

Free Julian Assange! Support the June 19 vigil in London

The Socialist Equality Party (UK)
6 June 2018

The Socialist Equality Party calls for a maximum mobilisation in support of the June 19 vigil outside the Ecuadorean Embassy in London calling for freedom for WikiLeaks editor Julian Assange.

Workers and young people must demand that the Conservative government of Theresa May end its cruel persecution of Assange, drop the bail-related issues against him and allow him to leave the embassy and, if he chooses, the UK, without fear of arrest.

The defence of Assange is the cutting edge of the struggle to defend Internet freedom, freedom of speech and all the social and democratic rights of the working class.

The SEP, the International Committee of the Fourth International and the *World Socialist Web Site* support every effort worldwide to secure Assange's freedom. Our Australian sister-party is also demanding that the Turnbull government extend to Assange the rights that should be available to him as a citizen and secure his return to Australia with guarantees against indictment and extradition to the US—culminating in a June 17 demonstration at Sydney Town Hall Square.

For nearly eight years, Assange has been arbitrarily detained in London—first on bogus accusations of sexual misbehaviour in Sweden and, now that the entire case has been dropped, for defying bail conditions and seeking refuge in the Ecuadorean embassy.

Everyone knows the real reason that Assange has been targeted is because he exposed the crimes of the United States and other major powers—especially Britain—for their murderous wars, targeted assassinations, rendition, arbitrary detention, torture and spying on their own citizens.

The US has made clear it wants Assange to be silenced forever, having prepared a Grand Jury indictment on espionage charges that carry a sentence

of life imprisonment or even the death penalty.

Sweden sought Assange's extradition on a European Arrest Warrant, without any actual charge being brought against him, only so he could be shipped off to the US. But this plan relied on the collusion of the UK—more so now that the only basis for his arrest is that Assange skipped bail to avoid deportation.

For six years, the UK has trapped Assange in the embassy under heavy police guard and constant surveillance. The impact of his confinement inside a small building, with no direct sunlight and without the necessary medical treatment, on Assange's health is appalling—but is of no concern to Britain's rulers.

His treatment stands in stark contrast to the handling of the fascist dictator and mass murderer General Augusto Pinochet, whose extradition to Spain under an international arrest warrant was resisted for more than a year while he lived in luxury until the then Labour government Home Secretary Jack Straw cited "compassionate grounds" allowing him to return to Chile. Pinochet's defence team included Clare Montgomery, the lawyer for the Crown Prosecution Service who represented the Swedish authorities in arguing for Assange's extradition.

This year, documents emerged showing that the Crown Prosecution Service responded to a suggestion in 2012 from Sweden that they might have to abandon their attempted frame-up with the warning, "Don't you dare get cold feet!!!"

Sweden's prosecutors closed their investigation this last year—effectively confirming that there was never a case against Assange and that he and WikiLeaks were the targets of a "dirty tricks" operation. But a British judge ruled in February that Assange would still face arrest if he left the embassy—just one day after the US Department of Justice confirmed to Reuters that its case

against Assange is ongoing.

Assange has now been denied all contact with the outside world and is unable to receive visitors, make phone calls or access the Internet because Ecuador's President Lenin Moreno is seeking a rapprochement with Washington that would only be sealed with the WikiLeaks editor's expulsion from the embassy.

None of this could proceed without the role played by the liberal media, the Labour and trade union bureaucracy and various pseudo-left groups that have erected a wall of silence around Assange.

The *Guardian* has led the pack in blackguarding Assange as a sexual predator, an egotistical self-promoter and a Russian stooge—especially following his political exposé of the warmongering and corruption of Hillary Clinton and the US Democrats.

The trade unions and the Labour Party have maintained absolute silence on Assange's fate. As soon as he became Labour leader, Jeremy Corbyn abandoned any criticism of Assange's treatment. To this day he has refused to condemn the May government's preparations to arrest Assange should he leave the embassy and has offered no guarantee that a Labour government will block his extradition to the US.

Of equal significance, Assange has been incarcerated without a word of protest or significant demonstration by the alphabet soup of "socialist" and "revolutionary" groups.

To a man and woman, they have sacrificed Assange because they support the regime change wars he has exposed and will do nothing that cuts across their promotion of identity politics in furtherance of a career in academia, local government and the trade unions.

"Wikileaks Is Not a Threat," proclaimed the Socialist Workers Party in 2010, before lining up behind Assange's accusers and the demands that Assange must be extradited to Sweden in August 2012, claiming that "Assange and some of his supporters have refused to take the rape allegations seriously."

The Socialist Party concurred, insisting, "It is important for socialists to reject any idea that some rape does not need to be taken seriously."

Socialist Resistance added, for good measure, that "Rape and all forms of sexual violence" are "Sometimes ... committed by people—overwhelmingly men—who see themselves as progressive and act in radical ways on other questions..."

All these groups knew that Assange was being targeted by Washington, with the SWP writing, "We know that Assange faces a secret 'sealed indictment' in the US, and a grand jury has been convened against Wikileaks." All knew that his two accusers had engaged in repeated consensual sex acts and attended social events with Assange after the alleged incidents—forcing Socialist Resistance to argue, "In consenting to have sex with a man on a particular occasion, a woman is not consenting to have sex with him on other occasions."

This is the last time any of them has said a word about Assange—even after the manufactured sex case against him collapsed.

The SEP insists that the defence of Assange and WikiLeaks can be carried out successfully only when based on a socialist, anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist perspective. Everything depends on a determined effort to politically mobilise the broadest possible layers of workers and youth internationally on such a perspective.

We call on all defenders of civil liberties and democratic rights, all opponents of imperialist wars for regime change, to attend the June 19 vigil and circulate information on it in workplaces, campuses and schools across the country and throughout social media.

Freedom for Julian Assange! Attend the vigil at the Ecuador Embassy in London

Tuesday, June 19

6-8 p.m.

3 Hans Crescent London, SW1X 0LN

(nearest Tube station: Knightsbridge, Piccadilly Line)

For further details of the vigil visit:
<https://wiseupaction.info/2018/>



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact