

Letters on Roman Polanski

12 October 2009

On "The sordid coalition pursuing filmmaker Roman Polanski"

Far-right elements decry bank bailouts that privatise public monies as "socialism". These same elements, hand in hand with their new liberal feminist(!) allies, now declare the travesty that is the arrest of an elderly man who never received a fair trial—not even a convincing charade—as "justice being served". Truly, we are living in a world turned upside-down. Deliberate populist muddling on the part of the media only adds to the lunacy. I have little doubt at this point that Polanski will be extradited and imprisoned. The furor will die down eventually, but what of the seemingly strange bedfellows made by this sordid affair? It will be exploited as a pretext for further redrawing some lines that, for a ruling class anticipating a coming intensification of class struggle, need to be redrawn, and I get the feeling that here we're seeing a romance that will last.

Loren P
North Carolina, USA
8 October 2009

The howling for Polanski's blood has infected many people who should know better. Even so-called socialists have taken advantage of the opportunity to foam at the mouth and keep on repeating "Rape! Sodomy! Child abuse!" One would think that the strictures against shouting "Fire!" in a crowded theatre would prevail in such a situation as this, but apparently not.

The hidden puritanism of many so-called "liberals" is showing its twisted face. I and some friends of mine have been attacked on Facebook for posting the articles from the WWS on the Polanski story in language that was out of all proportion to what the articles actually said. We have been accused of condoning rape and child molestation in the most hysterical language. Not one of these attackers has paid any attention to the facts of the matter and the misconduct of the judge in the original case. Not one of them has bothered to consider what sort of elements they are supporting by these attacks. And not one of them has taken any notice of the wishes of the woman in the case, who has filed a motion to have the case dismissed. The shrieking "feminists" seem to have no concerns about the woman's present feelings in the matter. Instead of supporting her, they are making her life a living hell. (Where is their outrage about the rape and murder of women in Iraq and Afghanistan? What about the slaughtered women in Gaza?)

All of these elements in fact sicken me. Yes, Polanski has admitted that he had sex with the young woman. He has never denied it. What do these people want? To see him drawn and quartered in the marketplace? Could it be that their vicious attacks on Polanski and their depiction of him as a monster reflect their confused responses to their own sexual fantasies?

Most important, though, as you rightly state in your article is the newfound bond between the social liberals and feminists on the one hand and the right-wing "law and order" creatures on the other, working hand in hand to distract the population from the crimes of real rapists, torturers and murderers and setting up Polanski as a straw man, representing the "elite", to be knocked down and trampled, while the likes of Cheney, Rumsfeld, Bush and the rest get the real "get out of jail free" card.

Carolyn

California, USA
8 October 2009

The media spectacle around Roman Polanski is disgraceful, but also depressingly predictable. At a time when the US-led coalition in Afghanistan is facing its heaviest losses and formulating plans to bludgeon the Afghani population into submission, right wing reptiles, newspaper editors and feminists march around in high dudgeon, fulminating about Polanski. The hypocrisy is sickening.

Eric G
South Africa
8 October 2009

The British Socialist Workers' Party star blogger "Lenin"/Richard Seymour linked to the Salon piece in response to a request for a position on Polanski, and received no criticism for it. The *Guardian* had a blog on this which attracted a deluge of "burn him, castrate him...." type letters from gung-ho feminists. I'm pleased that you at least show some real "moral fibre" in resisting this appalling witch hunt, and astutely identifying the "tough on rape, tough on the causes..." type demagoguery which populist left-liberals succumb to so readily. But can you seriously suggest that the left-liberals are anti-semitic? Uncritically, the opposite to the point of inverted racism, I feel. And could you deny that the Hollywood "casting-couch" culture, of which I see this as an example, is at least not admirable.

Jim L
London, UK
8 October 2009

Dear Dave,

It is exactly for clear perspectives like this that I read the WWS. The Polanski extradition issue is causing no small amount of disorientation; right-wing demagoguery has been having a profound effect on "progressives." I pointed out to one friend that jumping on the anti-Polanski bandwagon was to lend support to the most reactionary elements in society, and he said that was why it was important for the Left to say that it was wrong—much like proposing that the best defense for a besieged city is to open the gates and surrender. And it is the supposed liberals who are the most crass in how they justify ignoring the wishes of the victim. We've reached the point, I think, where the reactionary pundits need only lift a finger and liberalism falls all over itself in the rush to demonstrate how nonthreatening it is. I'm glad there is an alternative. My thanks for an excellent article.

Steven Brust
Texas, USA
8 October 2009

One factor that has consistently been brought up in the WWS's articles on Roman Polanski that needs to be addressed: his artistic achievements are not a mitigating factor. This is an area that does extend into apologetics for his crime, as it implies either that his importance as an artist requires him to be out of prison and creating, or that his artworks, in

reflecting a response to this and other tragedies in his life, constitute a reparation in some way. Either of these imply extralegal status for artists, under various circumstances.

In a society organized along more rational lines, the crime to which he pled guilty would likely be treated differently (age of consent laws suffer from the paradox that the ability to give intelligently informed consent can only come after years of being legally able to give informed consent), but he did not have consent at all, and it is a testimony to how human beings can work together more humanely than fixed criminal laws that he achieved his plea bargain at all. Polanski was right to flee, and was right to fear that the corrupt, moralizing judge would not be overturned by a system strengthened by further moralizing, but his failure to appear in court is itself an additional crime.

The US legal system will likely use this as a backdoor way to prosecute him for the “moral abuses” thrown out by his original plea bargain. All in all, this is a sordid business where both those calling for Polanski’s head and his defenders operate on bogus legal and moral grounds. This case stands as an example of the complications of life exceeding the needs of inflexible law, or as Aristotle put it, “Law is mind without reason.”

Thomas H
8 October 2009

Just a couple of things:

1) There is a statute of limitations in most civil and criminal cases. With the exception of outright murder, which has no limitation, most cases, such as Mr. Polanski’s, cannot be prosecuted usually after five to seven years, unless there is new evidence that could warrant such a prosecution.

2) We have something called double jeopardy, where a defendant cannot be convicted for the same crime twice. This is guaranteed in the constitution. So to put Mr. Polanski in prison for a crime that he has already been convicted of and served a jail sentence for is against the law and in violation of a constitutional protection that everyone, including foreign nationals, have as a right.

It is interesting that the so-called powers that be want to throw Mr. Polanski in prison this time without the benefit of a trial, violating due process, also a right guaranteed in the constitution.

This is nothing more than modern day lynch mob mentality, going back to the days when a young black man would be publicly hanged for so much as looking at a white woman. And its also a truly sad day when feminists, with all of the far more pressing issues out there, have chosen yet again to jump in bed with the right wingers. Many of them made the error with the anti-pornography movement, solely to the benefit of the right. These so-called feminists haven't learned their lesson, and are now getting ready to finally lay to rest the last remnants of that legacy.

I’m glad that some of us are able to look past the smoke and mirrors being thrown at us during this second Great Depression, and see that the swamis, snake oils salesmen, and robber barons of yesteryear have not gone away. Thank you for continuing to be the voice of reason and logic.

CMC
Glasgow, Scotland
8 October 2009

I did not know child abuse was progressive.

I did not know having enough power and money to escape from justice was socialist.

I did not know Roman Polanski is a working-class victim of the capitalist system.

This time, the US judicial system is going to judge a White wealthy man, not a poor Black from a ghetto. This is quite fair. Furthermore, Polanski is not exactly Captain Dreyfus: he recognised he had abused a 13-year-old girl after giving her drugs and alcohol. Whatever the inequities of the US justice are, he is not exactly a scapegoat or an

innocent.

Just think how many children are abused by wealthy and powerful guys who will be not punished.

Chamil
8 October 2009

Another timely and welcome article, David. I would argue, however, that the editorial you quote by Christopher Caldwell is more disturbing than ludicrous, especially in the light of other individuals you cite and remarks you make yourself.

Whether being denounced as the equivalent of a persecutor of the Jews or turned into the object of anti-Semitic smears, it is clear that Polanski being a Jew is central to certain hysterical attacks on him. If Le Pen gloats sadistically on Polanski being extradited to rot in prison, this is the manifestation of a diseased unconscious where Le Pen is really giving expression to a fantasy where Polanski is herded into a cattle wagon and sent off to Auschwitz. Extradition stands-in for deportation (think of the treatment of many immigrants...).

It is in this most sinister context that your references to Hearst and Chaplin are particularly pertinent. The latter was persecuted from the 1920s on for his penchant for girls far younger than himself, and the ultra-reactionary forces at the origin of this not only obtained satisfaction in the 1950s when HUAC had him declared persona non grata in the US. They were also the same people who supported fascism throughout the 1930s—Hearst was an admirer of Hitler—and gave vent openly to anti-Semitic declarations about Hollywood. These were not limited to pro-Nazi white supremacists in the South.

Today, fascist Christian fundamentalists opposed to abortion support racist and imperialist wars against the infidel and await the Apocalypse in the Middle East where Jews will become converted and the Arabs annihilated. They also call for the murder of people like the late Dr. Tiller. Their support for the murderous policies of Bush and Co. have created a climate of fear and despair in the US where fathers, bereft of support and understanding, go berserk, kill the very families the Christian Right claims to support, then shoot down innocent strangers before killing themselves.

It is not a question of some simple cause/effect syndrome but of stressing the ideological and psychological parallels between the unholy alliance against Polanski today (with its necessary “liberal” cohort, as during the heyday of anti-Communist witch-hunting) and the obscene values defended by similar right-wing forces between the wars.

Best,
Reynold H
Paris, France
8 October 2009

Another outstanding analysis by Mr. Walsh. This is a very depressing and frightening development that follows, as Mr. Walsh points out, a very familiar and predictable historical formula. The WSWS deserves credit for not capitulating to the current hysteria being manufactured by right-wing media forces and their “liberal” collaborators.

Max A
New York, USA
8 October 2009

Keep hammering. Even my wife, who is far from insensitive on the topic of rape, last night declared this the largest farce she’s seen come from the so-called feminist community for a long time. “With all the things there are happening to women in this country who can’t afford to feed their children, or maintain a basic maintenance schedule to take care of things like type 2 diabetes, this is what these fools want to scream about?”

It really is disgusting, and grows more so by the day.

Michael H
Washington, USA
8 October 2009

Excellent article. But let me point out that mainstream “feminists” sold out back in the 80s (*MS* magazine), leaving authentic feminists exposed, vulnerable and in hiding and/or rethinking their strategy.

Any “feminist” that could justify fascist US tactics against Polanski is not a feminist at all, but a collaborator.

True feminists have allied themselves with socialists and anarchists to bring down the patriarchal, neoliberal, fascist new world order.

R

8 October 2009

The series on Polanski has been brilliant. Keep it up. While the rest of the world cries for his blood, it is good to see one source calling BS on the whole affair. It very much is a “populist” bone being thrown to the plebes at a time of intense social misery.

Nick P

8 October 2009

Hi David Walsh

I'd just like to say:

To those who try to give a “left”, “egalitarian”, “populist” face to an openly right-wing petty-bourgeois movement of upper-middle class puritanical witch hunt of Polanski for “justice” one only need repeat Lenin’s words in *What is to be Done?* against these deluded people who allow themselves to be swept up by a right-wing bourgeois broom:

“Working-class consciousness cannot be genuine political consciousness unless the workers are trained to respond to all cases of tyranny, oppression, violence, and abuse, no matter what class is affected—unless they are trained, moreover, to respond from a Social-Democratic point of view and no other. The consciousness of the working masses cannot be genuine class-consciousness, unless the workers learn, from concrete, and above all from topical, political facts and events to observe every other social class in all the manifestations of its intellectual, ethical, and political life; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of all aspects of the life and activity of all classes, strata, and groups of the population. Those who concentrate the attention, observation, and consciousness of the working class exclusively, or even mainly, upon itself alone are not Social-Democrats; for the self-knowledge of the working class is indissolubly bound up, not solely with a fully clear theoretical understanding—or rather, not so much with the theoretical, as with the practical, understanding—of the relationships between all the various classes of modern society, acquired through the experience of political life.”

Regards,

Chris R

New Zealand

8 October 2009

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Well said, David Walsh. Thank you for an expert history lesson and superb perspective. The right wing has at its disposal the financial and propaganda arsenal that successfully kept America under its iron glove for most of last century and this entire one. Today, the techniques and gambits of McCarthyism join techniques that proved effective from the Nixon period to the Karl Rove one. This is transparent to all but those caught and invested in the strangulating web of this country entering a period of chaos, inching toward military solutions to its problems with the world and in protracted self-destruction at home. The gestalt now developing is massive, powerfully deluding, and underwritten by those who will most benefit. If I were a Christian using Christian terms, I'd call

it demonic. If I were a Jew whose mother was exterminated by Nazis, I would call America a fascist state. While I don't believe the year 2009 is dissimilar in any respect to those previous periods impacted by right wing demagoguery that Mr. Walsh describes, it is dramatically dissimilar in every other respect. Much more is at stake than anyone outside threat to its resources, markets, financial acumen and reserve currency. Rather, everything is at stake! America is clearly a descending world power, financially bankrupt, potentially insolvent with neither economic nor social means to prevent a potential collapse from within. Of course, the emerging cohesion of Left and Right factions over the Polanski issue is no surprise to any who understand that both political poles in America are two sides of the same coin. This upcoming period when Americans finally face the truth about their critically weakened position in a world they believed they “owned” may become, in my opinion, fraught with the potential for large-scale global wars, and for civil violence and political “mob rule” at home. In my opinion, America is disintegrating from within and the rise of fascist rule (right wing and military alliance) is possible! The combined currents now are warning us of this.

Michael B

Maine, USA

8 October 2009

Dear David Walsh,

Usually I agree with just about everything you have to say, but this time I must disagree.

That the right-wing favors the extradition of Polanski is not a valid argument for your point of view. All people who favor extradition are not necessarily right-wingers or right-wing sympathizers. It is permitted, in fact not unusual, for the left and the right to agree on a particular point occasionally, as many do on this one (and also on the health-care issue).

Other of your arguments against extradition that fail to convince me are:

Polanski's mother was murdered by the Nazis.

Polanski is 76 years old.

Polanski has been free for 30 years.

Feminists have jumped on the anti-Polanski bandwagon.

He plea-bargained the original charge and was betrayed by a judge.

There is a movement of an entire layer of the upper-middle class to the right to persecute Polanski.

Those that want his extradition are stupid and easily duped.

Those that want his extradition want to accommodate themselves to the right and return to the respectable fold.

Right-wing forces, with the aid of feminists and liberals, are manufacturing a scapegoat...and there are unmistakably anti-Semitic undertones to this campaign.

The use of sex scandals has a long history in Hollywood and in America more generally as a means of settling political accounts and eliminating troublesome elements. (True, but how is this relevant to an actual rapist?)

Phony egalitarian and populist efforts also have a lamentable record in US history.

The power of the state would be enhanced. (Maybe so, but the power of the state to discourage rapists is a valid, and welcome, exercise of power.)

Those that want his extradition are politically confused and uneducated.

The abuses of the state—the extension of its powers—is far more dangerous to the public well-being than the actions of any individual. (True, but why should that fact excuse the criminal conduct of an individual?)

In short, I find your arguments extremely unconvincing.

To argue against the extradition of this rapist is—to use your own words—“a poor way to advance the class struggle.”

PL

8 October 2009

Dear WSWS,

I would like to make a couple of comments which would interest your readers. I guess everyone knows France does not extradite French citizens for crimes they may commit overseas. What's not mentioned by the corporate media is that French citizens can be tried in French courts for crimes committed overseas as if they had been committed in France itself. The French did offer to try Polanski in a French court, but the offer was turned down by the US. So it is peculiar that the Americans still continue to hunt down Polanski in the way they have at US taxpayer expense when a cheaper and less sensational option is available.

Also Polanski has just finished filming *The Ghost*, which is based on a Robert Harris novel about a ghost-writer commissioned to write the memoirs of a fictitious UK politician. I have never read the novel but understand it is an unflattering treatment of Tony Blair. The movie treatment would have been released sometime next year if Polanski hadn't been arrested. I know Tony Blair is front-runner for the position of European Union president and possibly the movie will be as damning of him as the novel is if it does get a release.

Jennifer H

8 October 2009

Your article covers important issues highlighted by this case—the similarity to the post-war anti-left purges; the political confusion of the mass of people, who are encouraged to focus attention on this and other 'sex scandals' (ex., David Letterman), the swine flu circus, and trivial gossip. The only thing I'm aware of that you may have left out in your description of this affair, is that the Swiss government may be acquiescing to Polanski's extradition now because they are intimidated by recent attacks on their banking system.

The description of the persecution suffered by some of the greatest creative artists during the anti-communist witch hunts of the 1940s and 50s can't be repeated too many times. If any period needs to be studied urgently, it's this one, along with the years that led up to the rise of fascism.

The reaction of "feminists" is especially deplorable. In the short clip I saw of her, Polanski's victim is clear that she forgave him long ago, agreed on a settlement, and does not support his current prosecution. Clearly he is not now being attacked for her sake, or for that of the untold numbers of genuinely oppressed women in this world. I wouldn't call the attack puritanical; really it's part of an attack on the thinking and feeling mind. We're constantly being assaulted by degrading and hurtful images of sex, that's the real puritanism....

I could go on about the capitalist version of feminism, but without going off on too much of a tangent, I would just like to bring up another recent example of diversion of attention from those who are really in need of support. Here, there has been a lot of coverage given to a small number of "sex trade workers" who are demanding the legalization of prostitution. Meanwhile, the reality of masses of women who are forced into selling their bodies out of economic necessity is virtually ignored—there is a stigma in being a "victim," as we are all supposed to believe. The women who are trafficked around the world are implicitly unworthy of respect (after all, they're not "empowered" or "strong" like our sex trade professionals supposedly are). In its insistence on a kind of self-empowerment that makes the individual solely responsible for everything that is happening in her world, capitalist feminism is in fact absolving men of responsibility for their own attitudes towards women and how they treat them! I think this is one of the great frauds of our time.

KV

British Columbia, Canada

9 October 2009

Thank you for being a voice of sanity on the Polanski circus. The only

other rational statement that I have come across is that of Samantha Geimer, the victim of the 1977 assault. If there are to be any further articles on this issue, I wonder if it would be worth including a link to her *Los Angeles Times* opinion piece from February 2003.

I think she demonstrates dignity, intelligence and human decency. Her words would, in any sane society, be the last word on this sad matter.

Elmar M

9 October 2009

On "International protests against arrest of film director Roman Polanski"

Let's not forget that the man drugged and raped a 13-year-old girl. I'll repeat: he drugged and had unlawful sex with a minor. He then fled the consequences. One wonders how much sympathy he would have gained from the chattering classes had he been an ordinary working person.

Jeff S

Australia

28 September 2009

On "Director Roman Polanski faces months in Swiss prison"

Why should a movie director be given more lenient treatment than that of any worker?

The lady in question asked that charges against him be dropped after they reached a financial settlement. A very important omission to your article!

Peter

30 September 2009

Someone should tell you that your defense of Polanski is destroying your credibility. After your third ridiculous support of Polanski, I have to remove you from my bookmarks. Your justification is ludicrous, as in "he didn't really know she was under age" and other flimsy absurd defenses Polanski uses. The main point is that this is not an important issue at all, not even a trivial issue unless you are a gossip rag, which you apparently have become. What is going on? Stupidity and foolishness from every corner—more like insanity. I have read you site for many years, so I thought someone should tell you. Spare the great artist Polanski because he has had a sad life—who cares—there are many significant injustices around. This is just crazy and stupid. You care about this guy—it's too much!

Lee R

1 October 2009

On "The New York Times throws Roman Polanski to the wolves"

Surely you people are not trying to vindicate in any way the perverted practices of this low life who has admitted publicly his penchant for under-age girls? How many other young people has he defiled in his quest for misguided sexual satisfaction, their lives having been damaged most probably irreparably. It doesn't matter a hoot if this disgusting act was carried out 30 years ago, just so long as justice is seen to be carried out as a warning to other people with a twisted sense of what is right or wrong, or as in this case I suspect, the arrogance that comes with extreme wealth that he believes he is above the law. I used to view your website on a regular basis because I thought you were fighting the good fight with your many and varied informative articles from all corners of the globe. So I truly hope I have misread your response to this news report from the *NYT* so that I can continue enjoying this site. But I am afraid I will have to wipe this link from my favorites list if indeed you are supporting this miscreant.

Neil

1 October 2009

Thank you for making the connection for me between Polanski's seizure and the Swiss desire to protect its banking interests. As you know,

there's no way one would find this out by reading the newspapers or through any other media. Your analysis makes it all clear.

Rob M

1 October 2009

I just wanted to say that I agree he should be prosecuted. She was only 13! Imagine if an average worker who didn't have the resources to relocate abroad had been caught doing that.

Peter

1 October 2009

What a piss poor argument against bringing someone like Polanski to justice. For someone running a "liberal" site, you are making a horrifically classist argument on behalf of a wealthy do nothing that got away with child rape. Just because the *NYT* can be hypocritical, you've completely avoided looking at whether or not Polanski deserves to be brought to trial. As a liberal myself, I'm continually amazed at other "progressive" sites that defend this man simply because some conservatives think he's in the wrong. You've lost all perspective and, in my opinion, credibility as well.

Jay

1 October 2009

I disagree with your defense of Roman Polanski. Yes, the U.S. has committed atrocities and the *New York Times* is hypocritical, but none of this justifies a rich Hollywood director raping a 13-year-old girl and then trying to use his wealth and fame to get away with it. If he weren't rich and famous, he would have already been in prison decades ago.

I see nothing socialist about sticking up for this man.

Jeremy G

1 October 2009

Yes, to the point indeed. The article however, would have carried more punch for our European readers, especially if the calculating Swiss had been examined more in detail under the glass along with a historic run down of the greedy reaction of the Swiss financial system, involving both it and the general smug "we can do no wrong" attitude of the populace in general.

Philip T

Germany

2 October 200

I commend your clarity on this issue. It's interesting to note that the groundswell of outrage was not initially orchestrated by the usual sources, but seemed to arise spontaneously on the comments boards across the Internet. Only later in the week did reactionary opportunists appear with op-eds designed to channel the rage and score cheap points. The public's sense of Old Testament wrath and vengeance is notable, to the point of dismissing the feelings of the woman at the center of the case in favor of exacting what is claimed as society's due. This might reflect that simmering below the surface of American life lies an uneasy recognition that huge crimes can be committed with impunity, and that powerful people see themselves as above the law. Unfortunately, the possibility can be foreseen that this case will play out on a highly symbolic level (if it's not there already), particularly if Polanski is returned to LA, and a desire that justice be served, honestly felt by many, will find its catharsis by this case alone. Alternately, the righteous absolutist theories of justice on display expose huge contradictions, as some of its proponents have also used very equivocal language on the issue of torture.

It's useful to compare this to another much-debated extradition case—that of Pinochet. Many voices came to Pinochet's defense using similar exculpatory arguments—so much time has passed, it was settled

long ago—without being hysterically accused of being "torture apologists", and I think the public debate established that there was a social good in pursuing justice. In this case, I can't see any social good being done, rather—particularly if Polanski is returned to the US and sentenced harshly—a social harm in that the symbolic catharsis will stand as a replacement for pursuing other current serious issues of crime and punishment.

JC

Vancouver, Canada

2 October 2009

On "Roman Polanski denied bail in Switzerland"

While I usually concur with most editorials on the WWS, I have to respectfully disagree with Hiram Lee's assessment on Roman Polanski's legal troubles.

I also see the case as a class struggle, but not between Roman Polanski and the powers that be. Instead, I view Polanski as the elite who can find a way to circumvent justice even after committing a quite heinous crime that he admitted to. Regardless of the prosecutor's and judge's grandstanding, Polanski had enough money, influence, and access to legal counsel that would have allowed him to stay out of jail and appeal, if the plea bargain had not gone as planned. Instead, he decided to flee his responsibilities. He portrays himself as a man who can sodomize a working class child and needn't be held accountable. Apparently, he views his victim as someone "beneath him" who doesn't deserve justice.

Instead of comparing his case to the mass murderers who are not prosecuted, it would be more egalitarian to compare Polanski with the countless men and women in our prisons who do not have the resources to combat the political maneuverings by overzealous judges and prosecutors who put them there. Many young men in my state (Texas), for example, are branded sex-offenders because they have consensual sex with their girlfriends who are just a few years younger than they are. These men have no recourse once they are labeled as rapists—the specter follows them to their homes, jobs, and schools.

That Polanski was able to circumvent his own legal problems and is now being held accountable does not show that he is in a class struggle that socialists can identify with. Instead, Polanski is the epitome of what I feel the working class fights every day: a justice system that favors and coddles the rich and famous, and leaves the rest of us without protection from either predatory criminals or from predatory attorneys.

Robin J

Texas, USA

7 October 2009



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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