

Public meetings called by the SEP/IYSSE in Britain: The fight to free Julian Assange is the fight against war!

Socialist Equality Party (UK)
4 March 2024

Imprisoned WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange, who exposed war crimes by the US and Britain in Iraq and Afghanistan, is facing imminent extradition to the United States and is now fighting for his life.

Assange has been indicted under the Espionage Act on trumped-up charges that carry a 175-year prison term. If Britain's High Court refuses this month to hear a final appeal from Assange, he will be bundled onto a plane and held in a US supermax prison. His lawyers warn that if Assange is extradited, there is every likelihood of further espionage charges, including those with a death penalty.

Assange's freedom must be demanded by workers and youth in Britain, the US, his native Australia, and throughout the world.

He is being targeted for WikiLeaks' courageous journalism that exposed criminal activity and anti-democratic conspiracies orchestrated by the White House, Pentagon and CIA against the working class and oppressed people of the entire world.

Since he was dragged out of the Ecuadorian Embassy by British police in April 2019, he has been held in solitary confinement in London's Belmarsh Prison. Every arm of the British state—parliament, the judiciary, police, intelligence agencies and media—have been complicit in efforts to silence and destroy Assange, overseeing his slow-motion assassination in the heart of London.

The case of Assange embodies the struggle against imperialist war, the authoritarian measures used to suppress anti-war sentiment and the propaganda lies used to justify it all.

He was targeted by Washington and London because he sought to warn the population of the brutality the ruling class was capable of. He described WikiLeaks as “the intelligence agency of the people.”

Those warnings are now being daily and horrifically

confirmed by the NATO-Russia war in Ukraine, where hundreds of thousands have likely lost their lives, and in the Israeli genocide in Gaza, already responsible for at least 30,000 deaths, mainly women and children. Both are rooted in the drive by the imperialist powers for a redivision of the globe, its people and its resources, which marks the ever-deeper descent into a third world war.

The persecution of Assange, which includes a CIA assassination plot and which has ravaged his health and stolen over a decade of his life already, has been the spearhead of a crackdown on opposition to war, in preparation for the eruption of military violence now underway. It was intended to set a chilling precedent that anyone who gets in the way of the war plans of the imperialist powers will be silenced and destroyed.

The attempt to brutally silence journalists that began with Assange has now led to a policy of mass murder. Well over 100 media workers and many of their family members have been killed by the Israel Defense Forces in the space of just four months, in a clear campaign of targeted assassinations to stop the truth of the genocide being reported. In Israel, Britain, the United States, Europe and throughout the world, draconian legislation is being used to criminalise anti-genocide protests, with thousands arrested.

“If wars can be started by lies... peace can be started by truth,” Assange told a rally against the occupation of Afghanistan in London's Trafalgar Square in 2011. There has been no shortage of wars and lies since.

In Ukraine, the NATO powers claim to be defending “sovereignty” and “democracy” by working with fascist forces to dragoon the population into a fight to the last man designed to weaken and destabilise Russia.

In Gaza, they support Prime Minister Netanyahu's cynical invocation of Israel's “right to self-defence” as a

justification for the ethnic cleansing of the Palestinians.

Assange's fate, the fight for his freedom, depends on the development of a mass anti-war movement against the imperialist pyromaniacs responsible for these catastrophes.

That movement has begun, with mass protests of millions across the world demanding an end to Israel's genocide in Gaza, which is only the first stage of a war across the Middle East, waged by the US and its satellites against Iran and its allies in Yemen, Syria and Lebanon, to secure American hegemony over the oil-rich region.

This mass movement must place the demand for Assange's freedom at the centre of the fight against genocide and war.

Under these conditions, Assange's case will take on explosive political dimensions in its next stage, whether in the form of an appeal before the UK High Court, or a defence mounted in the United States. His tormentors in Washington may think they can act with impunity, but they have not reckoned on the enormous popular sympathy for Assange and WikiLeaks.

The working class and young people are at the beginning of an election year in which the two main parties presented to them—Republican and Democratic in the US, Conservative and Labour in Britain—are despised. Neither country's ruling class is in a strong position to mount an unprecedented, legally obscene extradition and prosecution.

It will be lost on no one that while they persecute Assange, the US and its allies have mounted a chorus proclaiming the death in custody of Alexei Navalny as the ultimate proof of the criminal character of the Putin regime, shedding an ocean of tears over this racist crook.

And millions will not accept the ruling elite's right to punish Assange for revealing previous war crimes when they are mobilising week after week against the newest crimes sanctioned in Gaza by "Genocide Joe" Biden and Rishi Sunak.

After more than a decade of the relentless persecution of Julian Assange by the imperialist powers, it is time for workers and young people to draw the lessons of the struggle for his freedom. At this critical juncture, it is urgently necessary to unite the fight against war with the struggle to free Julian Assange.

Like all great defence campaigns of the past, the fight to free Julian Assange can only succeed to the extent that it mobilizes the working class, linking the struggle to free Assange with the struggle against war and the fight by millions of workers all over the world against the brutal

attacks on jobs, wages, essential services and basic democratic rights.

This must be done in opposition to the Labour Party, which is complicit in the Gaza genocide and Assange's persecution. Leader Sir Keir Starmer was head of the Crown Prosecution Service throughout much of its pursuit of the WikiLeaks founder on behalf of the US. Former leader Jeremy Corbyn kept a shameful silence on Assange through two general elections until the dying days of his leadership.

We urge all workers, youth and students who want to rally the working class to Assange's defence and to win his freedom to attend the public meetings called by the Socialist Equality Party and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality.

Manchester

Monday March 18, 7pm

Friends Meeting House (rear of Manchester Central Library)

6 Mount St, Manchester

M2 5NS

Register here for Manchester meeting

London

Wednesday March 20, 7pm

58 Birkenhead Street

Kings Cross, London

WC1H 8BB

(near Kings Cross-St Pancras)

Register here for London meeting

Inverness

Saturday March 23, 1pm

Spectrum Centre, Room 6

1 Margaret Street, Inverness

IV1 1LS

Register here for Inverness meeting

Sheffield

Sunday March 24, 3pm

Showroom Cinema, Cafe Meeting Room

Paternoster Row, Sheffield

S1 2BX

Register here for Sheffield meeting



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact