

# Letters from our readers

13 August 2013

*On “Lon Snowden defends son’s actions in TV interview”*

While both Lon Snowden and Bruce Fein are correct about their assertions concerning Edward Snowden's legal status, certain aspects of his case merit closer attention. Assertions by Diane Feinstein, Peter King, et. al. about Edward Snowden's guilt are grossly prejudicial because they poison any potential jury pool. The US Supreme Court pointed out that pretrial publicity can have such an effect on potential jurors that it deprives the defendant of his due process rights to a fair trial. This was the holding in the famous case involving Dr. Sam Sheppard.

Second, regarding President Obama's unfortunate statement concerning Mr. Snowden's right to return to America and "make his case in court": Edward Snowden does not have to prove anything. The federal government bears the burden of proving him guilty by the use of evidence a court of competent jurisdiction finds admissible. The federal government must meet its burden of proof of guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

Edward Snowden does not have to say anything; he has an absolute right to remain silent pursuant to his 5th Amendment right against self incrimination. The US Supreme Court has repeatedly held that invoking this right may not be used as evidence of guilt.

Finally, while Mr. Snowden's flight may be used as circumstantial evidence of guilt, it is not conclusive. As at least one court in Connecticut has held: "When there is no immediacy between the flight and the crime, the court must be certain [before giving a jury instruction that flight is circumstantial evidence of guilt] that there is evidence that a defendant knows he is being sought for the specific crime charged and not some other crime or event. Acts supposedly showing consciousness of guilt can be explained 'by terrorized innocence as well as by a sense of guilt. After all, innocent people caught in a web of circumstances frequently become terror stricken.'" (State of Connecticut v. Alex Kelly 19 Conn.

Law Reporter 13 at 456.)

Mr. Snowden's flight could just as easily be explained by fear of "enhanced interrogation techniques" and trial by a military commission instead of by a jury of his peers as by consciousness of guilt of violating the Espionage Act.

Sincerely,

Peter L

Connecticut, USA

12 August 2013

On US government spying

Something that has perhaps gone unnoticed in all this, certainly by the mainstream press, is what the NSA activities revealed by Snowden offer us in regards to the US States possible and now very probable collusion with 9/11.

One doesn't have to be a conspiracy theorist to deduce that US state agencies now in all probability had information enough that an attack was brewing, and allowed it to happen.

John K

11 August 2013

*On “German election: The Left Party pledges its allegiance to the ruling class”*

Dear PS,

Many, many thanks for your brilliant, unequivocal analysis of the cynical pseudo-left scoundrels and their machinations—and for bringing out the historical implications for the German and international working class— if these forces succeed.

In the UK, the Socialist Party is similarly engaged in the most brazen fancy-footwork to ensure the working class draws no lessons from the past; to obscure the true implications of the role and history of Social Democracy ie., the Labour Party (of war criminals) as they gear-up for the inevitable social upheavals— and, to position themselves as they set the trap for the working class.

In this regard, the fragment of a recent article, below,

taken from the website of the Socialist Party (CWI link), demonstrates how these forces are operating, from Greece to Egypt... in response to the shifting sands.

“A strong SAV strengthens the left in DIE LINKE”

[Statement by Heidrun Dittrich]

“DIE LINKE (Left Party) MP for Lower Saxony, Heidrun Dittrich, has joined Sozialistische Alternative

(SAV), the CWI’s German section. This follows a period of intense cooperation inside the party and its left current, the ‘Anti-capitalist Left’. This is her statement...”

Best wishes,

Kath

10 August 2013

*On “Australian corruption findings highlight Labor Party’s decay”*

This is a very interesting article. I like to keep in mind readers of the WSWS who may be new to the Marxist world view, especially younger readers whose memories don't go back for decades. I would like to suggest some further reading to provide historical context for the topic of this article.

All of the articles in WSWS are selected for their importance to the international working class. Just because a certain article may be posted about an event or a political development in a country other than "mine" does not mean I may pass it by without a thought, or with only the thought that it is not pertinent to "my" local situation. On the contrary, all working people everywhere should read such stories carefully, for they contain important lessons for assimilation. Mike Head's article provides a perfect example of what we mean when we talk about developing "socialist consciousness" in the working class.

This particular article concerns deep corruption within the Australian Labor Party (ALP) and among the various labor unions, and explains the history of that corruption. As author Head points out, "[Eddie] Obeid’s rise was part of a wider process" involving three decades of history. Head writes, "Under the 1983–1996 Hawke-Keating governments, Labor and the unions responded to the globalisation of capitalist production by abandoning their previous program of national economic regulation and limited social reform in favour of pro-market economic ‘restructuring,’ privatisation, job slashing and erosion of social

services."

I do not mean to suggest that Head's article should have gone further within the space allotted to it in daily reporting. But by means of this letter I would like to connect it to the remaining parts of that "wider process": the spectacular failure of labor unions and Labor Parties in every country of the world to defend workers from the predations of the capitalist system, and their inevitable descent into the filthy politics of personal gain and Mafia-like criminality.

I won't go into the details myself; I just want to point readers to two speeches that were delivered at the 1998 ICFI International Summer School. These speeches will widen and deepen their understanding of international process of abandonment of the workers by their own organizations and political parties, so that they can understand and apply the lessons learned to their local situations.

On the "globalisation of capitalist production," one should read “The Significance and Implications of Globalisation: A Marxist Assessment” by Nick Beams.

And on the related effect of the labor unions and parties "abandoning their previous program of national economic regulation and limited social reform in favour of pro-market economic ‘restructuring,’ privatisation, job slashing and erosion of social services," read "Marxism and the Trade Unions" by David North.

Both of these speeches are available also as pamphlets from Mehring Books.

CH

Houston, Texas

10 August 2013



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