

Letters from our readers

2 November 2010

On “US election campaign ends amid deepening economic crisis”

Editors:

You guys, and gals, I hope, outdid yourselves with this one, 11/1, from the election and economic mess, to the alleged terror attacks-to-be (“In what has become a regular feature of American public life—especially on the eve of major elections—the airwaves were taken over Friday by breathless reports of a new terror threat.”) to the emptiness of the Colbert/Stewart rally ... on target, every observation, at least it seemed to me.

CW

1 November

On “US Supreme Court justice’s wife has leading role in ultra-right group”

Excellent analysis. I’m almost inclined to cynicism by phrasing this with a “Right, right, right they are, left, right, left, right, right, right. March ever more right to the beat of the capitalist drum.”

However, cynicism rarely offers an alternative and the SEP’s writers do.

Michael S

1 November 2010

On “Revelations of ‘systemic’ torture by British military”

Perhaps we ought to compile an international list (not necessarily a pack of cards—which has a mere 52 cards) of ‘leaders’ that should be arrested where possible and be placed on trial for their crimes against humanity. With the name followed by the charges against them to enable people in various countries across the world to call for or to make citizens arrests and bring those charges against Blair and his like, and be tried in the Nuremburg-style courts, even though UK, USA,

EU, etc., saw nothing with the treatment of Saddam, we would need to show the world how “a people’s court” would differ from other courts. Unfortunately arrest and interrogation methods may well be subject to those prevailing in the country of arrest at that moment in time.

John T

UK

31 October 2010

On the French strikes

I was thinking it would be interesting to do an article on the wealthy opposition in France, contrasting this parasitic ruling elite (doing it tough) demanding cuts to pensions, privatisation, job destruction and wage cuts. Or contrasting just who (and what empires) the French ‘left parties’ and trade unions are defending, or how they have sabotaged every struggle in the past to assist those fortunes. Or what all those sellouts, concretely, have contributed to in assisting their fortunes. Which reads like a sick disgusting joke by this layer attacking pensions.

Wikipedia has a list of the top ten richest people of France, starting with Gerard Mulliez (\$30billion).

Bernard Arnault has \$27.5 billion from the world’s top luxury goods supplier for those who have everything, but it is not enough. And Liliane Bettencourt with \$20 billion is the world’s richest woman.

John C

New South Wales, Australia

28 October 2010

On “Capitalism and the Chilean miners”

It is hard not to comment on this story, as I was a miner in a coal mine myself and understand the dangers of working underground. Like most I was glued to the plight of the Chilean miners that were trapped underground, and empathised with their lonely captivity although there were 33 of them. It is still a dark and lonely place to be; 70 days is a phenomenal amount of time to exist underground and not knowing whether you are going to be rescued or not. And I agree fully with this article.

You cannot trust capitalism in its strivings for profits. The pressures of this rescue that were placed on the authorities were foremost from the miners' families and supporters in Chile, and then the enormous support internationally. I agree with the story that it wasn't the opportunist nature of the capitalism, but that of the workers and engineers above the ground that freed the entombed miners and the workers who made the giant drill bits that freed them. But as usual the backslapping and accolades that will go with this nationalist charade will go to the likes of president *Sebastián Piñera*.

Malcolm B
UK
29 October 2010

Excellent analysis. I enjoyed the strength of your argument.

Thushara
29 October 2010

On "Right-wing populist Ford elected Toronto mayor"

I think followers of your exceptionally intelligent and wonderfully engaged web site would enjoy an introduction to Toronto's new Mayor Rob Ford on YouTube, possibly beginning with what will surely become a classic of this genre, his newly minted Excellency going berserk with his chief of staff, mild mannered Casey Ootes, looking on.

In this connection, I would like to comment on your astute mention of a divergence in tactics in the ruling class, of course within a common strategy of shoveling burden on the working class and the poor. Both Ford and his chief opponent Smitherman campaigned from the get go, after all, on dismantling the vestiges of social and cultural support of the post-war boom. In my view, the latter would be more dangerous.

Rob Ford represents the suburbs of a sprawling city forced by the province on the downtown core by an amalgamation in 1998. That was an era when Mike Harris, the Premier, kept his police busy enforcing a "common sense revolution" on toothless unions and civic groups. It happens everywhere after the loss, as your web site often, too often, noted: a dispirited working class and rallying of angry petite bourgeois sinking in debt, folk full of sound and fury signifying nothing. These are the people who, stuck in traffic in our many, wonderful ethnic neighbourhoods, looked about in horror and listened as Rob Ford made the circuit of talk shows, while that hateful rag the *Toronto Sun* ran regular features on this Tribune of the Not Wealthy Enough.

Ford's opponent, Smitherman, represents Old Money, those whose homes in Rosedale and Forest Hill may go back a century. They donate to the arts, not high school football teams, enjoy the theaters, film festivals, museums, clubs and concert halls and the ethnic treats this city offers. These are powerful people who know their own, even if their own, Smitherman, is happily married to another man. It is a marriage which surely bothered those like Rob Ford, who assert at every opportunity the sanctity of bourgeois marriage institution, that is, even though His Excellency's wife had occasion to call for police help after altercations.

I worked once with the brother of the leader of our so-called "socialist" party, Jack Layton, who pointed out his ancestor among the fathers of Canadian Confederation of 1887, a famous picture. By contrast, Rob Ford's Daddy, who made the family bundle by his own effort sat in Ontario's legislature behind Mike Harris, whose own Daddy owned a golf course in Ontario's North. Harris' political tutors know their own as well, and guided his enraged Excellency to victory in Toronto repeating a line "the gravy train is over", just as "we are hitting the wall" was a Harris mantra.

Now, here is why I favour Ford over Smitherman. There is nothing subtle about Ford. He is a monster. His incompetence will soon show, and opposition to his regime mount while television comedians will have a field day. But the Rosedale Cabal is famous for subtlety and ruthlessness as the career of jailed financier Conrad Black, one of their own, demonstrates. I would rather face the pig than the snake.

Thank you for reporting on my city so well.

AL
Toronto, Canada
28 October 2010



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