

SEP (UK) 2022 Congress Resolution

## Build the Assange defence campaign in the working class!

18 November 2022

*This resolution was adopted at the Sixth National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (UK), held from October 22 to October 25, 2022. Read the full report on the Congress here.*

1. The Socialist Equality Party resolves to redouble its fight for the freedom of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, held prisoner in London's Belmarsh maximum security prison.

2. Assange's life is in danger. He is facing imminent extradition to the United States whose intelligence agencies have been exposed plotting his kidnap and assassination. Imprisoned in the UK for a decade, Assange's physical and mental health has declined severely. He suffered a mini stroke in October 2021 and has now contracted COVID-19. Medical experts have warned his incarceration amounts to psychological torture and that extradition would drive him to suicide.

3. The US, UK and other imperialist powers are punishing Assange for revealing their war crimes, use of torture and abuse of democratic rights. They intend to destroy him as a chilling example to others and to set a pseudo-legal precedent for outlawing critical journalism. His case is the spearhead of a global attack on democratic rights, including to free speech, protest and strike action. This is preparation for the global eruption of imperialist and counterrevolutionary violence heralded by the NATO-Russia war in Ukraine and the international assault on workers' living standards.

4. Britain has played the frontline role in the persecution of Assange. Its courts have trampled on his legal and democratic rights while he is held in intolerable conditions. Confronting the most powerful government on the planet in Washington, he has been denied the time and resources necessary to fight his

case. The High Court and the Supreme Court have issued indefensible rulings to speed his dispatch into the hands of his would-be assassins.

5. Assange's fate is the result of an historically unprecedented gang-up by what passes for the left in official politics, turning the WikiLeaks founder from *TIME* readers' "Person of the Year" in 2010 into an international pariah. The trade unions have never once attempted to mobilise workers in his defence or challenge the state campaign against him, while Labour has supported and even played an active role in the witch-hunt. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer was head of the Crown Prosecution Service from 2008-2013. He oversaw the manhunt of Assange while the WikiLeaks founder was a political refugee in London's Ecuadorian Embassy. His Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper has joined the Conservative government in "strongly" condemning WikiLeaks.

6. This has allowed popular support for WikiLeaks and its founder to be suppressed by relentless media smear campaigns and blackouts, backed by the liberal media and the pseudo-left groups. These organisations slandered Assange as a sexual predator, who should be extradited to Sweden based on bogus, politically motivated accusations. The *Guardian* played the key role in promoting the accusation that he was a Russian agent. When their lies became untenable, they adopted a complicit silence or published for-the-record statements of opposition to his prosecution.

7. Assange's fate cannot be entrusted to Labour "lefts" such as Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell. Both now make personal appearances at rallies in defence of Assange, but they did nothing when they led the Labour Party to mobilise the mass support which they commanded. When Corbyn briefly broke his

silence after Assange was dragged from the Ecuadorian embassy in 2019, he retreated as soon as he was challenged by the Blairites and remained politically silent for the remainder of his tenure as party leader, including during the 2019 general election. Since handing control of Labour to Starmer, Corbyn's public statements have focused on appeals to the Tories, the media and the British courts, rejecting any fight to mobilise the working class against Assange's jailers. This would mean a direct political confrontation with the Labour and trade union bureaucracy which has been instrumental in isolating Assange, allowing his persecution to continue.

8. The international working class must take the lead in the fight to free Assange. It is the sole constituency for the defence of democratic rights, and it alone has the power to wrest the WikiLeaks founder from his captors. The resurgence of the class struggle throughout the world, seen in a growing wave of strikes and protests, provides the basis for a global defence campaign. The appeal for Assange's freedom by rank-and-file worker and socialist Will Lehman in the United States as part of his campaign for United Auto Workers president reached 100,000 autoworkers. It shows the possibilities that exist for a powerful campaign directed to the international working class. The October 8 protest outside parliament in London, the biggest yet organised for Assange, attracted larger numbers of workers and youth. It points to a growing awareness of the significance of the WikiLeaks founder's case under conditions of escalating NATO war in Europe, and the potential for a mass movement to secure his release.

9. The SEP will inscribe the call for Assange's freedom on the banners of the struggles now emerging. We will explain that the attack on Assange is directed against the social and democratic rights of the working class and that his defence is critical to the formation of a mass anti-war movement against capitalism and for socialism amid the rising danger of a nuclear conflict and World War III.



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