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Health Care Arena

An ongoing discussion on the health care debate

Nov. 09, 2009

Driving the Conversation:

Arena Ref: [Fred Barbash](#)

Is it a "tragedy" (Newt Gingrich) that Obama did not go to Berlin to commemorate the fall of the wall?

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David Boaz

Executive VP, Cato Institute :

Conservatives have been telling the president to talk less, and finally he's giving them what they said they wanted! I don't think the president has to bestow his appearance on every important gathering. On the other hand, the fall of communism was the most important event, the greatest advance for liberty, of our lifetimes. (Mine and Obama's, anyway; older folks may think the fall of National Socialism qualifies.) It's hard to see why you would go to Copenhagen for the Olympics and again for an environmental conference, and to France for D-Day, but not to Germany to celebrate the liberation of half a continent from totalitarianism.

I'm not surprised that [Brad Blakeman](#) thinks the president should commemorate the end of communism, given the Washington Post's article today on his contretemps with the Busboys and Poets restaurant. Seems that Brad was enjoying a pizza amid pictures of President Obama and Martin Luther King, when he happened to notice that the restaurant's walls also included posters of Che Guevara and Vladimir Lenin. He emailed the owner to object to celebrating "two of history's most notorious and infamous figures who dedicated their lives to bringing misery and death to thousands of their political enemies," and the owner responded that Lenin and Che "represent the struggles of working people." Brad says the owner

shouldn't have turned their private conversation over to the Post, but I think he's right. Lenin not only destroyed the Russian economy and conscripted laborers -- which seems like something working people would have struggled against -- but he initiated the Red Terror, i.e., mass executions of people based not upon their actions but their class origins and beliefs, and the gulag of concentration camps for political prisoners. He was the father of Soviet totalitarianism and mass murder, not Stalin. As for Che, he ordered hundreds of executions during the consolidation of Castro's dictatorship. These are not men who belong in the company of President Obama and Reverend King.

Subject	Date
Open Mic	Nov. 07, 2009
Will the House pass healthcare this weekend--or not? Speculate, please, on the consequences either way?	Nov. 06, 2009
Is Tea Party conservatism a help or a hazard to Republicans returning to power?	Nov. 05, 2009
Election 09: What's the message? Also see The Health Care Arena for impact on healthcare legislation.	Nov. 04, 2009
The Health Care Arena The GOP alternative	Nov. 04, 2009
Election 2009: Attention Washington	Nov. 03, 2009
NY 23 and the GOP: "First principles" or road to "internecine ruin?" (WSJ)	Nov. 02, 2009