

No more appeals to the fascist Trump! The Assange campaign must turn to the working class!

by Davey Heller 19th September 2020

As the outrageous show trial of Julian Assange continued at London's Old Bailey several developments highlighted the political crossroads facing the Assange campaign. Will elements of the campaign continue to foster the dangerous and self-defeating illusion that Assange can be saved by appeals to Trump, the fascist political thug responsible for his persecution? This reactionary dead end was personified by Glen Greenwald's recent interview with Tucker Carlson on Fox News. Or will the campaign turn to the only social force that can free Assange, the international working class?

The harsh truth is that the middle class forces dominating the Assange campaign continue to believe that only appeals to one faction or another of the ruling class can save Julian. In the US context this has been disastrous. Due to the almost universal hostility of the Democrat/liberal faction wing of the US ruling class to Assange, illusions were developed that Trumps MAGA movement could be a counter balance to this and his supporters could be a tool to lobby Trump for a pardon.

Classconscious.org has been warning against this self-defeating strategy since at least August 2018, when we [published an article slamming the inclusion of alt-right speakers among progressives on the #Unity4J platform](#). At the time #Unity4J was virtually the "official" arm of the

solidarity campaign. To see this strategy still being pursued whilst Julian is literally facing off with Trump's own DOJ in a London courtroom shows the level of desperation and disorientation of the petty-bourgeois "leadership" of this campaign.

Perhaps the most high profile, recent example of this trend comes from Brazil-based US journalist Glen Greenwald, who writes for the Intercept. He [appeared on Rupert Murdoch's Fox news on September 10th](#) on The Tucker Carlson Show. Carlson uses his platform on Fox to support Trump's fascist agenda. Carlson recently justified the murder of two anti police violence protestors by a fascist gunmen with the statement, "How shocked are we that 17-year-olds with rifles decided they had to maintain order when no one else would?" Greenwald appeared on this far right demagogue's platform to make the following direct appeal to Trump, who watches Fox News religiously:

"Obviously this isn't coming from President Trump! He praised WikiLeaks in 2016 for informing the public. He knows, firsthand, how these spying systems that Edward Snowden exposed can be abused and were abused in 2016. This is coming from people who work in the CIA, who work in the Pentagon, who insist on endless war, and who believe that they're a government unto themselves, more powerful than the President. I posted this weekend that there's a speech from Dwight Eisenhower warning that this military industrial complex – what we now call the Deep State – is becoming more powerful than the President. Chuck Schumer warned right before President Obama – President Trump – took office that President Trump challenging the CIA was foolish because they have many ways to get back at anybody who impedes them. That's what these cases are about Tucker, they're punishing Julian Assange and trying to punish Edward Snowden for informing the public about things that they have the right to know about the Obama Administration. They're basically saying to President Trump,

"You don't run the country even though you were elected. We do!" And they're daring him to use his pardon power to put an end to these very abusive prosecutions."

Tucker Carlson interviewing Glenn Greenwald about Assange.

Here we see yet another so called "progressive" element of the Assange campaign regurgitating the ludicrous idea that it's not Trump but "Deep State" actors opposed to him, who are responsible for the prosecution of Assange! For starters this completely contradicts the main tenet of Assange's legal defence, that the prosecution of Assange is being directed by the highly politicized U.S. Department of Justice, which under Trump, essentially takes it's orders from the President.

Max Blumenthal has [revealed evidence](#) of how the biggest single donor to Trump's election campaign in 2016, Sheldon Adelson acted as a conduit between the company who spied on Assange in the Ecuadorean Embassy and the CIA. Testimony from alt-right fascist Cassandra Fairbanks in the extradition hearing further proves the orders for the arrest of Assange came straight from Trump.

The "Trump versus the Deep State" narrative also somehow posits a billionaire developer from New York, whose cabinet is full of billionaires and the former head of the CIA is somehow an "outsider" fighting and taking on the "establishment"! This is the narrative that underpins the MAGA movement and the Q Anon conspiracy theory.

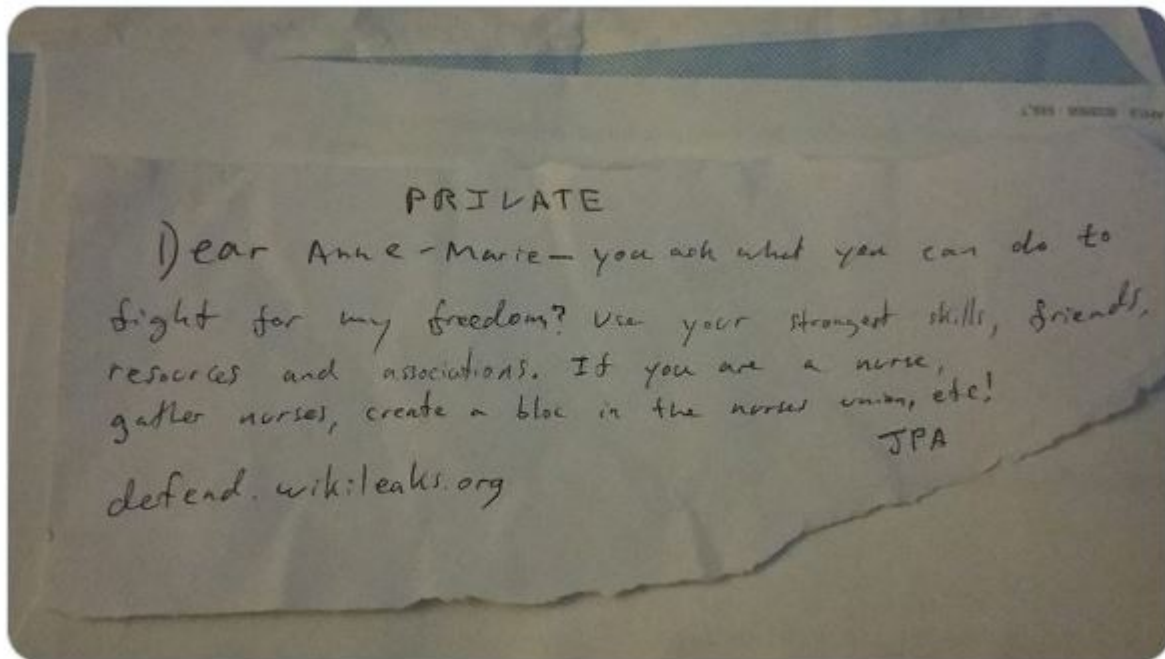
In reality, the US ruling class is currently locked in vicious internecine warfare between the liberal faction working through the Democrats, and the fascist wing working through the far right Republicans/Trump. Whilst both wings of the ruling class are reactionary servants of Wall St, they rest for their support on different social forces, backed by

different elements of the military-industrial-complex, and different networks of billionaires. They represent different strategic approaches of the ruling class as to how to best divide and suppress the working class at home, while pursuing imperialism's interests abroad under conditions of deepening social crisis. For Greenwald, however, to appeal to the fascist wing to pardon Assange is not only deluded, but dangerous. This appeal occurs in a context where Trump is openly planning to steal the election and crush resistance on the street with military force!

However It is not too late for the Assange campaign, despite Julian's dire situation. Julian himself has called from his prison cell for workers to organise themselves in his defence. In a letter from Belmarsh in late 2019 he wrote to a supporter

"Dear Anne-Marie, You ask what you can do to fight for my freedom? Use your strongest skills, friends, resources and associations. If you are a nurse, gather nurses, create a bloc in the nurses union, etc! <http://defend.wikileaks.org> JPA"

Julian Assange's letter written on an envelope from Belmarsh Prison



Julian Assang's letter written on an envelope from Belmarsh Prison

This reflects the fact that despite signs of some disorientation prior to his arrest in appealing to, and attempting to maneuver between different factions of the ruling class, Julian too has now turned politically to the working class.

This approach took a step forward with two recent developments. Firstly, South Africa's largest trade union federation (COSATU) issued a [joint statement](#) with the influential South African Communist Party (SACP) calling for an end to the US persecution of Assange..

COSATU is a Federation of over 30 unions, representing 1.6 million workers. Along with the Communist Party of South Africa which has over 200,000 members, they form the tripartite political alliance with the ANC that has dominated South African politics since the fall of Apartheid. The joint statement issued on September 15th stated:

“Assange has become a target because he did what journalists are supposed to do—expose the truth. The WikiLeaks publisher exposed the crimes that emerged out of wars launched based on lies, which have led to the deaths of more than one million people.

We stand firm on the belief that it is the working class, the broad mass of the population, that must be mobilised to defend Julian Assange, and all class war prisoners. The demand for their freedom must be a rallying cry for the global working class. We therefore call on all workers and young people, and all those who uphold democratic rights, to come forward.” (The full joint statement is reproduced below the article.)

Since the end of apartheid rule both the Communist Party (SACP) and COSATU have worked tirelessly to suppress the growth of a revolutionary socialist movement in South Africa. The SACP is a Stalinist party that embraces the political perspective of the “two stage theory” of revolution. The “two stage” theory demands that the class interests and struggle of the workers must be subordinated to the so called “progressive” wing of the bourgeoisie, in this case the ANC. Rather than fight independently for the overturn of capitalist property relations, the workers movement is forced into the dead end of giving parliamentary support to the ruling bourgeois nationalist ANC, thus propping up South African capitalism and the domestic ruling class. The Stalinist “two stage” theory has led to repeated disasters in country after country in the 20th century. From Spain and China to Indonesia and Chile, untold thousands of revolutionary workers and leftist militants have gone to their graves in the name of the Stalinist two-stage theory.

However, this political perspective does not change the significance of this development. Such a call-out is a crucial

break in the chain of betrayal by all the reformist, social democratic organisations around the world. It is a statement made in the name of the political forces which help run a country of almost 60 million people. In contrast, the Australian union movement in Julian Assange's home country has remained virtually silent as his extradition hearing kicks off again. One can hardly imagine such a statement coming from any of the political groupings associated with the Democrat Party in the US! It should be welcomed by the broader Assange campaign, but as yet it has received very little promotion within the campaign, and no news coverage outside it.

The statement also states "COSATU and the SACP call for an all-out campaign in South Africa, and internationally to defend Assange, oppose his extradition to the US, and secure his freedom, with guarantees against any future prosecution". Currently there is no evidence beyond publishing this statement that the unions and the Communist Party are working to activate their membership on this campaign in a concrete way. Time will tell whether this statement is left cover for the bureaucracy or a genuine statement of intent to organise for Assange. Once again though, the issuing of the statement has objective significance for the Assange campaign and should be utilised in efforts to build on the campaign amongst workers not just in South Africa but globally.

Another development occurred in London when a newly formed London Bus Drivers Rank and File Safety Committee, initiated by the Socialist Equality Party of Britain, [passed a motion](#) condemning the state frame up and persecution of Assange

The motion read:

"We call on all workers everywhere to come to Assange's defence. At stake are basic democratic rights, including free speech and freedom of the press. The defence of Assange is the spearhead of the struggle against militarism and war abroad, and the mobilisation of the state against the working class at

home"

The SEP is a Trotskyist socialist party. Trotsky, co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution fought for decades against the degeneration of the USSR under Stalin.

The safety committee is one of several rank and file safety committees initiated by the Socialist Equality Party, who publish the World Socialist Web Site (WSWS). The motion should be welcomed as a reflection of the deep well of support and internationalism that exists within the working class. However it is worth noting that classconscious.org has a principled difference with the SEP in regards to only organising with workers on Assange outside the structure of unions by insisting workers must "break" with the unions altogether and form new worker committees. We believe this severely limits the capacity of united front work with the best layers of workers still trapped under the control of the reactionary trade union leadership. By working only outside the unions, promising developments such as the safety committees motion, risks withering on the vine as other committee initiatives of the SEP have done over recent years.

Classconscious.org has long argued that only a campaign that did not appeal to any faction of the ruling class but sought instead to independently mobilise the international working class. This is the only social force capable of forcing a backdown by US imperialism in its obsessive campaign to crush Assange as part of its efforts to stop ordinary people from learning about its crimes.

The Assange campaign must once and for all step back from the cliff. No faction of the ruling class will save Julian, not the liberal/social democratic, or the fascist wing. The British ruling class and its kangaroo court do the bidding of

the war mongers in Washington. The working class is the only international force with the social power to free Julian. It is the working class that has the most to lose, because at its heart the prosecution of Assange by the Trump administration is designed to prevent ordinary people from learning about, and therefore, being able to intervene politically to stop imperialism's war crimes.

Joint Statement by COSATU and SACP: Call for US authorities to stop political persecution of Julian Assange

📅 September 15, 2020

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), and the South African Communist Party (SACP) emphatically condemn the forcible seizure and arrest of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, for his publishing activities of secret information, including news leaks, from anonymous sources. The US Department of Justice has laid charges of espionage by conspiracy to disclose classified documents, and to encourage others to do the same. This is a travesty of the truth. The documents in question revealed evidence of war crimes and human rights abuses in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Assange is in grave peril. He is currently in court on an extradition trial in the United Kingdom, on behalf of and at the behest of the US government. The US Justice Department previously issued a statement claiming that Assange only faces charges that could lead to a prison sentence of up to five years if he has been found guilty. COSATU is however aware that if found guilty, he faces the threat of 175 years in prison. Such an unimaginable punishment will have a devastating effect on his family.

COSATU and the SACP call for an all-out campaign in South Africa, and internationally to defend Assange, oppose his extradition to the US, and secure his freedom, with guarantees against any future prosecution. If he is transferred to the custody of the US, anything is possible, including charges of espionage that carry a death penalty or indefinite detention as an “enemy combatant”.

Assange has become a target because he did what journalists are supposed to do—expose the truth. The WikiLeaks publisher exposed the crimes that emerged out of wars launched based on lies, which have led to the deaths of more than one million people.

We stand firm on the belief that it is the working class, the broad mass of the population, that must be mobilised to defend Julian Assange, and all class war prisoners. The demand for their freedom must be a rallying cry for the global working class. We therefore call on all workers and young people, and all those who uphold democratic rights, to come forward and take an

Down with the dictators of capital! Long live the world socialist revolution!

Issued by COSATU and the SACP

Cde Sonia Mabunda-Kaziboni (COSATU)

Cell: 072 535 1577

Dr Alex Mohubetswane Mashilo(SACP)

Cell: 082 920 0308

Statement from COSATU website

London bus drivers resolve to fight for Assange's freedom

*By the London Bus Drivers Rank-and-File Safety Committee
16 September 2020*

The following resolution calling for the defence of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange was passed unanimously at the inaugural meeting of the London Bus Drivers Rank-and-File Safety Committee held on Sunday September 13.

This meeting of the London Bus Drivers Rank-and-File Safety Committee condemns the frame-up and state persecution of WikiLeaks publisher and journalist Julian Assange. Imprisoned in London's notorious Belmarsh maximum security prison, he has been charged under the US Espionage Act (1917). If found guilty, he faces 175 years in a US federal prison.

The extradition hearings underway in London are a grotesque show trial staged by the British state. We reject the lies against Assange by the media, the Tory government and their allies in the Labour Party. Assange is not guilty of "espionage" or "hacking." He has been targeted for exposing war crimes by the US, Britain and their allies—crimes that led to the deaths of 1 million people in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We call on all workers everywhere to come to Assange's defence. At stake are basic democratic rights, including free speech and freedom of the press. The defence of Assange is the spearhead of the struggle against militarism and war abroad, and the mobilisation of the state against the working class at home.

We demand a halt to extradition proceedings, the dropping of all charges and Assange's immediate release from prison. Julian Assange must be reunited with his family and be afforded full compensation for the suffering he has endured as a result of the decade-long state vendetta against him.

September 13, 2020

