

SUBVERSION

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ASSANGE & OPPRESSION

"Anyone who recognises the basis of political power and the need for resistance must not regard alleged crimes against individual women as being outweighed by macro-political imperatives. There is, to use Assange's unintentionally ironic phrase, 'unity of oppression' - there is no hierarchy of oppression"

The ongoing diplomatic crisis created by the attempted extradition of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange is causing almost as much embarrassment for the Left as it is for the British government. With the stand-off unlikely to resolve itself soon, it is worth prising apart some of the key issues which mark the contradictory nature of the Assange case.

Assange is one of the most wanted men on the planet, due to the seismic impact that the systematic leaking of government information by Wikileaks made as it revealed the inner workings of the wars in Iraq & Afghanistan and of the international diplomatic scene. However, in this particular instance he is in demand for alleged sexual assault of two women in Sweden. The issue at stake is whether his extradition to Sweden would lead to his subsequent extradition to the United States, where Assange believes he would face torture, imprisonment and possible death. Following the failure of his appeals against extradition, Assange subsequently claimed asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy - asylum which has subsequently been granted. The British government states that it will not honour the grant of asylum and is still intent on extraditing Assange to Sweden.

The first issue that need to be raised when addressing the above is the nature of Wikileaks and it's impact. Many people have expressed doubts about the political purpose

of Wikileaks in exposing the data that it did. Much has also been made of the particular political opinions of Assange himself, being notably libertarian and possibly outright rightist. However, we would be remiss to paint the Wikileaks operation in such specific terms as being universally progressive; the leaked data was a mass of different and often contradictory information, containing exposes of real injustice and many pieces of irrelevant trivia. This is not the point, however; like social media or other open forms of political activity, the opportunities created by the leaking of this unedited morass of data are there for those who wish to make a political narrative out of them, guided by insight and ideology. It is evident that the revelations in the leaked cables were an opportunity for the left, and their very existence challenged the operation of the state and of imperialism. The objective merit of Wikileaks for the progressive movement of resistance, then, is evident.

It also counts as a political act; we should not be calling for Assange to made 'accountable' for the leaks as if these are normal criminal charges for which he should expect 'justice'; we should recognise that it is in the interests of the resistance that Assange 'get away' with the leaks, much as Bradley Manning and the Anonymous collective should also evade the justice of reaction.

The second issue, then, is the real and pressing need of

the ruling class in the United States to get revenge on Assange and Manning, in order to prevent future rebellions of data. This, despite cries of 'conspiracy!' and 'tin foil!' from the anti-Assange lobby, is a live threat. A Grand Jury against Wikileaks and Assange already exists in the States, and although the calls for Assange to be executed for treason are the minority within the ruling class the fact remains that he is considered an existential threat to the interests of the American state. Extradition from Sweden being possible, and even feasible, there is no doubt that for Assange the route to the USA goes through Stockholm.

However - recognition of the above does not in any way detract from the issues around the extradition request from Sweden. The allegations of sexual assault made against Assange - regardless of the fact that no charges have thus far been made and that the allegations are not listed as rape by the Swedish authorities - are very serious, and nobody who regards Assange as being political defensible should use arguments of rape denial or victim-blaming to belittle the complainants. The recent intervention by George Galloway on this issue is only the most blatant and public example of this attitude. We must be clear that anyone who alleges rape or sexual assault has the right to do so and be respected, and not to be slighted or slandered for doing so. It is also clear from the legal proceedings thus far that Assange has an answerable case, which is the basis for the extradition request.

Furthermore, anyone who recognises the basis of political power and the need for resistance must not regard alleged crimes against individual women as being outweighed by macro-political imperatives. There is, to use Assange's unintentionally ironic phrase, 'unity of oppression' - there is no hierarchy of oppression.

This takes us to the request for asylum. Assange was entitled to seek refuge in the Ecuadorian embassy (although it was that showed remarkably callous disregard for the complainants) on the basis of his understanding of the political campaign against him. That this act infuriated and embarrassed the British authorities is also plain to see. However, the decision to grant Assange asylum by the Ecuadorian authorities was an act of national independence and political support for Assange - it most certainly was not done on the basis of Assange actually qualifying as a refugee under the 1951 Convention. Setting aside the issue that the allegations against Assange would explicitly disqualify him from the terms of the Convention, the fact that he was not under an explicit threat of being turned over to the US authorities means that his request was politically groundless.

But again, that does not change the fact that it was a grant that Ecuador was entitled to make, and now that it has been granted it must be respected by international law. Any attempt to erode the independence and sovereignty of Ecuador by raiding the embassy or ignoring the status they have conferred on Assange must be fiercely resisted.

Bearing in mind the above, we should be mindful not to ignore the simultaneously correct narrative at play within the case - the need for justice for the alleged victims, and the need to prevent victors justice for the United States. The League therefore calls for the following:

- * Stop the witch hunt against Wikileaks! Defend Assange and Manning from the vengeance of the US state!
- * Justice must be done for Women A & B! Assange must answer the allegations, in a protected or neutral environment.
- * End victim-blaming and rape denial!
- * Defend the independence and integrity of Ecuador! The grant of asylum must be respected!



JOIN THE LEAGUE!

For more information contact us at:

The League of Communists in Britain

PO Box 507

Leeds,

LS6 9DN

info@commies.org.uk

Website: www.commies.org.uk



PUSSY RIOT CONVICTED... BUT IT'S NEO- LIBERALISM THAT IS GUILTY



The League of Communists in Britain send our total support and solidarity to the women of the Pussy Riot collective in Russia, who have been imprisoned to two years imprisonment. The battle for democracy and against oligarchy, ignorance and oppression in Russia has now caught fire, and must be continued and strengthened by prolonged international solidarity.

That such a minor incident as the performance of a punk song in an Orthodox church can merit a prison sentence shows the depth to which the post-communist project has sunk in the Russian Federation. The degeneration of the Putin regime into outright falsification and persecution is all the more shocking for the public nature of the humiliating and downright farcical nature of the trial.

The real victim of the trial, however, is neo-liberalism. Twenty years of economic shock therapy, religious

resurgence, nationalist political discourse and the corrosion of the rationale of political liberty has left the neo-liberal project in tatters in Russia. Once when the oligarchs of the Yeltsin-Putin political class were the darlings of the neo-liberal consensus; every misadventure from Chechnya to the shelling of the Russian Parliament were forgiven in the rush to deify the new gods of feral capitalism. No more, though. The end result is now plain to see: a political class of naked and belligerent self-interest, undermining every foothold of secular rights, feminism or individual liberty and loading the political system in favour of the forces of reaction. The individual rights that were meant to be protected and nurtured by the Reagan-Thatcher project are now, officially, dead. Pussy Riot, essentially the children of neo-liberalism, have been condemned by it.

In the judgement of the trial, the cat is well & truly let out of the bag: the feminist motives of Pussy Riot, in respect of the anti-feminist Russian Orthodox Church, represented a hate crime. "In a modern society relations between various nationalities and between religious denominations must be based on mutual respect and equality and idea that one political movement can be superior to another gives root to perspective hatred between various opinions."; namely, to shove your demand for equal rights and equal treatment in the face of those who wish to deny you them, is offensive and a crime. A crime! In this we can see many things falling into place - the denial of political authority to women, workers, Communists, throughout the former Stalinist states of the east, is an essential method of removing all forms of activity which may offend the sensibility of the oppressors. When life is inverted in such a way, the mighty Russian Orthodox Church are the victims and the three women of Pussy Riot the offenders. Vaclav Havel, your work is done.



ABOUT

THE LEAGUE

The League of Communists in Britain was formed on 30th November 2011, and is a non-party, political organisation dedicated to grassroots political activity and practical solidarity. We are an inclusive, broad and non-sectarian platform for the non-authoritarian Left, and we include anarchists, communists, socialists and environmentalists in our affiliates. We believe that we are working in a post-Leninist politics, where the issue is not the establishment of another 'revolutionary vanguard' but the engagement of the working class with the masses, and the direct role of the masses in politics. The imposition of structure upon politics has failed, and the issue today is that of developing political consciousness and on supporting struggles against oppression and exploitation, and to work towards building a mass movement.

Communism in the 21st century is not a struggle for state power, but the struggle against it; it is the engagement in a radical, decentralised politics, which manifests itself as a challenge and resistance to exploitation and oppression on the basis of class, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, immigration status, species and religion. Resistance and practical solidarity is the basis for all of the Leagues political work. We work to defend human rights and political autonomy, provide humanitarian assistance and support those in struggle. We publish a regular newspaper, 'Subversion', which acts as a focus for politics and organising. Our members are active in trade unions such as PCS, Unite and the NUT, and campaigning groups such as UK Uncapped, refugee support organisations and the anti-cuts movement.

We believe in a radical politics which is decentralised and broad; we do not have a structure of committees or branches, we have no conditions of affiliation or payment of dues, and we do not work on the basis of an agreed political 'line'. Instead our emphasis is on practical political work, and not on party building. Affiliation is open to anyone, regardless of membership of other organisations, who agrees with our core mission. statement and signs our equalities disclaimer. Affiliation costs £1 per month.

RED

OCTOBER

a festival of revolutionary culture

Saturday 6th October

League of Communists in Britain stall & leafleting
Leeds city centre, 11am

Wednesday 10th October

"Developments in Nepal - Where Next for the Revolution?"

Public meeting & discussion. Speaker t.b.c. All welcome.

Swarthmore Education Centre, Woodhouse Sq., Leeds 7-9pm

Friday 12th October

Revolutionary Social - full details t.b.c

Bar Santiagos, Grand Arcade, Leeds, 8pm-late

Saturday 13th October

League of Communists in Britain stall
& leafleting, Sheffield city centre, 11am

Monday 15th October

Free Pussy Riot! Benefit gig

Featuring: Glee + more t.b.c

Flesh Eating Foundation + more t.b.c

The Packhorse, Woodhouse Lane, Leeds

8pm -11pm - £4 entry

www.red-square.org.uk

www.commies.org.uk

