

Letters on WikiLeaks

7 December 2010

On “The persecution of WikiLeaks’ Julian Assange”

Julian Assange is fast becoming a folk hero of the twenty-first century. An Internet comment I saw today said Assange was “a hall of fame journalist” but I think Assange is walking in a different crowd right now. Although their contributions are very different, doesn’t Assange’s situation, his determination and considerable flair under intense pressure recall the exiled Trotsky?

I applaud the WSWS for its strong and frequent exposures of the filthy and duplicitous campaign against Assange. In his own words: “History will win.”

Terrence M
Massachusetts, USA
3 December 2010

On “Australian government joins persecution of WikiLeaks’ Julian Assange”

Excellent. Especially relevant is the defense of WikiLeaks as a media organization which publishes events as it receives them.

Especially criminal is past action of those states and leaders to have conducted war. Those states and leaders are now using their military control to wage war on a media organization. They are seeking to not only kill the messenger but the message as well.

How WikiLeaks can be declared a “terrorist organization” is more than ludicrous. It is fascistic. The likes of Sarah Palin, Joe Lieberman and others are beyond hypocritical. They are the voices of fascism, promoting state sponsored violence and censorship and justification for war.

They are the danger and their danger lies in either their elected position or the influence they generate.

All those who read the revelations of WikiLeaks or analysis thereof must stand with Julian Assange because those readers are the recipients and beneficiaries of his courage and action.

Michael S
1 December 2010

Congressman Joe Lieberman reported this morning that his staff had received an announcement from Amazon stating that it would no longer host WikiLeaks on its site. Consequently, WikiLeaks was temporarily unavailable while it was being moved to Swedish servers.

This move should underscore the questionability of reliance on the Internet as an invincible weapon in the fight for a better world.

Because of the anarchic nature of the Internet—because information can go out to millions of computers users who may do with it what they will—many young activists believe that the Internet is uncensorable. Marxists, however, have an analysis that predicts that anarchistic strategies will always fail against class interests.

Ever since the invention of movable type, it has been possible for ordinary people to get their message out to “the world”, thus changing public discussion within months. The printing press was credited with playing a decisive role in the French revolution. With the telegraph, it became possible for news to reach millions within the space of days. It was credited with turning public opinion in Britain against the Boer War. The fax machine was credited with the rise of the grassroots Religious Right movement in the US and with the fall of the Soviet Union. (There are, of course, other social factors involved.)

Over time, however, all forms of mass communication eventually end up being monopolized by states and by monied interests.

Although temporary, this move by Amazon should raise some questions about Internet censorship. The world is already aware of how governments such as China, Iran and Pakistan have blocked Internet access to their own citizens. A history of the Pirate Bay torrent service shows how censorship can occur under more liberal regimes.

According to Wikipedia, governments have been able to pressure ISPs to block access to the Pirate Bay servers, and the servers themselves have been raided by police. In addition, server costs have grown well beyond the reach of ordinary citizens, leaving the owners no recourse but to rely on advertising as a source of revenue.

It is possible, though unlikely at present, for the US government to pressure the Swedish government to shut down the WikiLeaks servers. But there are alternatives. The majority of root name servers are located on US soil, according to the WSWS “Bush administration refuses to relinquish US control of Internet.” The US government could order the owners of these servers to block access to any domain name it chooses. At present, this would likely crash the 3 remaining servers, depending on how much Internet traffic is attempting to reach the blocked website.

A related problem is that of Internet anonymity—something that was virtually guaranteed in the early years of public Internet access, but which is now nearly impossible in today’s world of Internet forensics. Internet activists in repressive countries have to develop increasingly sophisticated computer skills in order to gain access to websites in the rest of the world. As governments in the West become more repressive, Western activists will increasingly face similar challenges.

Joan C
Canada
1 December 2010

On “Greens remain silent on witch-hunt against Australian citizen Julian Assange”

Editors:

We should know very soon if *Time* magazine has the guts to name Assange its person of the year. My bet, it won’t, passing on Assange like it did on bin Laden in 2001, both the right and obvious choices, and instead going with Jon

Stewart, so our wonderful media can have its obligatory field day.

CW
4 December 2010

Thank you Mr. Cogan for writing such an exceptional article. As you are, I’m disgusted by the cowardice of the Australian government in the face of pressure from the US. Conceivably, witch-hunt against Julian Assange may eventually turn into full-blown McCarthyism in US.

Mark G
4 December 2010

On “Army charges soldier for leaking video of US massacre in Baghdad”

Having experienced incarceration first hand, I especially feel for Manning. The hours are endless and the silence unbearable, yet you must bear it. Some men can’t and they lose their minds. I read Manning had been in solitary for seven months, probably longer by now. Then he’s gay, in the military, and now perceived a traitor on top of that. There’s no telling what he’s had to endure, both mentally and physically. And all for exposing a corrupt nation’s brutality and deceit.

Furthermore, as of this morning I believe WikiLeaks has been completely shut down. The united bourgeoisie are extremely powerful, with international ties, and this is a testament to that. Any struggle for socialism will, I think, have many more victims like Manning and the founder of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange. The bourgeoisie are powerful, with nearly endless funds, but they are the minority. If the working class became united as well, the battle could be won. But only if we are united internationally and together working towards the same end will it be possible for victory to be ours. I imagine a world of equals and prepare myself for the fight.

Daniel
5 December 2010



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