

Snowden's father defends his son's courageous actions

Peter Symonds
5 July 2013

In a moving open letter published this week, Edward Snowden's father, Lon Snowden, paid tribute to his son's courage and determination in exposing the National Security Agency's massive and illegal spying operation on the American people and the people of the world.

The letter, written in collaboration with lawyer Bruce Fein, drew upon the traditions of the American Revolution in ending oppressive and arbitrary British rule and establishing fundamental democratic rights in the American constitution. Addressing his son, Lon Snowden wrote: "You are a modern day Paul Revere summoning the American people to confront the growing danger of tyranny and one branch government."

Snowden contrasted his son's actions to those of Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, who when questioned in the Senate in March, denied that the NSA collected any type of data on millions of Americans. The letter pointed out: "President Obama has not publicly rebuked the Director for frustrating the right of the people to know what their government is doing and to force changes if necessary through peaceful democratic processes. That is the meaning of government by the consent of the governed. 'We the people' are sovereign under the US Constitution, and government officials are entrusted with stewardship (not destruction) of our liberties."

The letter continued: "The history of civilization is a history of brave men and women refusing to bow to government wrongdoing or injustice, and exalting knowledge, virtue, wisdom, and selflessness over creature comforts as the North Star of life. We believe your actions fall within that honorable tradition, a conviction we believe is shared by many.

"As regards your reduction to de facto statelessness

occasioned by the Executive Branch to penalize your alleged violations of the Espionage Act, the United States Supreme Court lectured in *Trop v. Dulles* (1958): 'The civilized nations of the world are in virtual unanimity that statelessness is not to be imposed as punishment for crime.'"

Lon Snowden concluded his letter by implicitly criticising the Obama administration's wars and intrigues, and expressing solidarity with his son's fight for a better world.

"We think you would agree that the final end of the state is to make men and women free to develop their faculties, not to seek planetary domination through force, violence or spying. All Americans should have a fair opportunity to pursue their ambitions. Politics should not be a football game with winners and losers featuring juvenile taunts over fumbles and missteps.

"Irrespective of life's vicissitudes, we will be unflagging in efforts to educate the American people about the impending ruination of the Constitution and the rule of law unless they abandon their complacency or indifference. Your actions are making our challenge easier."

The full text of the letter can be found [here](#).



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact