

Letters to the WSWWS

6 June 2000

Dear WSWWS editor:

Many thanks to Bill Vann for his insightful commentary May 26 on New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's withdrawal from his US Senate campaign.

Giuliani's withdrawal, in my opinion, had little to do with his health, and even less to do with his marital problems. It had everything to do with a loss of confidence on the part of key sections of big business in Giuliani's ability to keep a lid on the growing anger of the working class. This anger nearly boiled over uncontrollably in the aftermath of the acquittal of the four cops who shot the unarmed Amadou Diallo 41 times, followed closely by the police murder of the also unarmed immigrant worker, Patrick Dorismond.

Giuliani's provocative statements at the time simply threw gasoline on the flames, in fact making it harder for the police to impose discipline on the workers, especially in minority areas. Influential figures began withdrawing their long-standing support of the mayor. Shortly before Giuliani discovered his cancerous prostate, the *New York Times* published a poll showing how many rank-and-file cops opposed Giuliani's tactics because he was alienating them even more from the minority communities than they already were. This "expose" had a dual purpose, first, to shore up the badly damaged credibility of the police, and secondly, to send a message to Giuliani that it was time for him to go.

Giuliani got the message. Some of his big business backers, who had promoted him all over the country as the man who had "cleaned up" New York, were not happy. However valuable his services may have been in the past, Giuliani's usefulness had come to an end. It was time for somebody new. Loyal to the end, rather than endure the ignominy that was being prepared for him if he continued his campaign, Giuliani found the perfect excuse—prostate cancer—to allow him to withdraw gracefully. As the saying goes, if his doctors hadn't found the cancer, he would have had to invent it! And if that wasn't enough, he chose this time to go

public with his long-standing separation from his wife.

In recent days, Giuliani has tried to remake himself as caring about the problems of minorities and the poor, even making the very un-Giuliani-like admission of having made some mistakes. Of course, his only mistake, from the standpoint of big business, has been to be so blatant about the police-state measures he has imposed in order to ensure the continued enrichment of Wall Street at the expense of the poor.

Frankly, I am disgusted by the current media effort to arouse sympathy for this vicious enemy of the working class on the basis of his cancer. But I think it is instructive to see how quickly big business can un-make a politician, as quickly as they can make one. Giuliani's abrupt withdrawal shows who these politicians really represent.

JB

Brooklyn, NY

Hi,

Just saw the movie *American Beauty* and wanted to say that that it was reassuring for my sanity to read David Walsh's perceptive review of it on your web site after seeing so much misguided (to my mind) commentary about how great it was. Thanks!

RF

The following is a letter from Marty Jonas, a frequent contributor to the WSWWS.

Editor—

I appreciated Stefan Steinberg's review of Peter Weiss's great play *Marat/Sade*. Weiss is an important figure whose work, unfortunately, is hardly ever discussed in the United States. However, *Marat/Sade* can often be seen in college productions (the intense clash of political ideas undoubtedly appeals to the inquisitive minds of students). Also, the Peter Brook production was made into a powerful film with excellent leading performances by Ian Richardson and Patrick Magee; it is still available on video and can be found in video rental stores. I urge readers to watch the

film and be alert for any local productions—I can say from experience that the strength of the writing and the ideas can elevate even flawed productions (I've seen two).

As for the intellectual inspirations for Weiss's play, I would point not only to Brecht and Artaud, but also to Georg Buchner's *Danton's Death*. This remarkable German play, written in 1830, contains gripping scenes, also during the French Revolution, in which the characters debate the essential questions of social revolution. It also anticipates the Stalinist show trials of the 1930s.

Weiss's films are virtually unknown in the United States, except perhaps at an occasional film society showing. His other plays are largely invisible, and the book versions are out of print. I have long felt that Weiss's *Trotsky in Exile* could be done as a reading—with no props or scenery—by amateurs, with a lively discussion afterwards. This would especially be valuable in a group of socialist youth. The play opens up many important political questions focusing on Trotskyism, and the strengths and weaknesses of Weiss's politics could be debated as well.

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