

Letters from our readers

5 February 2011

On “Obama backs bloodbath in Egypt”

‘Mubarak would hardly have mobilized thousands of cops ... if he thought it would provoke US retaliation’. When a regime is in the process of disintegration formal logic can often mislead. As Hitler said in his bunker ‘We are no longer masters of our fate here’. Or words to that effect.

From the net and news I see that the political police in Egypt number anywhere from thirty thousand to three hundred thousand. A huge counterrevolutionary force whose livelihood (they believe) is tied to the survival of the Mubarak regime. In a country with no social security system except support by relatives or begging. As I write the news reports the failure of the first attempt to drive the anti-Mubarak demonstrators from Tahrir square. But the attempt will have strengthened the hand of the Mubarak rejectionists (no negotiations with the current regime). And weakened those who want cut a deal. It is clear that to break the revolutionary movement now hundreds, probably thousands, will have to be murdered in public by Mubarak’s men. Is the current regime still strong enough, coherent enough, to organize such massacres and survive the blow-back? I have my doubts.

By now various state flunkies, politicians and police chiefs will be looking for bolt holes. And there underlings are likely to pick up on this mood music drifting up from the street.

Chris
Ireland
3 February 2011

The United States locked into step with Israel’s iron heel to kill the Egyptian bid for a new life.

That must be said, must be revealed.

Michael S
3 February 2011

On “The New York Times’ Bill Keller on WikiLeaks: A collapse of democratic sensibility”

David,
If you hadn’t heard the Assange interview on “60 Minutes” with Steve Kroft, well, don’t bother; here’s a sample:

Kroft: What statements are you referring to?

Assange: The statements by the Vice President Biden saying, for instance that I was a high-tech terrorist. Sarah Palin calling to our organization to be dealt with like the Taliban, and be hunted down. There’s calls either for my assassination or the assassination of my staff

or for us to be kidnapped and renditioned back to the United States to be executed.

Kroft: Well as you know, we have a First Amendment and people can say whatever they want, including politicians. I don’t think that many people in the United States took seriously the idea that you were a terrorist.

Assange: I would like to believe that. On the other hand the incitements to murder are a serious issue. And unfortunately there is a portion of the population that will believe in them and may carry them out.

I urge you and the WSWs/SEP contributors to continue to decline to participate in these kinds of interviews; they are degrading.

Randy R
Arizona, USA
3 February 2011

Thank you for this much-needed analysis. You have nailed it, as they say—and I can’t help but think that the contrast between the position of the NYT at the time of the Pentagon Papers’ release and now is something which should give everyone pause. I appreciate your continuing coverage of their collaborationist stance.

The only thing I would change is this: you write, “Washington backs and arms dictatorial regimes, regimes that torture and murder, in every part of the globe.” Washington *is* a regime which tortures and murders—not just through agents of other nationalities, but with its own trained crew. Guantanamo, Baghram AFB, etc., and these are just the ones we know about.

Christie S
Oregon, USA
3 February 2011

Editors,

David Walsh rightfully ends this piece with a reference to the 1975 film *Three Days of the Condor*—but he makes the wrong point.

In the film, after Redford’s character tells the CIA deputy director (played by Cliff Robertson) that he has given the story to the NY Times, he walks off and the director yells after him, “What if they don’t print it?”

Today, would there be any doubt?

CW
3 February 2011

On “*The New York Times and ‘living within our means’*”

Thank you for this brilliant response to some of the most hypocritical “journalism” (smut) I’ve ever encountered. An absolutely superb piece.

Michelle L
2 February 2011

Live within your means? Huh! I took a pay cut and am now making \$9.00 an hour. My car had a rusted out gas tank which caused me to have to purchase another car. Now I have a car payment which I didn’t have before and my insurance went up as a result of having had to purchase the car. What would they tell me? Maybe I should have bought an unreliable car at \$500 so I wouldn’t have a car payment and maybe my insurance wouldn’t have gone up and just maybe that car I paid \$500 for would have lasted long enough for me to get a better paying job, which I have been looking for for months and months. Since I have no dental insurance, maybe they would have told me to just live with my infected tooth since I really couldn’t afford the exorbitant fees that dentists charge. These people have no idea what the real world is all about. They live in luxury and tell those of us who go without to live within our means. I would love for them to live on my income and experience unforeseen expenses and then tell me about my “means”. I would love to tighten my belt all right... right around some wealthy necks.

Linda P
2 February 2011

On “*Canada: Mass rally in support of locked-out US Steel workers*”

I believe I ran into at least your photographer at the Hamilton rally — but I sure didn’t see anyone handing out your leaflet... and I was looking. In any case, let me point out that — the intentions of sleazoids like Georgetti aside — both Jack Layton and Andrea Horwath spoke at the rally. Layton even had the temerity to call workers “middle-class” (as did NDP MPP Chris Charlton not long after); which I quickly corrected by yelling “working-class!” almost in their faces. Unfortunately, the sound system was underpowered, and many people could not hear the speeches — which under the circumstances wasn’t such as loss, now was it?

Jim J
2 February 2011

On “*Rallying round the flag: The King’s Speech*”

I am reminded what one of America’s greatest Founding “Fathers” Thomas Paine said in his classic pamphlet “Common Sense”, written in reaction to what he called the “massacres” of American Minutemen Citizen Soldiers by hardened British mercenary Hessians at Lexington and Concord. To paraphrase Paine: Who founded the British Monarchy? It was that French Bastard and his gang of Armed Bandits. Plus ca change....

Francis B
Illinois, USA
3 February 2011

On “*True Grit, a revenge tale from the Coen brothers*”

Editor—

While I appreciate the fine review of *True Grit* by Hiram Lee (January

25, 2011), I must differ with him on the question of how revenge is handled in the film. The reviewer contrasts such classic Westerns as *The Searchers* and *Rancho Notorious* “in which revenge is treated far more seriously, or at least with more depth.” These works, he says, show “to one degree or another, the devastating moral and emotional consequences of revenge for both the wanted criminal and his pursuers.”

But the Coens’ *True Grit* deals with a far different kind of revenge. In the film as well as in Charles Portis’s superb novel, the story is told from the viewpoint of a woman, Mattie Ross, who is in her 60s, a devout Presbyterian, a believer in cold, exacting justice, remembering back 50 years. The 14-year-old Mattie is precise in her language, canny with her finances, and rigorous in that same sense of justice. It is not a tale of bloody revenge or “frontier justice” but of a young religious-minded girl settling accounts in the Lord’s eyes. Crime equals retribution—as simple as that.

Marty J
Massachusetts, USA
3 February 2011

On “*One third of Americans are diabetic or prediabetic*”

An excellent article, on the whole. I particularly agree with you on the subject of corn—especially the way cattle are stuffed with it to bulk them up (not to mention the drugs they are fed and the unsanitary conditions in which they are raised). Cattle are supposed to eat grass, not corn. Grass-fed beef tastes better, too.

Regarding dairy fats, I have to say that fat is needed (along with cholesterol) to form brain cells. That said, moderation is the key here. I drink whole milk (preferably raw, which is even more nutritious), eat cheese and use real butter. All of these are better for you than their “low fat” replacements.

Also of note regarding diabetes is the insanity of drinking “diet” drinks or chewing “sugar-free” gum. All of these things are sweetened with the chemical aspartame, which is a neurotoxin and contributes to the damage of the nervous systems of diabetics. I had to bring in articles about it to my doctor, who was still recommending diet drinks and candy to diabetic patients (including me). In fact, actual sugar (once again, in moderation) or honey would be healthier for these people.

It should also be remembered that aspartame was developed and marketed by Searle when its CEO was none other than Donald Rumsfeld. The company did everything it could to fudge test results in order to get aspartame on the market. Subsequent research by scientists in Europe and the US has determined that not only is aspartame a neurotoxin, it causes cancer in rats.

There are a lot of lies told by commercial food conglomerates and their PR flacks to get us to eat junk and/or poison ourselves. Worst of all, the healthy food gets shoved to the margins and therefore more expensive to produce, leaving people with low incomes no choice but to stuff themselves with crap.

Carolyn
California, USA
2 February 2011



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