

Letters from our readers

3 September 2009

On “75th anniversary of the Minneapolis truck drivers’ strike”

Thanks to Ron Jorgenson for writing such a clear and readable series on the 1934 Minneapolis truck drivers’ strike. It was particularly clear on the importance of a Marxist political leadership for that struggle, with the lesson of course being that preparation for the developing struggles in today’s crisis of capitalism is not just one of technical organizing, as middle class radicals would have it.

Rosa Luxemburg wrote in 1906 in *The Mass Strike*: “It becomes obvious that the task of social democracy does not consist in the technical preparation and direction of mass strikes, but, first and foremost, in the political leadership of the whole movement...by making clear to the widest layers of the proletariat the inevitable advent of this revolutionary period, the inner social factors making for it and the political consequences of it...There are not two different class struggles of the working class, an economic and a political one, but only one class struggle, which aims at one and the same time at the limitation of capitalist exploitation within bourgeois society, and at the abolition of exploitation together with bourgeois society itself.”

At the same time, the article reminds workers who are coming into struggle now that mass struggles which united workers across the divides created by trade unionism have been part of its history. Some of the conflicts in which the modern American working class was forged, that took on the character of more general workers struggles, included the railroad and St. Louis general strikes in 1877; “The Great Upheaval” for the 8-hour day in 1886; the New York-New Jersey port-wide walkout in 1887; the New Orleans general strike of 1892; the Philadelphia general sympathy strike for street-car drivers in 1910; the Seattle general strike of

1919; the national steel strike of 1919.

How opposite to those battles, and of the 1930s and even of the post-World War II period, has the official labor movement become. This series and the *World Socialist Web Site’s* frequent articles analyzing labor struggles internationally to this effect are invaluable.

Harvey L

1 September 2009

I have started to read your article and can remember a lesson from the 1989 Cockatoo Island Occupation. The only independent movement of the working class was through the actions of the Trotskyist movement. I am still proud to this day that I participated in mobilising the working class against the trade union bureaucracy. I can assure any doubters that without collective revolutionary consciousness there is no political independent movement of the working class. However, with this consciousness, what seemed impossible becomes history, and it only becomes history through politics as a whole. This must also include mass memory through teaching the working class its true culture.

Thank you for reminding me of my greatest ally, the politically independent American proletariat.

Phillip X

Australia

1 September 2009

On “US health care lobby pumps millions into Obama’s cost-cutting drive”

Dear Editors:

Thank you for the excellent work you’ve done in covering the BS emanating from Washington and beyond. [“Beyond” refers to the establishment of those “death panels” Sarah Palin has claimed Medicare will become if the health insurance industry’s demands aren’t met.]

But just one question—why has the AARP been allowed to lead some charmed life when groups like

Aetna and United Health Care are two of their biggest health insurance sponsors? And those nauseating ads? They're every five minutes on local TV. No doubt you've seen the ad featuring passenger cars swerving to block some ambulance on an all-out run. With their voice-over of "special interest groups want to de-rail health care reform..."

Nothing ever changes at the AARP Ethics Dept.

Why has AARP—a bare-naked, for-profit, health, life, and auto industry lobby to seniors (while raking in windfalls from the subsidiaries of AIG that we're already paying for thanks to the bailout) been allowed to maintain in perpetuity the pretense of being some non-profit, "pro"-seniors public interest group (PIG)? They're obviously not.

Thanks,

Bob R

Missouri, USA

31 August 2009

On "Letters on the death of Kennedy"

I'd like to respond to Michael M regarding his letter the editor on the late Edward Kennedy and the decay of American liberalism.

On the subject of conspiracies, WSWS and the "befuddlement" of the American public, allow me to offer this: Chappaquiddick—and what came to be regarded by the press as "the blonde, the booze and the Buick" (in fact, it was an Oldsmobile model 88)—may have been a case of blackmail, in which Kennedy confessed to a crime he did not commit in order to avoid more serious charges. There's some interesting research on this topic by Joachim Joesten in his *The Truth about Chappaquiddick* and Jack Olsen's *The Bridge at Chappaquiddick*. Now, that's a conspiracy theory!

Let's assume, for arguments sake, that the claim is true. What then?

By July of 1969, when this incident occurred, the Liberal ruling class figures in America had already acquiesced in the assassinations of Edward Kennedy's elder brothers; they accepted the cancellation of the New Deal ethos and adjusted their outlook to conform with the reactionary military-industrial complex. They had to do so, or they would have unleashed social forces that would have demanded policies considerably more progressive than the New Deal.

Even Senator "Ted" Kennedy would have

condemned such a move, the murders of his brothers notwithstanding.

In other words, the conspiracies are driven by historical realities, objective and subjective, that arise every moment. WSWS is concentrating on explaining how revolutions have arisen in the 20th century, within the last couple of generations. That's why WSWS is not a "conspiracy theorist" website; it's not the center of their analysis.

The Russian noblemen who planned and carried out the murder of Rasputin in 1917 are little known today; in the aftermath of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, they became irrelevancies: the Bolsheviks swept all that aside. We too, will cease to agonize over the tragedies and conspiracies of the Kennedy family when a socialist revolution begins to develop in the US and around the world.

Randy R

Oregon, USA

31 August 2009

On "Toyota announces closure of manufacturing plant in California"

It seems to me that the only logical conclusion that one can draw from the irrationality of this situation is that the moment may soon be upon us where a worker takeover of such a state of the art plant as exists at Fremont will be widely supported and applauded.

The history of the militant struggle of auto workers at an earlier time in the 20th century can, of course, be the way to cut through the "Gordian Knot" of labor inactivity and the collapse of labor militancy in the US.

It would only take one major successful labor event to build a whole new momentum that could quickly build to make what happened in France in 1968 seem quite tame by comparison.

"Carpe Diem"

Charles K

1 September 2009



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