

Letters demand the immediate release of Gary Tyler

10 March 2007

Below we print letters of protest to Louisiana's Governor Kathleen Blanco regarding the case of Gary Tyler, the victim of a 1974 frame-up.

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As a teacher of history who is old enough to remember the beginnings of the travesty, I think it is clear that justice demands Gary Tyler be freed immediately. Arrested in 1974 at the age of 16 from a school bus surrounded by a riotous KKK-inspired crowd, with a gun only found later on a second search and that had no fingerprints and was stolen from a police firing range, his trial was clearly a frame-up. It is time to acknowledge the outrageous truth.

That he is still incarcerated is only another display of how this society continues its bitter history of racism. Gary Tyler's case remains what it always has been, an attack not just on an innocent African-American youth and man but on the rights of the entire working class, for which racist intimidation is used to try break its ability to carry out a united struggle. If the Democrats as well as the Republicans must rule with such suppressive means, it only demonstrates their distance from and fear of the people they claim to serve. The mass of people are learning to see through such undemocratic practices. The only politically righteous action in this case is to grant immediate freedom to Gary Tyler.

Sincerely,

HL

8 March 2007

For 33 years, Gary Tyler has been imprisoned by the state of Louisiana for a crime he did not commit. His arrest and conviction took place in the midst of extreme racial antagonisms and violence after desegregation.

As the latest in a long line of Democratic governors who have turned a blind eye to Tyler's fate, you are no doubt well aware of the multiple recommendations for his release issued by the Louisiana Board of Pardons. The historical facts show that his arrest was a shameful frame-up, independent investigations have demonstrated that his trial was unfair, and the courts have insisted that his sentence was unjustified.

All of this has been ignored by Louisiana Governors and Democratic Party leaders, who would rather ingratiate themselves with the well-heeled racist element in the South than take the first step to rectify such a glaring injustice. Likewise, decades worth of appeals by Tyler's family, human rights organizations, and concerned people all over the country and the world have fallen on deaf ears.

Rather than make another appeal to the human heart that beats in your chest, I will make a demand to the politician's spine that determines your position: Release Gary Tyler, and compensate this victim of white supremacism—or you, like your Democratic predecessors and colleagues, will be revealed as a vital benefactor of white supremacists in the state.

Your handling of Hurricane Katrina shocked the world, Governor Blanco. The poor black population was vilified, dehumanized, and dispersed. Tens of thousands have had no assistance from the state to rebuild or relocate even a year and a half later.

This is an election year for the Gulf Coast. Both you and your Republican counterpart in Mississippi, Haley Barbour, are up for election in November. The world will be watching to see how you treat your population. Barbour has made his racism no secret; the Gulf Coast was “licked clean by the hand of God” for big business after Katrina. If you cannot find it within yourself to serve the people and uphold justice, perhaps the state houses will be “licked clean” by the sensibilities and dignity of the people.

The abandonment of the minority working class neighborhoods, of the institutionalized populations in nursing homes, hospitals, and jails of New Orleans to Katrina provoked international outrage, grief, and horror. Your response in the aftermath was to lock down the city with military and police forces, with your order to “shoot to kill.” In not a few cases, the recipients of your authorization were innocent civilians.

One might conclude that your attitude toward these decent and forlorn people is the same as the one shaping your policy toward Gary Tyler and his long-suffering family. The injustice they have suffered is more than a personal tragedy.

It is a political outrage, which is accompanied by political consequences.

I urge you to carefully reconsider the ramifications of Gary Tyler's case as a remnant of the segregation era and a symbol of the inhumane and unjust government that persists. This is your responsibility because both the evidence and the power rest on your desk. If you do not immediately correct this error—crime—in the history of Louisiana politics, you willfully perpetuate it. Free Gary Tyler and redress the sufferings of his family for the lost time, pain, and stigma of his imprisonment.

Sincerely,

NS

I believe that Gary Tyler was convicted in 1975 not by facts but by racism, vengeance and manufactured evidence. The facts surrounding his trial and conviction speak for themselves.

He was denied a fair trial 32 years ago, and imprisoned for life for a crime he did not commit. I call on you to free Gary Tyler now.

CB

7 March 2007

I believe that the trial and conviction of Gary Tyler was biased and unconstitutional and should be reviewed. And at the very least he should be pardoned and compensated for the years he has served in prison wrongfully charged. Let him go.

SC

Mercer, Pennsylvania, USA

8 March 2007

As I sit reading your column after also seeing the Amy Goodman interview, I wonder how many people like me regret not following up the 1976 plea for pardon, clemency or retrial of Gary Tyler. My outrage for the injustice of the trial and verdict when I heard of Gary's sentence (and innocence!), was assuaged because of the media interest and the sympathy pouring forth. I assured myself that interested professionals, who were in a position to help reverse his sentence and right such a terrible wrong, would come forward with offers of help and professional aid.

To now find that little aid or support was ongoing, and that there is no hope for Gary due to various "Catch 22" clauses that nullify all legal options on flimsy technicalities, e.g., as a new trial not being granted "due to the incompetence of Williams (his lawyer), who could not remember why he did not object to the judge's biased rulings." Huh?

Why isn't someone representing Gary's family in a civil suit against the state for "stealing the life of their son and brother" and demanding compensation? Surely to sue for millions with a high-profile attorney would certainly get media attention and show the Louisiana state government in

its true colors of seditious quackery.

I should think even Democrats peripherally involved in the case would want to distance themselves and their progeny from the possible consequences of retribution by granting Gary a new trial, amnesty and release, a pardon, or all of the above.

I should think not even Democrats in power in Louisiana can withstand accountability when citizens are demanding it on all fronts.

CC

S. Lake Tahoe, California, USA

8 March 2007

I am writing you about the miscarriage of justice that took place in 1974 in the state that you govern. The case of Gary Tyler is not a convoluted affair; it is a completely clear and undisputable fact that he was innocent. It is well-known that he did not kill Timothy Weber. Gary Tyler was the victim of a political frame-up. He was tried in an unfair and deeply racist court of law by an all-white jury.

The political process that landed Mr. Tyler in jail for life was categorized by a strong presence of the Ku Klux Klan and White Citizens Council (a group that Judge Ruche Marino, who presided over the case, was a member of), coerced testimony, planted evidence, judicial misconduct, and an incompetent defense—based on the fact that he has not hitherto been set free, I'm convinced that the racist legal system in Louisiana has not changed one bit. There is absolutely no legal basis for keeping him in prison.

Despite the glaringly obvious fact that Gary Tyler committed no crime, he has been imprisoned for 33 years. To allow Mr. Tyler, who is indeed not guilty, to sit and rot in prison is to acquiesce to racism and backwardness. In the eyes of millions, you will forever be known as a fool who had the power to free an innocent human being from the shackles of institutionalized racism, yet did nothing.

You are faced with a decision to rectify this ruthless act of racism. I, along with thousands of others, demand that you free Gary Tyler!

Sincerely,

PG

9 March 2007

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>