

Second pro-insurrectionist flag revealed to have flown on property owned by Justice Samuel Alito following Trump coup

Jacob Crosse
22 May 2024

On Wednesday the *New York Times* reported that multiple sources had provided photographs showing “An Appeal to Heaven” flag, also known as the Pine Tree flag, flying at a New Jersey vacation house owned by Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito between July and September of 2023. The *Times* also obtained an image from a Google street view showing the same flag flying on Alito’s property.

The “An Appeal to Heaven” flag was flown by a few naval vessels during the Revolutionary War of 1776. The phrase, “An Appeal to Heaven” was inspired by writings of Enlightenment philosopher John Locke. One of the first British empiricists, Locke argued that revolution was the right of humans against the divine right of kings.

In the last decade, the flag and phrase have been appropriated by Christian nationalists and far-right Republicans, oblivious to their history, as part of their bid to refashion American bourgeois democracy into a fascist dictatorship with a Christian face. The “An Appeal to Heaven” flag was carried by supporters of Trump’s coup during the assault on Congress, and is one of three that are currently posted outside the office of Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, one of over 100 Republicans currently in Congress who voted in favor of overturning the 2020 election after the January 6, 2021 attack.

The resurrection and bastardization of the Pine Tree flag can be traced back to “dream interpreter” Dutch Sheets, a leader in the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR), a nondenominational conservative American Christian sect. Sheets, a prolific author and preacher, claims the almighty speaks to him in his dreams and

that “God’s plan” includes returning Trump to the White House in 2024.

NAR’s theocratic vision for the US commands evangelical Christians to infiltrate and “conquer” family, religion, education, media, arts and entertainment, business and government. This is known as the “Seven Mountain Mandate,” or “7M,” and it has been adopted by fascist elements in the Republican Party across the country in order to justify sweeping attacks on democratic rights and authoritarian measures to block a socialist movement in the working class against the capitalist system.

In a 2015 interview with the Christian Broadcasting Network on the use of the “An Appeal to Heaven” flag, Sheets rejected secular laws that did not comport with his religious views. He said:

I don’t care what they say about the unborn, I don’t care what they say about marriage, it ain’t over until God says it’s over. It’s not settled law until He says it’s settled law, we are going to change these things.

Sheets has been working with high-level Republican politicians for over a decade. In 2012, he was appointed by then-Republican presidential candidate and former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich to be the co-chair of his Faith Leaders Coalition. Like Sheets, Gingrich has argued that separation of church and state was not an aim of the American Revolution.

In its Wednesday report, the *Times* noted that Alito

and the Supreme Court refused to respond to questions concerning Alito flying the “An Appeal to Heaven” flag championed by Sheets and others, including “what it intended to convey and how it comported with his obligations as a justice.”

This is the second time in less than a week that the *Times* has revealed that a pro-insurrectionist flag had flown on property owned by Justice Alito after January 6, 2021. Last Thursday, the newspaper published an article detailing that 11 days after the coup, an inverted American flag—a symbol of the “Stop the Steal” movement—had flown on the front lawn of Alito’s home in Alexandria, Virginia.

The photograph published by the *Times* last week was taken on January 17, 2021, but it is unclear how long the flag stayed in that position. It is also unclear how long the *Times* has been in possession of these images. As former *Times* editor Bill Keller once declared, freedom of the press means freedom *not* to publish, including if it damages “national security.”

According to the *Times*, when the paper contacted Alito concerning the upside-down American flag, he claimed his wife, Martha-Ann Alito, was responsible and that she did it as a petty reply to an anti-Trump sign posted by a neighbor. An inverted flag represents a nation in “distress,” and, as such, was widely adopted by the “Stop the Steal” movement following Trump’s electoral defeat and the failed attack on the Capitol.

When contacted by the *Times*, Alito did not state disagreement with his wife’s apparent decision to solidarize herself with Trump’s insurrection.

Despite his attempt to blame his wife, the fact is that Alito, alongside Justice Clarence Thomas and Thomas’ wife Virginia Thomas, not only sympathize with, but conspired with Trump, a majority of the Republican Party office-holders, and large sections of the police-military-intelligence apparatus to block the transfer of power to Joe Biden.

Notably, on the same day the US flag flew upside down at Alito’s Virginia home, heavily armed pro-Trump militia elements such as the Boogaloo bois held rallies at state capitols, including in Lansing, Michigan. At the time, the FBI warned that “armed groups” were

planning to storm state legislatures and seize/execute lawmakers if Trump was removed from office.

During the coup itself, as the *World Socialist Web Site* previously explained, Alito was holding in reserve a blatantly unconstitutional “emergency application” filed by Trump coup lawyer Sidney Powell. The emergency application was filed by Powell on the morning of January 6 and docketed by the Court at 3:51 p.m., as the Capitol was under siege by the far-right mob.

Once the Democrats discovered that Alito was not going to immediately reject the application, then-House Speaker Nancy Pelosi was forced to reconvene the House and certify the election.

As of this writing, President Joe Biden has yet to comment on Alito’s open support for the fascistic forces that attempted to block his election. Senate Democrats have yet to draw up articles of impeachment against either Alito or Thomas.

This is not a surprise. Ever since January 6, the goal of the Democratic Party has been to whitewash and downplay the immense support Trump’s coup had, and still retains, within virtually every federal government institution, including the Supreme Court. The Democrats’ aim was to form a government of “national unity” focused above all on the preparations for imperialist war abroad, targeting in the first place Russia and China.

The bipartisan cover-up extends to the House Select Committee to Investigate January 6, whose “Final Report” mentions Alito and Thomas only once, in footnotes.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact