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OMNI NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL DAYS PROJECT

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One of the most powerful modes of information control to control the minds of the public is the nation’s official heroes. Reagan received one of the longest presidential funerals since the beginning of our country. That would not have happened had the people been well-informed about the harms he caused the US and the world. Here are a few glimpses into his real life.

Contents of #1
Dick Bennett’s Writings about Reagan
William Blum on Reagan’s Record

Contents of #2
Dick Bennett, Rev. of Reagan Speaks
DeWitt, Reagan’s Deceptions
  • Rhetoric Society Quarterly Vol. 17, No. 3, Summer, 1987 >
  • Review of Reagan Speaks by Dick Bennett

Contents #3
Dick, The World of Orwell’s 1984 was Ronald Reagan’s World
Jeff Madrick, “The Age of Cruelty”
Reagan Origin of NSA Surveillance Sweep
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Dick, “Reagan’s Doublethink in a Speech on Arms Reduction”
RONALD REAGAN, SELLING THE SOVIET THREAT


Day after day in speech after speech composed of a tangle of truths, half-truths, innuendoes, and lies impossible to disentangle without extensive historical knowledge, president Reagan attacked the evil Soviet Union (SU) for threatening not only the US but, in his melodramatic language, Western civilization itself. For example, to Reagan, the obstacle to arms reduction, “which we want so dearly is not Washington, and it never has been; it’s Moscow.” But former President Carter declared that “in all past negotiations with the Russians...the Russians have always bargained in good faith, and the Soviet Union has never violated an arms agreement.”

The evil most represented by the SU was spreading throughout the world as “international terrorism,” a phrase he loved for its fearful vagueness—“vicious, cowardly, and ruthless.” This “force” was taking over the middle East, in Yemen, Ethiopia, Syria, and throughout the world. In partial response the US invaded and smashed the threat of Grenada in triumph.

And on and on day after day. Our troops are sent into a foreign country, they are resisted, and President Reagan decries another heinous outrage by the vicious enemy. And invasion after intervention, even the soberest of us, like Winston Smith in 1984, have difficulty resisting being swept up by the deceptions and the lies, the images and the emotion, the fear and vindictiveness and victories by which rulers control their populations. The figure of a Eurasian/Eastasian soldier (Soviet, Chinese, Libyan, Cuban) is always advancing, “huge and terrible, submachine gun roaring,” and the message repeated, “PEACE IS WAR,” knowing that in our ignorance is his strength.

J. William Fulbright wrote, “You see the periodic revival of the same kind of sentiment, this paranoiac anticommunism. Reagan’s initial rhetoric was a virulent revival of the old McCarthy attitude...” (The Price of Empire, 51).

And when the Soviet Union collapsed and the possibility of a conversion from a militarized economy and foreign policy was within reach, the warrior leaders marched immediately into a “War on Terrorism,” and the permanent war Orwell described in 1984 continued.

Jeff Madrick, “The Anti-Economist: The Age of Cruelty.” Harper’s Magazine (May 2013). In a few pages a summary of all the ways Ronald Reagan began the US “age of cruelty” that continues under Pres. Obama, an age of financial cuts that “reflect an abdication by the government of its responsibility to maintain a decent society.” --Dick
Most Of Nsa’s Data Collection Authorized By Order Ronald Reagan Issued

McClatchy Washington Bureau WASHINGTON — The National Security Agency’s collection of information on Americans’ cellphone and Internet usage reaches far beyond the two programs that have received public attention in recent months, to a presidential order that is older than the Internet itself. Approved by President Ronald Reagan in 1981, Executive Order 12333 (referred to as “twelve-triple-three”) still governs most of what the NSA does. It is a sweeping mandate that outlines the duties and foreign intelligence collection for the nation’s 17 intelligence agencies. It is...more »

http://article.wn.com/view/2013/11/21/Most_of_NSA_s_data_collection Authorized_by_order_Ronald_Rea/

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Remembering Reagan's Sweet Little Lie to the Air Traffic Controllers

By Steven D

[A few paragraphs have been excised—and indicated-- merely to shorten the newsletter. – Dick]

Most politically astute and knowledgeable people remember that it was President Ronald Reagan who began the assault on our unions by taking on the Professional Air Traffic Controllers union (PATCO). By refusing to negotiate with the union regarding pay and working conditions, and hiring replacements (i.e., scabs) to take their jobs, he set the stage for the ongoing eradication of unions and the working middle class. As The New York Times noted in 2011:

More than any other labor dispute of the past three decades, Reagan’s confrontation with the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization, or Patco, undermined the bargaining power of American workers and their labor unions. It also polarized our politics in ways that prevent us from addressing the root of our economic troubles: the continuing stagnation of incomes despite rising corporate profits and worker productivity.

By 2010, the number of workers participating in walkouts was less than 2 percent of what it had been when Reagan led the actors’ strike in 1952. Lacking the leverage that strikes once provided, unions have been unable to pressure employers to increase wages as productivity rises. Inequality has ballooned to a level not seen since Reagan’s boyhood in the 1920s.

This event was and is rightfully considered a watershed moment in the Republican Party's attempts to destroy unions and the union movement. Since Reagan took on PATCO, unions have seen their membership number decline precipitously, and most working class Americans have seen their wages and salaries stagnant, even as the individuals (CEO’s, Senior executives, and people like Mitt Romney and his former firm Bain Capital) who control major corporations and industries have seen their pay and income soar to levels once thought unimaginable.

What many may not know, however, is that Ronald Reagan in the last days of the 1980 election campaign, sent a letter to the President of PATCO, Robert E. Poli, promising he understood the many numerous concerns air traffic controller had with their pay, outmoded equipment and working conditions. Specifically, he promised to provide them with the most up-to-date equipment and to work with them to provide more staffing and less brutal work schedules in the interest of public safety.

Dear Mr. Poli:

I have been briefed by members of my staff as to the deplorable state of our nation’s air traffic
control system. They have told me that too few people working unreasonable hours with obsolete equipment has placed the nation's air travelers in unwarranted danger. In an area so clearly related to public policy the Carter administration has failed to act responsibly.

You can rest assured that if I am elected president, I will take whatever steps are necessary to provide our air traffic controllers with the most modern equipment available and to adjust staff levels and work days so that they are commensurate with achieving a maximum degree of public safety.

As in all other areas of the federal government where the President has the power to appoint, I fully intend to appoint highly qualified individuals who can work harmoniously with Congress and the employees of the governmental agencies they oversee.

I pledge to you that my administration will work very closely with you to bring about a spirit of cooperation between the president and the air traffic controllers. Such harmony can and must exist if we are to restore the people's confidence in their government.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan

Based in part on this letter Poli and other senior PATCO officials had PATCO endorse Reagan for President. PATCO was one of only four AFL-CIO affiliated unions to endorse Reagan over Carter.

[N]ewly elected PATCO president Robert Poli—who'd succeeded the more irenic incumbent John Leyden in a surprise insurgent challenge—was keen to demonstrate his clout before the union's restive rank and file. He presumed to be bargaining from a position of strength because during the run-up to contract negotiations, PATCO had sought to secure firm Washington backing with another surprise move: it endorsed Reagan in the 1980 election, partly as a matter of heeding the shifting national mood, and partly out of sheer exasperation with the Carter administration's handling of key controller concerns.

Never has a Union leader made a more serious mistake in judgment. The Reagan appointed head of the FAA failed to negotiate in good faith, reacting to PATCO's demand for pay raises, improved equipment and less arduous working hours with a counteroffer equal to approximately 1/7 of the cost of the union's offer. Poli accepted the offer, but did so with little enthusiasm. Reagan had doubled crossed him and put his position with PATCO's membership at risk. The administration's hard line only encouraged those at PATCO to strike, which was Reagan's goal all along.

He immediately invoked the Taft-Hartley act and fired all the striking air controllers on August 5, 1981, a total exceeding 11,000. Reagan then hired 5,500 scabs as the FAA head, Drew Lewis claimed that there had been a "surplus of controllers." The FAA also reduced flights by 25% and also brought in 370 military controllers. Though the FAA promised to have staffing levels up to pre-1981 levels within two years, in fact it took almost a decade before those levels were again achieved. This was due partly to Reagan's ban on rehiring any of the fired PATCO controllers.

Reagan never had any intention of working with the union. This can be best demonstrated by the fact that in February, the Reagan Department of Justice, aided by the FAA, had complied a list of air traffic controllers to be arrested and prosecuted in the event of a strike. One Federal District Judge in Denver threw out all the criminal indictments against local PATCO officials, labeling the Reagan DOJ's actions as creating a "hit list" at a time when the government was supposed to be negotiating with the union in "good faith."

Today, of course, the Republican candidates feel free to openly demonize unions and seek to
destroy the right to collectively bargain. We've seen the actions of Republican governors elected in 2010 as proof of that. The nation's political landscape is vastly changed by what Reagan accomplished in his showdown with PATCO. Reagan gambled that he could get away with his lies back then, and he succeeded. Now Republicans can lie on a daily basis and no one in the media even bothers to check the claims they make, the numerous falsehoods and prevarications they promulgate. Now the unions are shrinking, and they more often than not refuse to strike out of fear. Now Democrats govern as 1990's era Republicans, catering far too often to the wealthy elites and multinational corporations and failing to support unions.

And it all started with Ronnie Reagan's sweet little lie to the air traffic controllers. He wasn't concerned about the safety of air travel. He wasn't willing to work with PATCO to improve working conditions or modernize our air traffic control system. He wanted an easy target to make the case that unions are bad for America, and he hoodwinked PATCO into believing he would act honorably and treat them fairly. He lied, and we have been paying the price for it ever since.

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Dick Bennett

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