The #MeToo campaign versus the presumption of innocence

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In the US, the Democratic Party and its celebrity and media allies, through the vehicle of its #MeToo campaign, are waging a battle against the presumption of innocence. By seeking to whip up hysterical moods surrounding allegations of sexual misconduct, they are trying to popularize the idea that those accused of sexual assault should be presumed guilty. This campaign is, in its essence, reactionary and should be opposed.

The proponents of this view have put forward four primary arguments:

1. All accusers must be believed, and doubting any accuser is tantamount to "victim blaming" or "rape apology." The actress Rose McGowan said in December 2017, "I would challenge the media to stop using the word 'alleged.' My beef is really with all the people who are complicit. It's the first time in history women are being believed, even though we get slagged."

2. The impact of such crimes on victims is so devastating that basic protections for the accused are obstacles in the way of justice, not only for the particular accuser, but for women as a whole. Hawaii Democratic Senator Mazie Hirono recently said the presumption of innocence "is what makes it really difficult for victims and survivors of these traumatic events to come forward."

3. It is a mark of unfairness and gender bias that the accused have the right to cross-examine their accusers, which #MeToo proponents such as the International Socialist Organization call "put[ting] rape victims on trial."

4. The presumption of innocence is not a democratic principle but a mere legal technicality, and as such it applies only in a criminal prosecution. As New York Democratic Senator Charles Schumer said, there is "no presumption of innocence" in the case of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh because "it's not a legal proceeding. It's a fact finding proceeding."

When considered in a historical context, the anti-democratic character of these arguments emerges. For centuries, proponents of the democratic right to the presumption of innocence have fought against powerful moods, based on appeals to emotion, mob justice and irrationalism, which view the presumption of innocence as an obstacle in the way of exacting immediate revenge against the alleged perpetrator. Proponents have always insisted that the principle is meaningless unless it applies universally, even to (and especially to) individuals who find themselves in the crosshairs of official public opinion.

The #MeToo campaign's arguments against the presumption of innocence have reared their heads before, including at the ugliest moments in US history. They run counter to the centuries-long historical struggle for due process and the rights of the accused.

The origins of the presumption of innocence

The right to the presumption of innocence until proven guilty is among the foundational principles upon which many other significant legal protections depend. If the accused are presumed guilty, then the right to counsel, the right to cross-examine witnesses, and the right to remain silent would be substantially weakened.

According to the attorney François Quintard-Morénas, as early as the 4th century BC the Greek orator Demosthenes put forward the position that "one merely accused of murder cannot yet be called a murderer, for no man comes under that designation until he has been convicted and found guilty." In 212 AD, the constitution of the Roman Emperor Antonin enshrined the legal maxim *actori incumbit probatio*, or, "he who wishes to bring an accusation must have the evidence."

It was in the 13th and 14th centuries with the development of the *jus commune*, however, that the presumption of innocence first crystalized into a fundamental legal principle. The adoption of *jus commune* marked a revolution in legal forms, replacing the unwritten custom-based European law of the high Middle Ages with a more advanced, written common law system that combined a revitalized Roman legal framework based on procedure with Catholic canon. It was the French lawyer Johannes Monachus who first used the phrase *item quilbet presumitur innocens nisi probetur nocens*—"a person is presumed innocent until proven guilty."

As Catholic University law professor Kenneth Pennington notes, this principle "summarized the procedural rights that every human being should have no matter what the person's status, religion, or citizenship." It "protected defendants from being coerced to give testimony and to incriminate themselves. It granted them the absolute right to be summoned, to have their case heard in an open court, to have legal counsel, to have their sentence pronounced publicly, and to present evidence in their defense."

Pennington explains that the presumption of innocence came under attack in the late medieval and early modern period. During the Inquisition, many European Jews were accused of sexually assaulting Christian women and were burnt or otherwise killed.

In one such case in 1398 or 1399, Papal Judge Johannes de Pogiali took the rare step of conducting an investigation into the facts underlying the accusations. Discovering that the particular accusations were false, de Pogiali concluded: "It was better to leave a crime unpunished than to condemn an innocent person." Pennington adds, "Many will recognize in these words 'Blackstone's ratio:' 'the law holds that it is better that ten guilty persons escape than one person suffer.'"

In the 15th through the 17th centuries, the right to the presumption of innocence was affirmed in papal letters requiring that Jews be granted the right to counsel and to know the names of their accusers.

The emergence of presumption of innocence coincides with the earliest development of bourgeois law. The presumption was advanced in opposition to the medieval torture chamber, where the accused person was simply tortured until he "confessed." Under this regime of torture, the court proceeding consisted merely of the confessed sinner being brought

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before a tribunal to acknowledge his confession.

"Must we assume that witches are guilty?" asked German Jesuit professor Friedrich von Spee, an early opponent of torture, in his 1631 work *Cautio Criminalis*. "I assume that no one can be condemned unless his guilt is certain: an innocent person ought not be killed. Everyone is presumed innocent, who is not known to be guilty."

In the 18th century, the revolutionary European and American bourgeoisies were determined to deliver a blow against centuries of feudal backwardness and arbitrary dynastic rule. Their chief ideologists, schooled in the ideas of the rational Enlightenment, recognized the presumption of guilt as a characteristic of tyranny that is wholly inconsistent with democracy and the rule of law.

The revolutionaries rejected the notion that rights could be granted or rescinded by the state at will. Rather, rights were vested in "the people" themselves, and the maintenance of the rule of law meant protecting them from the power of the government. In this sense, the American Declaration's "right to revolution" is incompatible with the presumption of guilt. Strong, repressive states justify their existence based on suspicion of the population and the need for social control.

It was a rejection of this reactionary view that guided the revolutionaries and led John Adams to remark in relation to the presumption of innocence that "there was never a system of laws in the world in which this rule did not prevail." Benjamin Franklin expanded Blackstone's ratio by a factor of ten, declaring "it is better 100 guilty Persons should escape than that one innocent Person should suffer."

Similarly, during the French Revolution, Quintard-Morénas explains that the third estate viewed the monarchy's use of torture and its belief in the presumption of the guilt of its subjects as an indication of the regressive character of the Bourbon dynasty:

"The relative indifference of the population to the plight of accused criminals, combined with the widely shared opinion among jurists that torture was not a punishment and that humanizing criminal procedure would encourage crime, contributed to maintain a practice that increasingly fell into disuse in France at the end of the seventeenth century."

The representatives of the third estate who gathered at the Estates-Generals in 1789 "referred to the presumption of innocence to request a better treatment of suspects and their complete absolution in the event of insufficient evidence." The presumption was enshrined in the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and serves as the foundation for the US Constitution's Bill of Rights.

A legal formality or essential democratic principle?

Particularly prominent today is the argument that the presumption of innocence is a legal technicality that applies only in a court of law and otherwise has no broader applicability. These arguments evidence an ignorance of history and the absence of democratic consciousness on the part of those who have been swept up in this campaign.

When hundreds of people were dismissed from government jobs or positions in Hollywood based on allegations they were spies for the Soviet Union because of sympathies for left-wing politics, they were provided no opportunity to challenge their persecutors.

As Robert Goldston noted in his book *The American Nightmare: Senator Joseph R. McCarthy and the Politics of Hate*, a victim of the McCarthyite witch-hunt was "presumed guilty until he could prove his innocence. He was not permitted to know who his accusers were or to face them… He was not even permitted to know what the specific charges were against him! He was simply to know that he was considered disloyal unless he could prove his loyalty."

Supporters of the #MeToo campaign presumably have no objection to this regime, since after all, these were not criminal proceedings and the presumption of innocence does not apply.

In the US Supreme Court's milestone 1895 decision *Coffin v. United States*, the convictions of two men were overturned because the judge failed to specifically instruct jurors about the presumption of innocence.

The US Supreme Court ruled that even though the judge had instructed the jury that the prosecution had to prove the defendants' guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, if the jury did not properly understand the fundamental importance of the presumption of innocence, the process would be fundamentally unfair and in violation of due process. The Supreme Court called the presumption of innocence "the undoubted law, axiomatic and elementary."

The Supreme Court explained that without an understanding of the presumption of innocence, no jury could fairly determine a defendant's guilt beyond a "reasonable doubt" because the presumption of innocence is not merely a *status* but is rather *evidence* that tends to show the innocence of all accused of crimes. By failing to instruct the jury about the presumption of innocence, therefore, the lower court judge was withholding evidence of the defendants' innocence from the jury. The Supreme Court wrote:

> The evolution of the principle of the presumption of innocence, and its resultant, the doctrine of reasonable doubt, make more apparent the correctness of these views, and indicate the necessity of enforcing the one [the presumption of innocence] in order that the other [the requirement that guilt be proven beyond a reasonable doubt] may continue to exist. While Rome and the Mediaevalists taught that wherever doubt existed in a criminal case, acquittal must follow, the expounders of the common law, in their devotion to human liberty and individual rights, traced this doctrine of doubt to its true origin—the presumption of innocence—and rested it upon this enduring basis.

In an 1897 article in the *Yale Law Journal*, Professor James Bradley Thayer argued against the *Coffin* decision and wrote, "The presumption of innocence has been overdone in our hysterical American fashion of defending accused persons."

According to Thayer, the presumption of innocence should not require special jury instruction because it makes conviction far too difficult. It was a mere legal technicality, he argued, and not evidence in favor of the accused. It "plays a very small part indeed" in American life and should provide no further legal or social protections for the accused.

By requiring that jurors be specifically instructed about the importance of the presumption of innocence, the Supreme Court, in an era where it could still articulate essential democratic conceptions, was explaining that the presumption of innocence must be broadly grasped in social consciousness if it is to retain any significance, even in a criminal legal setting. It is a bulwark against all forms of jury bias, including racial prejudice. Democratic rights are hollow if they are not understood by jurors and potential jurors. Every jury pool will be tainted if the presumption of innocence is not recognized in social consciousness.

As Quintard-Morénas writes:

> [The presumption of innocence] challenges the very foundation of a social contract in which society, by prohibiting private vengeance and guaranteeing the right to be tried by an impartial jury, acknowledges that there is a time for innocence and a time

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> for guilt. All too often suspects are treated as guilty by a society that owes them protection, even in light of the appalling nature of the alleged crime. But one cannot expect society to treat the presumption of innocence as an 'article of faith' outside the courtroom if those in charge of applying the law overlook the rationale for the maxim.

The US Supreme Court ultimately scaled back the presumption of innocence, including in a 1979 case titled *Bell v. Wolfish*, which allowed pre-trial detention of those accused but not convicted of crimes on the grounds that the presumption of innocence does not apply until the time of trial. This decision is responsible for drastically expanding the size of the population detained in local jails while awaiting trial. Justice Thurgood Marshall denounced the *Wolfish* majority opinion at the time, writing that "the Supreme Court decided the presumption didn't exist at all."

By hollowing out the presumption, #MeToo is paving the way for future frame-ups and convictions, in particular of the millions of poor and oppressed who are often caught up in the gears of the criminal system and become the victims of prejudices—racial and otherwise—of juries who do not understand the presumption of innocence.

The absence of the presumption of innocence and lynch law

The proponents of the #MeToo campaign attempt to present the position that all accusers must be unquestionably believed as a "left-wing" view. They characterize as "progressive" the idea that those who defend the accused are "rape apologists" and that requiring an accuser to subject herself to cross-examination is unfair and "places the victim on trial." These are presented as basic principles of the struggle for women's rights.

Nothing could be further from the truth. This is not the first time in American history that such arguments against the presumption have been made.

According to the Tuskegee Institute, 3,446 African-Americans were lynched from 1882 to 1968. The instigators and participants of lynch mobs acted under the belief that the legal system failed to believe accusers and slowed justice by providing unnecessary protections for the accused.

Sexual assault of white women was a common accusation levied against black men during this period. Because rape and sexual assault are among the most brutal and degrading crimes, accusations generated a degree of emotional fervor that made the facts underlying each accusation irrelevant for those involved. Appeals to due process were viewed as "tricks" by lawyers to give the guilty free rein to rape and defile white women.

In his 2017 book *The Republic For Which It Stands: The Untied States During Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865-1896*, Stanford Professor Richard White wrote of the fight by civil rights leader Ida B. Wells to expose the use of rape and sexual assault accusations as a mechanism for murdering black men.

White wrote:

> [Wells] discovered that no matter what the original reason for mob violence, newspapers turned them into stories of the rape of a white woman by a black man. Wells showed that in some cases the rape accusations disguised consensual sex, and in most other cases the original reasons for the lynchings had nothing to do with rape at all. Accusations of rape were, she wrote, "an old racket." Her attacks struck at the core of the mythic South: the purity of Southern womanhood and homes threatened by black men. Memphis papers attacked her "obscene intimations" and a mob destroyed her press and threatened to kill anyone who tried to resume publishing.

One of Wells' chief opponents was the prominent feminist temperance movement leader Frances Willard, who supported racial segregation and claimed that lynch justice was a lamentable but necessary way to protect white women from "great dark-faced mobs."

In 1894, Wells denounced Willard when the latter claimed that white women must be believed when making accusations of sexual assault or rape. White wrote:

> Willard attacked [Wells] for slandering Southern white women by saying that not all accusations of rape were true. The WCTU [Woman's Christian Temperance Union] resolution of 1894, although lamenting lynching, indicated that it could not be banished until "the unspeakable outrages which have so often provoked such lawlessness [i.e., sexual assault and rape allegations] shall be banished from the world, and childhood, maidenhood, and womanhood shall no more be the victims of atrocities worse than death."

To Wells, the presumption of innocence was what stood between life and death for thousands of black men across the South. She dedicated her career and risked her life to defend this presumption against the hysteria of moralists who claimed that any black man against whom an accusation was levied must be guilty.

In an 1893 article titled "Lynch Law," Wells wrote that 269 black men were murdered by mobs after being accused of rape between 1882 and 1891. She wrote, "This crime is only so punished when white women accuse black men, which accusation is never proven … Investigation as to guilt or innocence of the accused is never made."

In 1900, Wells wrote an article titled, "Lynch Law in America," which warned against condemning a man "upon the unsworn and uncorroborated charge of his accuser." The article continued: "No matter that our laws presume every man innocent until he is proved guilty; no matter that it leaves a certain class of individuals completely at the mercy of another class … if a white woman declares herself insulted or assaulted, some life must pay the penalty, with all the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition and all the barbarism of the Middle Ages. The world looks on and says it is well."

In 1892, Wells denounced those who claim accusers should be protected from testifying because of the trauma they have allegedly endured as victims of sexual assault. She attacked a Southern bishop who said those "who condemn lynching express no sympathy for the white woman in the case." Referring to a lynching in Chestertown, Maryland, Wells wrote:

> When that poor Afro-American was murdered, the whites excused their refusal of a trial on the ground that they wished to spare the white girl the mortification of having to testify in court.
>
> This cry has had its effect. It has closed the heart, stifled the conscience, warped the judgment and hushed the voice of press and pulpit on the subject of lynch law throughout this "land of liberty." Men who stand high in the esteem of the public for Christian character, for moral and physical courage, for devotion to the principles of equal and exact justice to all, and for great sagacity, stand as cowards who fear to open their mouths before this great outrage. They do not see that by their tacit

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> encouragement, their silent acquiescence, the black shadow of lawlessness in the form of lynch law is spreading its wings over the whole country.

Wells demanded that accusers stand before their accused and answer difficult and perhaps embarrassing questions about their accusation. She rejected the idea that white women were too fragile or emotionally weak to explain themselves. She denounced those in the press who undercut the presumption of innocence and helped make it possible for mobs or juries to convict innocent men.

The decline of democratic consciousness and the war on terror

The fact that such arguments could find such a broad hearing today among the oligarchy and the affluent upper-middle-class testifies to the advanced state of decay of democratic consciousness. An important experience in setting the conditions for this degeneration is the ongoing "war on terror."

The "war on terror" involved an attempt to whip up mass hysteria that could be used to undermine democratic rights, presenting the public with a great evil that was supposedly too extreme, too horrible, and too urgent to justify maintaining basic democratic principles.

Pursuant to the "war on terror," countless individuals were abducted, imprisoned, and tortured without ever having been convicted of a crime. Once they were designated as "unlawful enemy combatants," they could be held indefinitely without trial. The presumption of innocence, of course, was unavailable to the victims of the Guantanamo Bay torture camp and the CIA's network of black site prisons around the world.

This applies to individual terrorist suspects as well as entire societies. Alongside individuals like José Padilla and John Walker Lindh, the entire nation of Iraq was presumed guilty of involvement in the September 11 events as well as producing "weapons of mass destruction." The war that was launched on this presumption of guilt resulted in the deaths of over one million people.

The outlook of the US government in prosecuting the war on terror was epitomized by George W. Bush's vice president, Dick Cheney, who said he still supported the use of torture against suspected terrorists although 25 percent of torture victims were later proven innocent.

"I'm more concerned with bad guys who got out and released than I am with a few that in fact were innocent … I have no problem as long as we achieve our objective … I'd do it again in a minute."

The timeline of events following September 11, 2001 shows how the government used widespread confusion and emotional sympathy for the victims of the attack to whip up blind nationalism and belief that those accused of terrorism did not deserve to benefit from constitutional protections.

On November 13, 2001, the Bush administration issued an executive order allowing "individuals … to be detained, and, when tried, to be tried for violations of the laws of war and other applicable laws by military tribunals," instead of held pursuant to the Geneva Convention, which mandates the humane treatment of prisoners of war.

At the Guantanamo Bay prison as well as a network of black site prisons around the world, the US government engaged in the systematic torture and brutalization of "unlawful enemy combatants" whom it held without charge.

A new category of super criminal—"terrorist"—was promoted by the corporate media and the political establishment. A powerful campaign to generate jingoist and pro-war sentiments brought immense pressure to bear against anyone who defended the democratic rights of suspected terrorists. These rights were presented as burdensome obstacles to thwarting the "next 9/11." All those who questioned the government were labeled as "anti-American" or subject to state surveillance under the PATRIOT Act.

In 2006, the Democrats and Republicans passed the Military Commissions Act of 2006, which held that enemy combatants who were not US citizens could not seek habeas corpus relief and had no right to challenge their detention. In 2008, the Supreme Court ruled in *Boumediene v. Bush* that military commissions were acceptable and that detainees did not have to be tried in criminal court, but that detainees did have the right to file habeas corpus petitions.

Under the administration of Bush's successor, Barack Obama, the attack on the presumption of innocence reached unprecedented levels. The government set up a secret "kill list" comprised of targets of drone strikes.

On September 30, 2011, the military-intelligence agencies assassinated a US citizen, Anwar al-Awlaki, in Yemen without a warrant or trial, presuming him guilty based on briefings from an intelligence file. Two weeks later, the Obama administration murdered al-Awlaki's 16-year-old son, Abdulrahman al-Awlaki. The Obama administration also kept the Guantanamo Bay prison open, and the prison has detained a total of 779 people since January 2002, many of whom were innocent.

The anti-democratic impact of the ongoing war on terror has poisoned and degraded all aspects of official political, legal and cultural life. As Washington University law professor Leila Dadya Sadat said in a 2008 speech titled "A Presumption of Guilt: The Unlawful Enemy Combatant and the US War on Terror:"

> This dehumanization of a whole category of human beings—the "suspected terrorist" or "unlawful enemy combatant"—has had pernicious effects upon the American legal system and severely harmed America's international standing. These doctrines and the propaganda supporting them have led to the systematic use of torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment used on prisoners detained in the legal limbo known as Guantanamo Bay, Kandahar prison in Afghanistan and Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, as well as the rendition of terror suspects to third countries and to "black sites" scattered around the world for detention, interrogation, mistreatment and sometimes death. Although most (but not all) of the individuals subjected to this regime have been foreigners, the impact of this Executive Activism has been on the American legal regime and the American psyche, for it has been US investigators, US courts, and US lawyers, that carried out the government's plan. Indeed, these policies have turned US legal principles upside down, resulting in a presumption of guilt applicable to anyone accused of acts of terrorism by the government.

The powerful anti-democratic tendencies unleashed by the government in the conduct of the war on terror have advanced the erosion of democratic consciousness and seeped into all aspects of domestic law.

Thousands of victims of police murder in the US do not receive the benefit of the presumption of innocence. They are presumed guilty as a result of living in "high-crime areas," where the police shoot first and ask questions later. Instead, police on the beat, armed with the latest weaponry from the battlefields of North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, serve as judge, jury and executioner and are hardly ever punished.

Tens of millions of undocumented immigrants, whose very presence in the US has been deemed "illegal" by the same laws aimed against "terrorists," can be dragged out of their homes or off the job, separated

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from their loved ones, thrown into cages and forced to face physical and sexual abuse in detention centers for months or years on end.

Eight million people are either in prison, jail or on parole or probation. That arrestees who have not been convicted of a crime can be held in jail while they await trial is no longer even a matter for debate.

Who can claim the United States suffers from *too much* attention to the presumption of innocence?

Postmodernism, identity politics and the presumption of guilt

The abandonment of progressive attitudes toward due process and the presumption of innocence is most pronounced among affluent sections of the upper-middle-class. For this privileged layer, identity politics and postmodernist philosophy have become key theoretical vehicles for the attack on the presumption of innocence.

Proponents of this view have leapt to defend the accusers in several instances where the accusations were false. In the Tawana Brawley, Duke lacrosse and University of Virginia *Rolling Stone* cases, the media and supporters of identity politics assumed that the accused must be guilty because they were white men.

In a recent comment in support of the #MeToo campaign on their blog, the ex-radicals Alex Steiner and Frank Brenner sum up the reactionary marriage between identity politics and postmodernism. Brenner denounces the WSWS for "harping on due process in a thoroughly bourgeois legalistic manner" by defending the presumption of innocence for those accused of sexual misconduct.

Due process may be warranted, Brenner writes, but "a *far greater legal concern* is the way in which women who bring sexual assault accusations to court are subjected to character assassination in order to undermine the credibility of their accounts," which, he says, allows "perpetrators" to "walk free." (Emphasis added). He praises the #MeToo campaign as a "spontaneous upsurge of the masses" that challenges the fact that "we have a category of crime where a great many women (and some men) are being abused, often scarred for life, and yet few perpetrators are ever brought to justice."

Employing the language of the police by referring to "perpetrators" who must be "brought to justice," Brenner invents a "right" of the accuser to be believed without question and explains that this is of "far greater legal concern" than due process for the accused. He appeals to the emotional damage suffered by "a great many women" and claims that women should be spared the humiliation of raising their accusations in court, where women face "character assassination"—i.e. the Sixth Amendment right to cross-examine witnesses.

Brenner is making an argument for lynch mob justice. He is opposed to the fundamental conception that rights are intended to protect the population from state repression. Instead, he views the right of the accuser to be protected from uncomfortable questioning to be of "far greater legal concern" than the right to question whether the accuser is telling the truth.

Appeals to the "identity" of the alleged victim share much in common with the lynch mob instigators of the late 19th century, who claimed that no white woman would ever lie to a jury and that accusers should be protected from the embarrassment of giving testimony under oath. In this warped postmodernist view, the actual facts underlying the allegation are of no consequence.

In an earlier period of US history, progressive attitudes in defense of the right to the presumption of innocence found a wide cultural audience in beloved novels like Walter Van Tilberg Clark's *The Ox-Bow Incident* and Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*, as well as in popular songs like Abel Meeropol's "Strange Fruit" and Bob Dylan's "Hurricane," and films like *Twelve Angry Men* and *Inherit the Wind*.

If the promoters of the #MeToo campaign had been present at the trial of Tom Robinson in Harper Lee's novel, they would have denounced Atticus Finch as a "rape apologist." They would consider the "right" of Mayella Ewell to be believed to be "of far greater importance" than the right of Robinson to be presumed innocent. Finch would have been attacked for "harping on due process" in his appeals to the jury. When Finch posed difficult questions to Mayella and accused her of lying, the attorney would have been slandered for having engaged in "character assassination." Brenner would say that Finch was helping "perpetrators" escape being "brought to justice."

The modern-day opponents of due process can claim all they want that they wish only to presume the guilt of the rich and powerful, not the oppressed. But the common law is based on precedent, and instigators of attacks on democratic rights do not have the luxury of deciding whose democratic rights will be violated and whose will not.

Whatever rules are established against the wealthy will be brought down upon the backs of the poor and defenseless with the ruthless force of the power of the state and public opinion.

In cases like the Scopes Monkey trial, the Sacco and Vanzetti frame-up, the Dreyfus Affair, the trial of Oscar Wilde, the Leo Franks case, the Leopold and Loeb trial and the frame-up of the Scottsboro Boys, the political left rejected calls for blood and vengeance and sought to expose the powerful interests fanning the flames of passion and prejudice.

Today, socialists reject the efforts of the proponents of the #MeToo campaign to undermine democratic consciousness and attack the presumption of innocence with all the old arguments of the extreme right.

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