

Young people in Scotland speak up for Julian Assange: “We cannot just watch as remote legal proceedings develop and liberal articles are exchanged”

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The *World Socialist Web Site* has received messages of support from young people in Scotland for Julian Assange’s freedom. The WikiLeaks publisher will spend his third Christmas inside Belmarsh maximum security prison in London next week, with the threat of extradition and lifetime incarceration in a US federal prison hanging over his head, deprived of his most fundamental legal and democratic rights.

On December 10, Britain’s High Court ruled in favour of a US government appeal aimed at securing Assange’s extradition. The court’s vicious decision confirms that the British state, its government, judiciary, and intelligence agencies—and all of its political parties—are determined to destroy Assange in retribution for WikiLeaks’ courageous exposure of war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Next Wednesday, the Socialist Equality Party in Australia is hosting an emergency online meeting, “British court decision puts Assange’s life in danger. Demand his immediate release!” The meeting will take place at 7pm AEDT (see here for registration details, including international start times). We urge workers and young people all over the world to help promote the meeting and make plans to attend.

The thoughtful comments published below show the enormous potential to win support among a generation of workers and young people being politicised by momentous world events, including unending wars, staggering social inequality, climate change, the collapse of democracy and a pandemic that has claimed millions of lives.

Jordan, 23, a delivery driver from Inverness said, “Assange did not sell a product, but brought to light truths with evidence, and they want to lock up the truth and throw the key away in the USA! For years the TV, radio, and written press networks have been in the hands of tycoons who in turn finance their companies and keep journalists’ mouths sealed with millions of dollars.

“That is why there is no longer a place for journalists who are not corrupt, or who are willing to go beyond the script set by

their bosses. Manipulative garbage is what exists in all these media today, almost entirely.”

Calum, 23, a postal packing worker from Inverness said, “The betrayal of Assange years ago by the global press was a sign of things to come. Unfounded accusations and his continual smearing by the press should have shocked more and shown people the bias of capitalist media as anti-journalistic, but the reality of the situation was smothered and confused by the weight of that media.

“Now as he’s facing American ‘justice’, the threat of life imprisonment and the chance of execution or assassination in response to the highest journalistic integrity. It should say something about the death of our democratic ideals and should rally the working class and journalists, anyone with a conscience, in a fight for his freedom—a fight that is not only to save a man’s life, but to save journalism and is intertwined with the fight for socialism.

“Now, more than ever, we cannot watch as remote legal proceedings develop and liberal articles are exchanged. The people need to take to the streets, to their workplaces, to their communities in protest and discussion. This needs to become a real political issue and exposed as the serious political crime it is.”

Daniel, 23, a sound technician from Inverness said, “Assange’s extradition is a travesty of justice and morality. The silence of the pseudo-left and the Labour Party is tantamount to complicity. Assange should never have been held without due cause for any length of time, and the duration of the ordeal he has gone through will have undeniably caused severe degradation of his mental and physical health.

“The fact that the working class are the only force to bring forward the struggle for truth, justice, and for Assange himself, is evidence that the ruling class care nothing for any of the ideals that give us our humanity, and are a force in undeniable opposition to the proletariat and the common good of all the earth’s people.”

Andrew, 21, a cook in Glasgow said, “This vicious him.”

entrapment of Julian Assange exemplifies the brutal lengths the ruling classes will go to cover up and disguise their own heinous war crimes. His extradition to the US is being used by the ruling classes to strengthen British-American relations. Giving Assange to the Americans now is quite literally a death sentence. The fact is that we, the working class, are the only class interested in fair justice because we are the class that these hidden crimes, done by the ruling class, affects. We are the people in danger of learning the truth behind the atrocities conducted overseas especially in the Middle East.”

Jill, a social care worker and the mother of a young Socialist Equality Party member from Inverness wrote, “Article 10 of the Human Rights Act 1998 says, ‘everyone has the right to freedom of expression’ in the UK. I am personally disgusted by the treatment of Julian Assange and that there has been an ongoing criminal investigation and that his kidnap and his murder was actually planned by the US government.

“So, a man is going to either 1) Rot in prison or 2) Be kidnapped and murdered—for what? Speaking the truth?

“I personally am ashamed to say that until recently I did not know who he was and was only made aware due to the *World Socialist Web Site*. The working class need to take a stand and can make a difference because this outcome will also make a difference to their own democratic rights.

“We need to act now because either way this poor man has a death sentence hanging over him due to his treatment. Today’s generation needs to be the ones who say no more! ‘The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win’. (Karl Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*).”

Ari, 23, a final year media student in Glasgow, said the case against Assange means, “The presumption of innocence and people’s democratic rights, that’s all out the window.”

Ari described Assange’s achievements as a journalist, highlighting the *Collateral Murder* video which he watched for the first time when he was a 13-year-old, “It’s horrific, it’s a war crime. I was really enraged. They’re killing those people as if it’s a video game, they’re so detached from it. That was my first introduction to WikiLeaks.

“In 2012 when Assange first went into the embassy, I was 14, so I’ve been aware of the case for quite a while.” Ari said the sight of Assange being dragged from the Ecuadorian Embassy in 2019 by police was “brutal, they made a show of it for the world’s media. They’re making an example of him. It’s been very brutal and drawn out over many years. It’s a horrific example to make, and journalism is under a threat because of it.”

Ari recently watched a YouTube video called, “The CIA’s plot to assassinate Julian Assange”, showing evidence of CIA and US government plans to kidnap and kill Assange in London during his time inside the Ecuadorian Embassy. At the same time, efforts to smear Assange personally were being intensified, “They’ve thrown a lot of bogus accusations against

him.”

Asked if there was discussion at university about Assange, Ari replied, “Because of the rape stuff [bogus allegations against Assange by the Swedish state], amongst the ‘leftist’ student types he’s not very popular. It’s definitely bullshit. It was too convenient, far too convenient.”

The WSWWS told Ari about UN Rapporteur on Torture Nils Melzer’s forensic take-down of the Swedish allegations that Assange and his lawyers had also refuted. In contrast, leading pseudo-left parties in Europe, Australia and the United States eagerly weaponised the CIA-backed “rape” narrative, using gender politics to incite middle class hysteria against a journalist persecuted for exposing war crimes. Ari agreed, adding, “Obviously, they were false allegations and they have been dropped now.

“This all happened about five years before the #MeToo era, and it was a prototype for what was to come.”

Ari questioned the precedent being established by #MeToo, including its undermining of the presumption of innocence, “Wasn’t the #MeToo movement another form of essentially throwing away people’s democratic rights, including to a fair trial? It’s pretty messed up.”

Ari warned that the promotion of gender and race-based politics and its undermining of democratic rights was playing into the hands of the far-right, “When the pseudo-left come up with this kind of nonsense, the far-right dismantle it and sometimes they do a good job of dismantling it, and the danger is that it brings young people towards the right. They’re giving them an ammunition in a way.” Ari described the January 6 coup in the United States as “a very worrying development.”

A recent survey by the Institute of Economic Affairs found nearly 70 percent of young people in Britain want to live in a socialist economic system. It found 73 percent of 16–34-year-olds believe “a socialist system would boost solidarity, compassion and cooperation among people.” Ari said, “I’ve been speaking to my classmates about this, and it’s remarkable how much more radical everyone’s got. People are talking much more about Marxism and socialism compared to when I was 13 or 14. Back then, my friend and I would talk about Karl Marx and socialism, but people didn’t really want to talk about it. But now young people are completely interested and that is growing.”



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