

Letters from our readers

19 March 2011

On "Hillary Clinton in Tahrir Square"

Dear Bill Van Auken,

Yes, hypocrisy, the whole lot of the American administration: Obama's so carefully crafted pronouncements, so high minded they sound; Biden's "wouldn't go so far as to call Mubarak a dictator"; to Clinton, primed at State, off and running to establish connections and handshakes. That she's not shown with an American destroyer or aircraft carrier in the background must be a disappointment to the set-up handlers.

The Egyptian people don't "suffer from severe short-term memory." The military controls the country. It is hiding, disguised and maneuvering. It will not easily relinquish its control, a control beyond strictly military.

The democracy promotion boilerplate is also hypocrisy unparalleled. Obama and Clinton call for restraint, etc., is so obviously an attempt to position as an embrace of how things might go if the oppressed and exploited are able to unite in numbers too great to ignore, or worse, slaughter.

What is missing, as yet, is the sweep of realization of how capitalism and militarization of America and Israel have really sought to continue the policy of division and destabilization in the Middle East, and how Iran and Islam are presented as the scapegoat.

Michael S

17 March 2011

On "Pakistan: Government minister opposed to blasphemy laws assassinated"

I felt quite pained as I read the Pakistani people's experiences. As per a note I read elsewhere, these one-sided blasphemy laws are used to punish the minorities whose faiths are constantly attacked, but when in their impatience they retaliate, they are punished. Similar anti-oppression laws meant to protect "dalits" (members of former untouchable castes) in India, are misused.

Prabhakar

17 March 2011

On "Several thousand demonstrate in Columbus, Ohio"

I noted with interest the cowardly behavior of Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown, who, after comparing the Ohio and Wisconsin Republicans to Hitler, later retracted his remarks under pressure from other Democrats and the right-wing media. The Cleveland *Plain Dealer* reported on March 5, "US Sen. Sherrod Brown apologized Friday for citing the name of Adolf Hitler and other tyrants as being among those who have opposed labor unions, just as Republican lawmakers in Ohio and Wisconsin are opposing union rights today."

The actions of the Wisconsin and Ohio governors are a step toward authoritarian rule, and I think Brown should not have apologized. What he said was true: "I look back in history, in some of the worst governments we had, you know the first thing they did? Go after the unions. Hitler didn't want unions. Mubarak didn't want unions. These autocrats don't want independent unions."

The *Plain Dealer* article also quoted Brown as saying: "I am passionate about fighting for the middle class," mentioning Ohio's teachers, nurses, police and firefighters who stand to lose their collective bargaining rights. And the Ohio Democratic Party has stepped up its e-mail fundraising campaign, posing as our "friend." However, I would note it was under the outgoing Democratic governor, Ted Strickland, when a balanced budget amendment was passed, mandating furloughs. The union I belong to, SEIU, wrote a provision regarding mandatory furloughs into our recent contract without any hesitation, explaining that if something was already a matter of law, there was no way to oppose it.

Several of our union workers returned from the recent protests in Columbus, very discouraged. As one co-worker remarked, "If we could only go on strike for

one day, we could defeat this thing” (Senate Bill 5).

The unions will not conduct a political struggle, whether the seat of government is Columbus, Ohio or Paris, France, or anywhere else.

Lesley J
Ohio, USA
16 March 2011

On “Massachusetts: Hundreds of thousands affected by proposed LIHEAP cuts”

Before putting on his sneakers for the daily basketball game, Mr. Obama ponders the heating of homes and decides that subsidies for candle makers should be in his next budget plan.

Richard C
16 March 2011

On “Teachers and students speak on Wisconsin education cuts”

Thank you, Andre for doing this. Apart from the teachers union leadership, PTSA officials are also responsible for isolating teachers.

Thushara
15 March 2011

On “Who is responsible for the nuclear catastrophe in Japan?”

Really, I can see complaining about nuclear power plants built along fault lines, but hurricane force winds really don't have the strength to seriously interrupt a power plant. Furthermore, the author goes on to criticize the placement of southern Ontario's power plants, which are near no major population centers, no fault lines, and have no danger from hurricanes. Yes, the Great Lakes are nearby. If the author's position is that it is irresponsible to build plants near fresh water, fault lines, hurricanes, or population centers, I think his real problem is with nuclear technology, not its placement.

Nuclear power needs a large supply of water, and saltwater is going to put it near a fault line, and non-saltwater is going to be near fresh water (obviously).

All power plants need to be in some proximity to the population centers that concern it; the cost of transporting energy over distance is exponential. The further it needs to go, the more energy is used (and danger incurred) by transporting it. If the author's true argument is “if only all North American power was generated in northern Alberta,” then he can make that

argument. Otherwise, he should just come straight out and say he thinks nuclear power is dangerous no matter where it is placed.

Peter M
17 March 2011

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