

More letters on the jailing of Judith Miller

15 July 2005

On July 7, the World Socialist Web Site published an article opposing the jailing of New York Times reporter Judith Miller, ordered by Federal District Judge Thomas Hogan after she refused to answer questions posed by special prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald. (See “Jailing of Times reporter: an attack on press freedom and democratic rights”). We received many letters critical of our position, to which Patrick Martin wrote a reply (See “Why the WSWs opposes the jailing of Judith Miller”). The following letters were received in response to Martin’s reply.

Miller was jailed July 7 after maintaining that to testify would violate a promise of confidentiality given to a source. Fitzgerald sought to question Miller in the course of his probe of the Valerie Plame case, in which a high-level Bush administration official leaked information about Plame’s role as an undercover CIA agent, in apparent retaliation against her husband, Joseph C. Wilson, a former US ambassador who was a public critic of the White House on the Iraq war.

I support your position on the jailing of Judith Miller as expressed in this article and the previous one. I appreciate the intellectual consistency and effort involved in taking and explaining this position. As evidenced by some of the letters, it is easy and tempting to lose sight of what is really important when the victims are people like Miller and Rove.

JB

Scotch Plains, New Jersey

11 July 2005

Thanks for your reasoned analysis and position on the Judith Miller case. As soon as I heard of the pressure put on the members of the press to reveal their sources, I concluded what you did. Though I am glad Rove has been incidentally exposed (which, one suspects, will lead exactly nowhere), I condemn the attacks on the free press (which are ongoing in the US).

The thing that the WSWs does right consistently is put aside convenient opportunities to use the logic of

the fascists. You stick to principles, not camps. Socialism, for me, is ultimately about humanism. It makes no difference, for instance, that the PRC or former USSR is/was nominally “left.” They are/were totalitarian societies that betrayed Marxist ideals, and you have recognized this in print on many occasions.

If only the US lived up to its principles, setting policies in accordance with claimed values like “democracy” and “freedom”! These referents, if they were ever meaningful, serve now only as tools of demagoguery. Orwellian doublespeak!

We are radicals—not extremists and totalitarians. The means are at least as important as the ends. Never let the readership forget it!

BB

Oklahoma

13 July 2005

Thanks for printing the letters of your readers regarding the imprisoning of Judith Miller. I have to admit to feeling more sympathy for their views than the rather more convoluted reasoning you’ve used to come to the defense of Judith Miller.

While I believe you to be correct in your interpretation of the Intelligence Identities Protection Act of 1982, and Victoria Toensing, one of the authors of the act agrees with you, I think that you are taking your eye off the ball.

In Germany in the 1930s, the National Socialists never ever acted illegally. What they did instead was to turn the law inside out and make it a mockery of decency. This is what the Bush Crime Family is doing with great finesse today, and I’m afraid that they’ve been able to suck you into their perverse game.

While you suggest that Karl Rove is a dispensable cog in the reactionary machinery, I would suggest that you may care to familiarize yourself more with why he’s the first political hatchet man to ever have an office adjacent to the president’s, while other political party operatives have never even been in the building.

It's because of Rove's efficacy. He is not a mere cog; he is the most superb Machiavellian operative of our era. Taking him down a peg is more of a moral issue and a huge strategic issue for the forces of democracy rather than a mere legalistic challenge to the status quo.

Trying to fight on behalf of a government operative like Judith Miller on the legal points misses the point entirely. We need to power Rove into a prison cell. I don't care how. Let Judy Miller have her damn book deal, even though she's just doing what she's doing right now to mock us and to mock democracy.

My advice? You really need to start to think about how to go for the jugular, instead of juggling legal loopholes that leave the Left looking limp.

RD

11 July 2005

I did not want to agree with your response, since I am appalled at Miller's and Karl Rove's obvious manipulation of the media. However, ethically you are correct. I wish you weren't, since fighting dirty seems to be the winning strategy. Then again, when ends justify tactics, we become the enemy.

MB

Los Angeles

11 July 2005

I read your rebuttal but I am still not convinced.

JF

Mexico

11 July 2005

Originally I had questioned your motives in defending Judith Miller. I'm certain you didn't feel you had to preface your article with the reasoning behind your defense, however this seems to have been quite the hot button issue.

It did cause much confusion that you would defend Judith in this case, knowing not only the stance you had on her prior writings but also the belief you held regarding the Valarie Plame leak being a smear campaign. This is what made your article hard to swallow.

That being said, the justification provided in this reply was a perfect explanation of your position. As this case involved journalistic freedom, one could easily have imagined your initial defense of Judith to simply be reactionary defense of journalism in general.

It is wonderful to see the objectivity with which all

the folks at the WWSWS try to approach any situation. If one were to take what you say every day in the context of what you have said in the recent past, bias could be drawn into every word you write, as was the case here. This can only happen when one forgets the stated goals and beliefs of the socialist cause, which I believe the readers are guilty of here.

When viewing events such as this with a desire to see justice be done upon a member of the Bush administration, the view of the whole picture is lost. After having read your reply and reviewed the situation, it is plain to see the message of socialist democracy was truly lost in the reactionary view. Thanks for the insight.

JH

11 July 2005

Thank you for explaining your position on Judith Miller's incarceration. I had been unaware of the story behind the Intelligence Identities Act, and I appreciated the moral clarity of this piece. Initially, I had conflicting feelings on this issue. Like a lot of your readers, I am frustrated with the criminality of the Bush administration and would like to see cracks form in its facade. But your piece helped me to see that we are trading press freedom for her jailing and that it is a most unfair exchange.

You remind us of other recent examples of suppression such as the *Newsweek* Koran story. Seems like the right-wing complaints about stories like this bring the contents far more publicity than they otherwise would have received; I sometimes wonder why the complainers bother. That said, the mainstream media censor themselves very well already. If I were to see the *New York Times* publish a 9/11 story as thorough as any of your own, I would fall over in shock.

Thanks again. I feel as if you folks at the WWSWS are my teachers.

AEC

Brooklyn, New York

13 July 2005



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