Terry Hicks, father of former Guantánamo prisoner, speaks with WSWS

Richard Phillips
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Terry Hicks, the father of former Guantánamo Bay prisoner David Hicks, spoke with the World Socialist Web Site*yesterday. His son, who was released from South Australia's Yatala prison on December 29, has been barred from speaking to the media until the end of March. Terry commented on the political vendetta now being conducted by the Murdoch press and the imposition of a 12-month control order by the Rudd Labor government.*

Richard Phillips: How is David coping with the media campaign?

Terry Hicks: Obviously he's a bit nervous about all the media attention but he's out of jail at last and that's good. Of course, the pressure is going to be on us for a while, especially here in our home state when you have statements from the South Australian premier and the ex-foreign minister Alexander Downer. Their comments are absolutely ridiculous.

Downer even claimed when the *Age* newspaper found me and David in the park together the other day, and took a photo, that we'd been paid for it. Nothing like that happened, but this is the mentality of people like Downer.

RP: Were you surprised when the Rudd Labor government backed the control order on David?

TH: I wasn't surprised but I was certainly disappointed. All the so-called evidence in the court hearing was so old and nothing was proven about these allegations. Yet they still decided to impose the curfews and all the other restrictions. This is going to make it hard for David, but he has said that he would wear that—to adhere to it—which is what he wants to do.

RP: Little has changed with the Rudd Labor government.

TH: That's right. I thought [Attorney-General] McClelland would have been more open-minded. The whole thing felt like a done deal to me, as if the Labor government wanted to have that show of power. It's surprising how even when there is a change of government, the paper work just goes from one desk to another.

RP: Could you comment on the media demands for an apology?

TH: It's absolutely silly. David's statement covered everything. He thanked the supporters and all that sort of thing. I just can't work out what this apology is supposed to be for. And why are they are using dirty underhanded tactics and bringing in the four Australian soldiers killed in Afghanistan? What's this got to do with David? He's not responsible for this. He had nothing to do with sending Australian troops to Afghanistan in the first place, and wasn't there when they were killed.

Rann is also trying to drag in the twin brother of the guy from Adelaide who died in the Twin Towers. What's this got to do with anything? The people involved in 9/11 weren't even from Afghanistan, but from Saudi Arabia, which the US has been supporting for years.

RP: David explained in his first interview with the AFP in Guantánamo that he disagreed with 9/11 and radical Islam.

TH: Yes. They know all this but push it to one side and bring in whatever suits their purposes. I think the media campaign is now starting to back-fire on them though. People are starting to get very angry about it.

The *Advertiser* discovered where David was the other night and did some door-knocking to try and stir the pot against him. It didn't work. Everyone said they had no problems with it and one of the guys said he was hanging out for David to come over for a barbie [barbecue]. The *Advertiser* has crucified David, but

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when you read the letters to the paper it's a different story.

This business of an apology is pathetic and it's not going to happen because David has nothing to apologise for.

Maybe we should demand that John Howard stands up and apologises for sending four Australian troops to their death in Afghanistan. Howard should also apologise for refusing to defend David's rights as a citizen.

RP: The campaign is obviously designed to discredit David and anything he says about what happened to him in Afghanistan and Guantánamo.

TH: Yes, and the media has completely contravened David's statement. He asked to be left alone and they've ignored him. The Rann government and Downer just seem to want to push it. I don't know why they want to keep doing this. It's just seems to be to stir the pot.

Somebody said in the media that this issue won't go away because Terry Hicks keeps talking about it. But what about the Murdoch media and Rann and Downer and all the others throwing in their two bobs worth?

People should realise that five and a half years in Guantánamo is like ten years in any other prison. This is what David has had to deal with and yet they won't leave him alone. David did it pretty hard, but the government's control order still makes it tough for him. The best thing they all should do is back off.

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