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Ferguson, Missouri: The U.S. Empire’s Global War of Terror Comes Home

by RAY LIGHT

-New Rebellion Against Criminal “Justice” in Ferguson-

On August 9th, in broad daylight, Ferguson, Missouri policeman Darren Wilson shot to death Michael Brown, an unarmed eighteen year-old Afro-American youth who had his hands up in the air! In this white supremacist society, Brown’s apparent “crime,” like Trayvon Martin and so many other Black youth in these times, was walking while Black! In this city of twenty-two thousand, two-thirds of the population is Afro-American, while the police force is almost lily-white. Reflecting cold disrespect for the youth, his family and his people, the cops left Brown’s body in the middle of the street for hours. There was a days-long delay in even naming Wilson as the killer cop. Clearly, the national oppression of the Afro-American people was at the heart of this tragedy. And the community responded with angry protests.

The protests were fueled and sustained by the economic conditions there, exacerbated by the 2008 economic crisis that has not ended. Ferguson’s unemployment rate rose from less than 5% in 2000 to over 13% in 2012-2013 and its poverty rate doubled in the same period. Attempting to stamp out the growing revolt, the U.S. imperialist state apparatus responded with undeclared martial law repression of the community. In addition to the Ferguson police department, other

Do you know who said it??

“The economic anarchy of capitalist society as it exists today is, in my opinion, the real source of the evil. ... Production is carried on for profit, not for use. There is no provision that all those able and willing to work will always be in a position to find employment; an ‘army of unemployed’ almost always exists. The worker is constantly in fear of losing his job. Since unemployed and poorly paid workers do not provide a profitable market, the production of consumers’ goods is restricted, and great hardship is the consequence. Technological progress frequently results in more unemployment rather than in an easing of the burden of work for all. The profit motive, in conjunction with competition among capitalists, is responsible for an instability in the accumulation and utilization of capital which leads to increasingly severe depressions. Unlimited competition leads to a huge waste of labor, and to that crippling of the social consciousness of individuals which ... I consider the worst evil of capitalism. ... I am convinced there is only one way to eliminate these grave evils, namely through the establishment of a socialist economy, accompanied by an educational system which would be oriented toward social goals.” (May 1949)

Hint: He was not a revolutionary Marxist, but he was one of the most prominent men of the twentieth century.

—Still stumped?  See page 8 for answer.

In the Streets of Ferguson, Missouri

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local and state police forces descended on the city. They were armed with assault rifles, tear gas, concussion grenades, smoke bombs, rubber and bean bag bullets, long range acoustic devices, armored personnel carriers and Humvees. There was also the declaration of a no-fly zone over the city, denial of media access and even the arrest of mainstream journalists.

A week later, flanked by Black politicians at an Afro-American church, Democratic Governor Jay Nixon declared martial law. Rejecting the Democratic Party-elected Governor and the Black bourgeois leadership, many in the audience immediately expressed their opposition to continued police control of the city and their determination to continue the protests.

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, the legendary basketball player and the NBA's all-time leading scorer, had a thoughtful commentary on the Ferguson events in Time Magazine. He said, “we have to address the situation not just as another act of systematic racism but as what it really is: class warfare.” (“The Coming Race War Won’t Be About Race,” Time Magazine, 9-1-14) Abdul-Jabbar points out that “police overreaction” is based “less on skin color and more… on being poor.” He warns us not to “fall into the trap of turning against one another, expending our energy battling our allies instead of our enemies.” He concludes that, “The middle class has to join the poor and whites have to join African-Americans in mass demonstrations, inousting corrupt politicians, in boycotting exploitative businesses, in passing legislation that promotes economic equality and opportunity and in punishing those who gamble with our financial future.” (ibid.)

Though it can be no accident that this early target of the U.S. militarized police “shock and awe” repression was a predominantly Afro-American city (about which many among the white masses would not be immediately sympathetic), Kareem Abdul-Jabbar’s point about “class warfare” is precisely correct. We have warned over the past six years that President Obama has been assigned by Wall Street to preside over “an orderly march of the U.S. population to impoverishment in the desperate effort of the U.S. monopoly capitalist and imperialist ruling class to save itself and its hegemonic position in the world capitalist system...And the challenge to the U.S. ruling class and President Obama to lead the masses of working people and oppressed nationalities in the USA to poverty without us opting to revolt, without us turning to socialist revolution for the way out of our difficulties, will only get more difficult.” (Ray O’Light Newsletter #59, March-April 2010)

In this context, we have warned about the rapid militarization of U.S. society, including through the use of the Obama-era National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), enabling the rulers to try to contain “the 99% of us” as austerity hits home.*

The terror directed against the people of Ferguson even generated a solid Time Magazine piece by Republican Senator Rand Paul from Kentucky, entitled, “We Must Demilitarize the Police.” Paul exposed the fact that, “Big government has been at the heart of the problem. Washington has incentivized the militarization of police precincts by using federal dollars to help municipal governments build what are essentially small armies ...” (9-1-14)

Despite the occupation and terror inflicted by the “small army” of local and state police forces armed to the teeth, the poor people of Ferguson and surrounding St. Louis communities continued to wage the rebellion. So U.S. imperialism pulled out its next maneuver to try to defuse the situation and demobilize the community. They brought Eric Holder, the Attorney General of the USA and close confidante of President Obama himself, to Ferguson.

What Happens to a Dream Deferred?

by LANGSTON HUGHES

(1951)

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?

Or fester like a sore —
And then run?

Does it stink like rotten meat?

Or crust and sugar over —
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

-The Treachery of Social Democracy and its
Dangerous Illusions About the Obama Regime –

Social Democracy in the form of the leadership of the AFL-CIO and the NAACP, liberal foundations and other NGO’s connected to the “liberal” / “left-wing” of the Democratic Party, revisionists in the Communist Party of the USA (CPUSA) and the right reformist,

*The absolute military lockdown of about 3 million people in the Boston area after the Boston Marathon bombing, supposedly to apprehend one wounded teenaged terrorist, is an example of a large scale dress rehearsal among a largely white working class population with this same aim in mind. But it did not entail military engagement such as is occurring in Ferguson.
opportunist-dominated “left-wing movement” in the USA have objectively supported the U.S. wars of imperialist aggression and plunder around the world during the past sixty years of U.S. imperialist hegemony and Empire. On the same basis of defending the privileged and parasitic mother country of the U.S. Empire, they have largely supported the Obama Regime’s rapid militarization of police departments across the USA on the basis of the reactionary laws such as NDAA that have been passed since 9-11.

The 8-14-14 official response of Richard Trumka, President of the AFL-CIO, to the Ferguson tragedy continues this social-democratic treachery to the workers and oppressed. Trumka admitted that, “We are a nation that still remains segregated by race and class and tragedies like this highlight those divisions.” Here Trumka pays lip service to the idea that he wants to eliminate such segregation and such tragedies. However, one must ask: what has Trumka done to eliminate “race and class” segregation, to make this situation better, during the years he has been the top leader of the organized labor movement in the USA?!

But after telling us he’s on our side, Trumka gives his punch line: “Despite the tragedy, there is also an opportunity to have an important discussion about issues that we have long neglected in this country. This conversation can only be had if cooler heads prevail.” (My emphasis, ROL) Again, why has Trumka, the head of the U.S. labor movement, “long neglected” this “important discussion?” Most importantly, Trumka is only willing to have the long neglected discussion if cooler heads prevail. Here Trumka holds out the promise of discussion if the Afro-American masses of Ferguson and St. Louis County “chill out” and demobilize, i.e., exactly what the powers that be are striving to obtain from the people.*

If you still want to give Trumka the benefit of the doubt, please consider the following:

Trumka concludes his statement with the following: “It is encouraging that the Justice Department and the FBI are closely investigating this incident so that the community of Ferguson is served.” Both the Justice Department investigation and the FBI investigation are under the general responsibility of the Attorney General.

Announcing his arrival into Ferguson, MO on August 20th, Attorney General Holder said, “This is my pledge to the people of Ferguson: Our investigation into this matter will be full, it will be fair, and it will be independent. Long after the events of Aug. 9 have receded from the headlines, the Justice Department will continue to stand with this community. As we move forward together, I ask for the public’s cooperation and patience.” (My emphasis, ROL) Here Holder’s punch line, in lockstep with Trumka’s, comes through: he too wants the community to stop its protests and demobilize.

*In a positive development, the three General Officers of the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) took almost the exact opposite approach from Trumka. The (8-21-14) “APWU Statement on Ongoing Events in Ferguson, Missouri” argues that, “At a time when we are reaching out to the people throughout the nation to defend the public Postal Service and good union jobs, we must also stand with our communities. … We urge our members and locals to speak out, peacefully protest, and demand justice for Michael Brown’s family and community. We seek an end to the militarization of local police forces. We seek a new day, where execution-style killings of unarmed African-American teenagers such as Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown take place no more.”
But Holder went on to give the people of Ferguson assurances: “At a time when so much may seem uncertain, the people of Ferguson can have confidence that the Justice Department intends to learn—in a fair and thorough manner—exactly what happened.” Accordingly, Holder ordered 40 FBI agents, some of the Civil Rights Division’s most experienced prosecutors and assistance of the U.S. Attorney for St. Louis committed to the investigation into Michael Brown’s death. But what is Attorney General Holder’s record in dealing with such matters?! Does it warrant the confidence that Social Democrats such as Trumka place in Holder and his Justice Department and its FBI?

-Eric Holder’s Troubling Record on Police Murders and Paramilitary Terror-

In a stunning article in the Washington Times (8-26-14) entitled, “Holder’s police-shooting hypocrisy” Joseph Bovard asserts that “Holder’s own record belies his lofty promise” to the people of Ferguson. Bovard points to the following facts: “As the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia (Washington, DC) from 1993 to 1997, Holder was in charge of policing the local police. When police violence spiraled out of control, he did little to protect Washington residents from rampaging lawmen. The number of killings by Washington police quadrupled between 1989 and 1995 … [in 1995] Washington police shot and killed people at a higher rate than any other major city police department. … A 1998 Pulitzer-Prize-winning Washington Post investigation concluded: “The rise in police shootings in the mid-1990’s went largely unnoticed among the top officials charged with policing the police.” Holder was the top official responsible.

While Bovard is focused on Holder’s lack of protection of poor Black communities in Washington, DC where black police officers were responsible for most of the police murders of Black people back then, he observes that, “because most police victims were from the lower-income parts of the city, their plight went largely unnoticed.” Certainly Michael Brown and Ferguson, MO have a similar impoverished status today and Holder has an atrocious record in dealing with police murders of Black youth.

Finally, four and one-half years ago, we wrote that, “Obama’s Attorney General, Eric Holder, … until recently, a partner in Covington and Burling … was the lead counsel in defense of Chiquita [formerly the infamous United Fruit Company] against the U.S. Justice Department investigation into Chiquita’s financial dealings with the right wing terrorist organizations in Colombia … Despite the fact that the company had to pay a $25 million dollar fine and was the first corporation convicted of financial dealings with a terrorist organization in U.S. history, Holder was able to broker a sweetheart deal in which none of the six company officials who approved payments to the terrorists received any jail time! Does anyone really believe that Holder has stopped defending Chiquita now that he is the head of the U.S. Department of Justice?!” (pp21&22, “The Honduran Coup, the Obama Regime and the Problems of the Revolution in Latin America,” Ray O’Light Newsletter #58, January-February 2010) Evidently, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka does!!!!

-Incredibly, prior to becoming Attorney General, Holder had the distinction of representing the first corporation convicted of financial dealings with a terrorist organization in U.S. history. Holder’s “achievement” was to get all six company officials off without any jail time after having been caught paying the terrorists. In essence, Holder was a defender of the murderous paramilitary organizations in Colombia. This “credential” links Eric Holder directly to the U.S. War of Terror at Home and Abroad!!-

-The U.S. Empire’s War of Terror Comes Home-

The overwhelming police presence in Ferguson has been much like the recent U.S. military occupations of urban areas in war zones where U.S. imperialism has sent the U.S. military to wage war and oppress peoples all over the world, especially where there is abundant oil and natural gas. For many decades, the USA has produced more weapons than the rest of the major powers combined! In the more recent past, the Congress has provided more funding for the military than the four services have requested! With the superabundance of U.S. weapons, the Obama-era NDAA unleashed a flood of U.S. military weaponry into local police departments all over the USA which keeps the military-industrial complex profits
flowing as well as placing the U.S. section of the international working class and the oppressed nationalities within the U.S. multi-national state under the same imperialist repressive state apparatus that we have helped provide against the rest of the international working class and the oppressed peoples. It is not surprising and is quite encouraging that Palestinians, including in Gaza, under the U.S.-financed and supplied Israeli settler war and occupation, have expressed their solidarity with the people of Ferguson.

We, the 99% in the USA, and especially the workers and the Afro-American people and other oppressed nationalities, need to recognize that we have been siding with our enemies, imperialism headed by U.S. imperialism, and we have opposed our friends and allies, the international working class and oppressed peoples in the Middle East and around the world. Ten years ago, when the Iraqi Resistance was waging a powerful war of liberation against the U.S. occupation army, Afro-American soldiers and recruits stopped enlisting and re-enlisting, as did Latinos to a lesser extent. Several U.S. military services had to resort to “stop-loss” orders compelling soldiers to remain in the military after their time was up. With the 2008 election of Obama, and the loss of millions of civilian jobs in the USA as a result of the economic crisis, Afro-American and Latino youth enlisted in the U.S. military in great numbers, once again providing cannon fodder for U.S. Empire.

Thus, Afro-American and Latino youth as well as white youth, have helped enable the Obama Regime to expand the Afghan war into Pakistan, to launch a war on Libya, to assist French imperialism in Mali, etc. As of this writing, the Obama Regime is aggressively provoking Russia over the Ukraine, while sending an expanding U.S. military force back into Iraq and threatening to invade Syria in the name of dealing with the mysteriously provocative ISIS terrorist group. As the U.S. Empire continues its decline, more and bigger wars are planned and provoked. In light of the Ferguson events, all the youth who have become cannon fodder for the U.S. Empire need to recognize that “the chickens are coming home to roost.”

The wise words of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar apply not just within the USA but globally: “Rather than uniting to face the real foe ... we fall into the trap of turning against one another, expending our energy battling our allies instead of our enemies.”

To Prevent Future Tragedies Like the Police Murder of Michael Brown,

and

To Prevent Future Militarized Police Suppression of our Cities Like Ferguson,

We Need to Mobilize our Allies and March under the Proletarian Revolutionary Banner:

“Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples Unite!”
The Revolutionary Organization of Labor, USA (ROLUSA) condemns the brutal Obama Regime of U.S. imperialism for its criminal attacks against the refugee children of Central America and Mexico, especially from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador. We condemn the profit-mad political-economic system of monopoly capitalism and imperialism which drives the U.S. Empire to create world conditions in which the future of all humanity, and all our children, are in peril. Indeed, the Central American youth at the Mexican-US border are our children.

Below we reprint a lengthy excerpt from a positive expression of protest from the Honduran Solidarity Network (HSN), a network of over 30 U.S. solidarity organizations, and Department 19, a network of Hondurans living in the U.S. and Canada, members of the FNRP/LIBRE Party.

“... The response of ... the Obama administration to this crisis is to call for yet more militarization of the border and quicker deportation processes with a complete lack of acknowledgement of the responsibility of the US government for creating this crisis over both the long and short term.

The problem of the child refugees is in part blowback from US policy in the 1980s when our government trained and funded Salvadoran and Guatemalan military and police to prevent popular revolutions, and more recently when the US supported the coup against President Manuel Zelaya in Honduras. US foreign policy, anchored in the militarized Drug War and pursued by both the Democratic and Republican administrations, has only empowered brutal and corrupt armies and police forces, particularly in Honduras and Guatemala.

US so-called free trade and structural adjustment policies have required the countries of Central America and Mexico to cut social services and credit to small farmers while wiping out local producers with a flood of low-cost, US taxpayer-subsidized products from US agribusiness. These policies have increased poverty and desperation in Central America and Mexico and created a fertile recruiting ground for drug cartels and criminal gangs.

The Obama administration bears particular responsibility for the influx of refugees from Honduras. The US turned a blind eye to the military coup of June 28, 2009 which overthrew the democratically elected government. After a brief suspension of aid, the Obama administration devoted its full diplomatic weight to return Honduras, under its coup-spawned government, to the OAS and UN despite opposition from most countries in Latin America. US Ambassador Lisa Kubiske was quick to recognize current defacto President Juan Orlando Hernandez’ election last November while credible complaints of massive fraud were still coming in. The Obama Administration has spent millions of dollars since the coup to equip and train Honduras’ murderous and corrupt military and police with the result that massacres of small farmers and political assassinations of reporters, Libre Party activists, human rights defenders, indigenous, labor, women, campesinos and LGBT activists have skyrocketed.

We are especially saddened and incensed that President Obama’s $3.7 billion request to Congress for emergency funds to deal with the refugee crisis contains almost $2 billion for more incarceration and removal of minors and refugees, without regard to their due process rights or the root causes of their desperate flight from their home countries. Indeed, in order to speed their deportation, he has called for suspending a 2008 law which requires minors to be transferred out of detention to centers where they can locate family members to care for them.”

This statement documents well the criminal guilt of the Obama-led U.S. Empire in this humanitarian crisis. However, the statement does not go far enough. It does not point out that the callous disregard of our Central American children is a systemic problem. To solve the problem we need to begin with the defense of our children in this crisis, as HSN indicates. But this is only the beginning of a long and difficult and necessary path of revolution in Latin America and desde las entranas, in the belly of the beast. The Central American refugee children cry out for the dismantling and destruction of the U.S. Empire and for a socialist world.

FIGHT THE U.S. EMPIRE!!
SAVE THE CHILDREN!!
On July 8th, the Israeli settler regime began a new military offensive against Gaza. Since then, close to two thousand Palestinians have been killed, while only 68 Israelis have perished. While the Israeli claim to self-defense is a big lie, what has been clear is that the Netanyahu government has been functioning as a rogue state. From the beginning, despite protestations from even the United Nations and other pro-imperialist forces that it is Israel that has been violating international law and that Israel should immediately cease its aggression, the Zionist state has issued one statement after another declaring that it would not listen to any request from any source to stop its bombing attacks and invasion of Gaza until it had destroyed the Palestinian infrastructure of Hamas.

Such rogue statements if made by Saddam Hussein or Moamar Quadafi or Bashar Assad or almost any other political leader other than the Egyptian military rulers or the Gulf Council Royals would have been used by George W. Bush or Barack Obama on behalf of the U.S. Empire to create an international coalition with pressure to invade their sovereign country and overthrow and murder such an illegitimate force. But since it is the Israeli settler regime, Obama and U.S. imperialism have not only been silent about Netanyahu’s rogue statements and behavior but they have quietly supplied and resupplied the Israeli settler state after it exhausted the munitions used to pummel and destroy the Palestinian enclave in Gaza.

Hamas won the parliamentary election in 2006, an election that even former U.S. President Jimmy Carter declared was “free and fair.” Since then, the US and Israel have waged economic and military war on Hamas and Gaza. With the invaluable help of the Egyptian military rulers, borders were sealed and Gaza and its people have been blockaded for eight years. In this period, Israel has waged three wars on Gaza: in 2008, 2012 and now in 2014. The one-sided character of the current war is underscored by the assignment by the U.S. Empire of the Egyptian military rulers, Mubarak’s minions, *with the blood of their own people on their hands*, to broker “a Gaza peace settlement” between the Palestinians and Israel.

It seems, however, that this one-sided war in Gaza in 2014 has more significance for U.S. imperialism than for Israeli Zionism. For one thing, Obama has not made even the slightest gesture to slow Israel down, let alone verbally “condemn” Israeli aggression. Secondly, U.S. imperialism has openly resupplied and rearmed Israel during this conflict so it could continue to attack Gaza. And third, U.S. imperialism has used the smokescreen of Israel’s naked aggression against Gaza to once again assert its presence forcefully in the Middle East.

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*The Mysterious Conduct of the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS)*

The Sunni super-terrorist group ISIS seized a large swath of Iraq in June. The timing could not have been better for U.S. imperialism which was trying to find a way to force out Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki. Prime Minister al-Maliki had sought to distance himself from the U.S. imperialist war machine that had devastated Iraq and from the demands of the U.S. oil cartels for a serious piece of the oil action. He was also seen as too close to the Iranian regime, the biggest challenger to the U.S. Empire in the Middle East and the biggest threat to the Empire’s major allies of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Council states. In the name of helping the Iraqi government to defeat ISIS, the U.S. military has gone back into military action in Iraq with a vengeance. Almost immediately, al-Maliki “agreed to step down” and be replaced by the more compliant Haider al-Abadi.

Then on August 18th, Iraqi and Kurdish forces, backed by U.S. airstrikes retook the Mosul Dam in northern Iraq from ISIS. After this victory, there might have been a danger of complacency and the rise of popular opposition to U.S. imperialism continuing to stay in Iraq to fight ISIS. So, with impeccable timing, on August 19th, someone covered head to toe but identified as an ISIS terrorist on their self-made video, beheaded Jim Foley, a U.S. freelance journalist captured in Syria nearly two years ago. None of the U.S. imperialist thinkers could think of a reason that made any sense for ISIS to carry out the barbaric beheading. The atrocity was suitably played up by President Obama. The result, as expected, was a real bump once again in U.S. popular support for military intervention in the Middle East, “against ISIS.” Now the U.S. military can remain a strong presence in Northern Iraq, including in the Kurdish semi-autonomous region, especially around the oil-rich Kirkuk area.

But ISIS has great significance for the ability of U.S. imperialism to finally invade Syria as well. One reflection of this fact: Oron Dorell, writing in *USA Today*, reports that, “Nearly three weeks after the U.S. began targeted airstrikes in Iraq against the Islamic State
(War on Gaza, Iraq, and Syria continued) Obama is weighing whether to move those tactics into Syria, but insists there will be no coordinating with President Bashar Assad …” (p. A6, USA Today, 8-29-14) Meanwhile, “Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Moallem said Syria was willing to participate in a coalition with the U.S. and Britain, but any violation of Syrian airspace would be considered ‘an act of aggression.’” (ibid.)

Indeed, the alleged threat of ISIS makes all kinds of alliances in the Middle East “possible.” According to Dorell, “In the past eighteen months, Islamic State militants have battled Assad’s military, Hezbollah, Iran’s Revolutionary Guards Corps, the al-Qaeda affiliate Jabhat al Nusra, Iraqi security forces and the Kurdish peshmerga …”

The alleged presence and existence of ISIS is of great benefit to both U.S. imperialism and the Israeli settler state both of which are once again thoroughly exposed and widely hated in the Middle East at this time. The ISIS factor puts everything up for grabs.

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In light of the above, the revelation by former U.S. National Security Agency (NSA) employee Edward Snowden that British and U.S. intelligence worked with Mossad, the Israeli intelligence service, to create ISIS is not that surprising. “Leaks revealed that ISIS leader and cleric Abu Bakr al Baghdadi took intensive training for a whole year in the hands of Mossad, besides courses in theology and the art of speech.” (7-16-14, Gulf Daily News)

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CONCLUSION: Finally, U.S. imperialism has been able to dominate the Middle East for decades because it relies not just on Israel but on the reactionary Arab regimes led by Saudi Arabia and Egypt. This is the reason why year in and year out Israel has been the number #1 recipient of U.S. aid and Egypt #2. The U.S. Empire constantly rides one horse and then the other while both Israel and the reactionary Arab regimes collaborate with each other, too, under U.S. auspices.

The proletarian revolutionaries of all countries must assist the Arab masses to:

**DRIVE US IMPERIALISM OUT OF THE MIDDLE EAST!**

**REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION OF LABOR (ROL), USA** is a revolutionary working class organization that fights for working class power and the elimination of all human exploitation. *Ray O’Light Newsletter* is the regular publication of ROL, USA. We believe, with comrade Lenin, that the working class “… needs the truth and there is nothing so harmful to its cause as plausible, respectable petty bourgeois lies.” In the spirit of Karl Marx who taught that “our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action,” we welcome your comments.

Comradely, *Ray Light*, Editor

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**“The great appear great to us Only because we are on our knees: Let us rise.”**
— Camille Desmoulins

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Still stumped?! See answer below to front page mystery quotation.