this is an opportunity for Google to start contracting with Homeland Security and secure a new revenue stream. Opportunity abounds in the New World Order.

Scott E
California, USA
8 January 2010

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