

WHAT'S PROGRESSIVE?

Jack Dresser's complaint [letters, 3/7] that *EW* betrayed its "progressive" credentials when it excluded two documentary films critical of Israel from its list of top documentaries raises the issue of what does it mean to be progressive when it comes to Israel's conflict with secular Palestinians, radical Islamists such as Hamas, Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad who are unequivocally bent on Israel's elimination, and Iran.

There is nothing progressive about demonizing, as Dresser does, the only country in the Middle East that is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multicultural, pluralistic democracy (half of Israel's population originated from the Middle East, 20 percent is Muslim, 120,000 are Ethiopian), that protects the rights of religious minorities, that does not harass its LGBT population, that protects freedom of speech and whose independent judiciary has sided with Palestinians against the government on issues such as preventive detention, interrogation techniques and seizure of land.

There is nothing progressive about holding Israel, as Dresser does, to a double standard that would deny it the right that any sovereign country has to protect its civilian population from the murderous designs of its enemies. The security fence separating Israelis and Palestinians that Dresser decries has practically eliminated suicide bombings and drastically reduced deaths of Israelis and foreign visitors. Security fences separate Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland, Sunnis and Shias in Iraq and Indians and Kashmiris among dozens of places, with little or no controversy.

There is nothing progressive about promoting conspiracy theories by suggesting, as Dresser does, that *EW* is afraid of criticizing Israel because it has been intimidated by an all-powerful, pro-Israel lobby. *EW* has never been shy about promoting speakers or viewpoints that are profoundly critical of Israel.

What is progressive when it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is promoting a two-state solution that establishes two states for two peoples.

*Craig Weinerman
Chairman, Jewish Community
Relations Council of Lane County*

EXPLOITING ATHLETES

Despite its two closing losses, the Oregon men's basketball team had a successful season beyond expectations. We all can empathize with the players for missing out on the Pac-12 Conference title that was within their grasp.

More important, they need sympathy for having their final exams preparation interfered with by an unjustified Pac-12 tournament. They are learning from excessive demands on them that higher education is based on bringing in TV money. This post-season tourney, and others like it nationwide, is the money-making scheme of TV networks which bribe schools with game fees. Like the many NCAA playoffs that follow, they exploit student athletes.

Schools choose to not pay players, using the lie that they have educational standards of amateurism to maintain. That's a sham. So is the published statement by Athletics Director Rob Mullens regarding the "ongoing NCAA investigation" of Ducks football: "I think we do things the right way here. I think people in the industry absolutely know that."

So now we hear it from the top. College sport is an industry. All it wants is more sports money at the expense of its players' education — obvious when the Pac-12 tournament is played in Las Vegas.

*George Beres
Eugene*

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- \$ Multiple Unit Property Tax Exemptions have been giving tax breaks to student housing developers for decades. When they don't pay their fair share, you pay to make up the difference. Capstone's \$8.5 million giveaway is just a hint of tax breaks to come. (The MUPE moratorium conveniently expires after the election.)

Some things just never go away.

Vote NO on the City FEE Don't be fooled, **Measure 20-211** is not about the services, it's about the cash flow. For more information, or to contribute please check out our web site at: votencityfee.org

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