from: Lloyd Russell-Moyle <casework@russell-moyle.co.uk> via caseworkermp.com
to: tonygreenstein111@gmail.com
date: 11 May 2022, 12:21
subject: Julian Assange (Case Ref: LR39637)

Dear Tony,

Thank you for contacting Lloyd about Julian Assange. He has asked me to respond on his behalf.

He appreciates this must be a difficult time for Mr Assange's family, friends and supporters.

Mr Assange was arrested in April 2019 for failing to surrender to the court in relation to previous extradition proceedings to Sweden in 2012, in breach of his UK bail conditions. He was found guilty of this offence and sentenced to 50 weeks in prison in May 2019.

As you will be aware, the United States subsequently submitted a full extradition request to the UK in respect of Mr Assange. This was considered at the Old Bailey and subsequently rejected on 4 January 2021 on health grounds. However, Lloyd understands that the US Government has since appealed that decision and that appeal was heard at the High Court on 27-28 October 2021.

Since Members of Parliament cannot interfere with decisions made by the courts, he is unable to comment on an ongoing legal matter, except to say that any process must be fair and proper.

However, Lloyd hopes it is of interest if he sets out his views on the broader concerns you raise about press freedom.

Lloyd believes it is very important that we protect freedom of the press, as this is an essential test of a properly functioning democracy. Sadly, press and media freedoms are under threat around the world and the UK is not without fault. Lloyd is aware that the UK ranked just 33rd out of the 180 countries in the 2021 world press freedom index.

Freedom of the press should be at the centre of a free society. He will continue to press the UK Government to do more to protect the rights of journalists and stand up for universal freedom, democracy, and the rule of law everywhere.

I can therefore assure you that Lloyd will follow any developments regarding press freedoms closely.

Thank you once again for contacting Lloyd and for sharing your views.

Yours sincerely,

Carly-May Kavanagh | Office of Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP |

Wednesday May 11 2022

Dear Carly,

Thank you for the message that you have conveyed from Lloyd Russell-Moyle. Nothing I say from here on in is intended as a criticism of you but I would appreciate it if Lloyd replied to this letter personally, not via you. Is it too much to expect one's MP to directly respond to a constituent's letter?

I will embargo this response, copying it to no one, for 7 days in order to allow Lloyd to reconsider his position.

Julian Assange has been incarcerated, without being convicted of any offence, for three years notwithstanding his 7 years confined inside a tiny embassy. His only offence was to have made available, via the whistleblowing of Chelsea Manning, the truth about US war crimes overseas and in particular in Iraq.

Julian's crime was to disclose an 18 minute video '**Collateral Murder'** in which a US helicopter machine gunned 20 civilians in a Baghdad street, including a Reuters journalist Saeed Chmagh and his colleague. Not only were they murdered but when a minibus stopped to rescue him, his rescuers including children were murdered.

It is clear that Lloyd knows absolutely nothing about the case of Julian Assange or if he does know he prefers not to know and that is in itself is a damning indictment.

Can I suggest that he reads a book that I am just reviewing 'The Trial of Julian Assange' by Nils Melzer, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture? Melzer is a distinguished Professor of International Law at Glasgow University and the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights. After that I together with others want to speak to Lloyd in person about the case of Julian Assange.

Melzer writes (p.28) that:

> Several US Iraq veterans subsequently confirmed that the operation in question was not a singular exception and that such massacres were commonplace at the time, without anyone ever being held to account.

Lloyd says that he *'believes it is very important that we protect freedom of the press'*. If that is not just an empty pious phrase designed to placate myself and others then my response is that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. If Lloyd actually means what he says then he cannot help but speak out against the treatment of Assange.

The attack on Julian Assange is an attack on press freedom. Assange had no option but to seek refuge in the Ecuadorian Embassy since Sweden refused to give him assurances that they would not extradite him to the United States on 'Espionage' charges after the rape allegations had been disposed of. Sweden did not pursue those allegations, despite Assange's offer that they could interview him in the Ecuadorian Embassy, because they were only a pretext to get Assange out of Britain.

Assange's suspicions has been proven absolutely correct. The legal process has been marked by dishonesty and duplicity. A secret Grand Jury indictment had been drawn up in the US ready to be sprung the moment his feet touched Swedish soil.

The fact is that the 'rape' allegations in Sweden were wholly bogus and if Lloyd is really interested in them then he can read Jonathan Cook's article on the Persecution of Julian Assange here and Craig Murray's article There Are No Rape Charges Against Julian Assange in Sweden. There Are Espionage Charges Against Julian Assange in the USA.

Even on the most basic facts Lloyd is wrong. Assange was charged and dealt with at Westminster Magistrates Court **not** the Old Bailey.

What really angers me is the statement that '*Members of Parliament cannot interfere with decisions made by the courts, he is unable to comment on an ongoing legal matter, except to say that any process must be fair and proper.'*

This is what is known as a non-sequitur. The second part of the sentence does not follow from the first part.

Obviously MPs can't interfere in judicial proceedings because they have no power to do so. However they can criticise and speak out against the injustices that Assange has experienced at their hands. There is nothing to stop Lloyd speaking out except his own narrow political calculations.

Tony Benn, Tam Dalyell, Chris Mullin, Joan Maynard and many other socialist Labour MPs have spoken out against judicial bias and irregularities in the past. In the Assange case there has been a multiplicity of irregularities including surveillance of his meeting with doctors and lawyers and the prevention of access to his legal counsel. There mere fact that he is imprisoned in Belmarsh, Britain's Guantanamo, is evidence of that fact.

Judges are the most reactionary part of the British Establishment How the hell would the Birmingham 6 have been freed if people like Chris Mullin and Gareth Pierce hadn't constantly 'interfered' with the courts (for which read 'fight for justice')? And all the other Irish miscarriages of justice that Lloyd is obviously unaware of would have remained unresolved, such as Guilford 4, Maguire 7 etc.

Lloyd's assumption is that in political cases there isn't already such interference. When the Bloody Sunday Inquiry was set up, Prime Minister Ted Heath and Lord Chancellor Hailsham met with the Chair of the Inquiry, Lord Chief Justice Widgery the day after Bloody Sunday, to inform him of the government's expectations. Ted Heath advised Widgery to remember that *'we are in Northern Ireland fighting not only a military war but a propaganda war'.* What was that if not interference?

The same happened in the case of Stephen Ward in the Profumo Affair when meetings were held between the Home Secretary and the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police. Perhaps Lloyd is also unaware of the corruption and political pressure in the conviction of the Shrewsbury 3 or the judicial attacks on the miners during the 1984 strike?

The Courts are not and never have been neutral. They are an instrument of class justice which is why they are unconcerned about the fact that someone who revealed war crimes, rather than the war criminals themselves, is being persecuted. Why does Lloyd Russell-Moyle find that so hard to understand?

Assange was convicted of jumping bail and given 50 weeks prison (the maximum is 52 weeks) by District Judge Lady Emma Arbuthnot. There was no trial. She should have recused herself. Let me quote from p.45 of Melzer's book regarding this 'lady':

> But there was an even more serious catch to Judge Arbuthnot's ruling. Her husband, Lord James Arbuthnot, not only sits as a Tory in the House of Lords. He has also held high positions in the British defence industry for decades, and, until 2014, was Chairman of the Defence Select Committee, whose tasks include overseeing the British military.

This whole process has been tainted by overt judicial and legal bias and corruption yet Lloyd has nothing to say. Like the 3 wise monkeys he neither hears, says or sees anything.

The process Julian has faced is anything but fair and it is obvious that what is taking place is slow murder. I refuse to accept Lloyd's assurances. They are utterly hollow and the person responsible for all this is Sir Keir Starmer who oversaw the request for extradition.

When the Swedish authorities wanted to drop their extradition request lawyers for the DPP, over whom Starmer presided responded. *'Don't you dare get cold feet'*. What is that if not interference in the legal process?

I understand that in order to protect his seat from Starmer's attacks on the Left Lloyd has left the Socialist Campaign Group. That is his decision but it would seem, in order to keep Starmer happy, Lloyd has resorted to these weasel words in order to avoid the Assange case.

Lloyd is my MP. I demand that he meet with me and others to discuss how he can help in the Assange case and that in the meantime that he acquaint himself with the facts of the case. It seems that there is no principle that Lloyd will not sacrifice on the altar of expediency.

Lloyd and I have never got on personally because I could not tolerate someone who said one thing to my face but another behind my back in secret letters to the then Labour General Secretary Iain McNicol. However our interpersonal relations are irrelevant.

I am writing about a hideous miscarriage of justice and I want Lloyd to take this seriously and not to try and fob me and others off with meaningless phrases about press freedom that belie his refusal to intervene in the most egregious case of an attack on press freedom.

For a start he can do what Caroline Lucas, for all her faults, does and write to me personally.

Secondly he can read Melzer's book. It will be good bed time reading.

Thirdly he can arrange the meeting I have proposed.

If Lloyd is unable to do any of these then I will draw the necessary conclusions as will others. I certainly will not vote for someone who places a premium on his career to the exclusion of all the principles he once espoused. Even decent Tories like David Davies and Peter Hitchens recognise the importance of the Assange case.

If Lloyd means what he says about press freedom then instead of lazily accepting the mainstream narrative he will find out for himself the details of this case and in the meantime abandon his mistaken idea that MPs cannot criticise the reactionary anti-working class judiciary that bows the knee in the name of 'national security'.

Yours sincerely,

Tony Greenstein

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Dear Tony,

I've read through your correspondence.

Carly-May accurately reflected my thoughts and I am happy with the response that she gave you.

I am not going to get into the details of which court said what.

You are right that MPs can choose to campaign on issues in courts, most MPs will select cases that match their interests.

I have no interest in taking up or commenting further on Assange and I will not be singing EDMs on it. If Assange is the most important thing to you over municipalisation, poverty reduction, money redistribution, social housing, Kurdish freedom, youth work, deposits protection, arms control, trade, constitutional affairs, cabinet office and ministerial code, health and social care ombudsperson (just some of the areas that I work on) then please vote for someone that pledges to sort out Assange at the next election or stand yourself, because it will not be me that prioritises Assange, I intended to publicly say nothing on this issue.

I am sorry we have to agree to disagree on this but I don't think a meeting would be useful and decline the request.

Yours

Lloyd

PS: most MPs get their staff to draft response for them, some pretend that they then send the emails, but we have always been honest on the process of who is writing the email.

Brighton Kemptown and Peacehaven | Unit 11, Hunns Mere Way, Brighton | BN2 6AH

Wednesday 18 May 2022

Dear Lloyd,

I refer to your email of 13 May refusing to sign two Early Day Motions in support of Julian Assange. You say that '*Carly-May accurately reflected my thoughts and I am happy with the response that she gave you.*' Nevertheless, as I originally stated, I preferred to hear from the horse's mouth.

All I asked you to do was to sign two EDMs in his support. That is not very onerous.

It is clear that you know very little about the case despite it having been in the news for a decade. You couldn't even get the court which is dealing with his extradition right.

However it was, Carla-May, who volunteered that *'Lloyd believes it is very important that we protect freedom of the press, as this is an essential test of a properly functioning democracy.'*

That was why I queried the reasons she gave, interference by MPs with the courts for your refusal to sign. As John Pilger said

> if WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange is extradited to the US "no journalist who challenges power will be safe".

I would expect you to know that Wikileaks were responsible for the leaking of thousands of files relating to, amongst others, US war crimes in Iraq. In particular the 'Collateral Murder' video which shows a helicopter machine gunning civilians on a square in a Baghdad neighbourhood in July 2007. 12 people were murdered including two Reuters journalists, Namir Nour El Deen and Saeed Chmagh, who worked for the Reuters news agency.

I would expect you to at least be aware of the outline of the affair if not all the details, including the use of an extradition request for rape in order to hand Assange over to the US for an espionage trial.

I would expect you to have some views about prosecuting those who reveal American war crimes whilst allowing the war criminals themselves, especially Bush and Blair, to go scot free.

You also cannot be unaware of reports that the CIA discussed assassinating Assange on British streets.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3u8xedWY2Ek

CIA plot to kill Assange

Contrary to your allegation that the Assange case is '*the most important thing'* to me I am painfully aware that I have done all too little about this monstrous injustice. I was sent a standard letter by the Julian Assange Defence Committee and asked to forward it on to my MP in the hope that they would sign 2 EDMs. Nothing more.

At no stage did I ask you to campaign for Assange. Of course it is your right and prerogative to choose the issues dearest to your heart. It would have taken you all of a minute to sign two Early Day Motions. SNP, Labour, Green and Plaid Cymru MPs have signed them. Even one Tory, David Davies signed it.

https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/58667
https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/57256

What does the first EDM say?

> *'That this House expresses its concern at the refusal of the UK Government and prison authorities to allow an online video meeting between Julian Assange and a cross-party group of British parliamentarians'.*

And what does the second EDM state?

> *That this House notes the July 2020 statement by the National Union of Journalists, the International Federation of Journalists, Reporters Without Borders and others in relation to the WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and affirms its commitment to press freedom and public-interest journalism?*

Pretty innocuous stuff you might think. So your fear of 'interference' with the decisions of the Courts was unfounded. The EDMs were a protest against the arbitrary actions of the Executive in the first instance and an anodyne statement in support of press freedom which you have previously assured me you supported.

I note that you list 'constitutional affairs' amongst your areas of interest (though not war, imperialism, civil liberties or racism). Well what could be more profound than the claim of the US to extra territorial reach for those who infringe its own legislation? Would we allow China, Russia, Israel or Turkey to claim that an offence committed in other jurisdictions allows it to extradite someone who isn't even its citizen? Especially when that 'offence' isn't even an offence in this country (and arguably not in the US either).

Of course the real reason for your refusal to associate with the Assange campaign has nothing to do with the reasons you gave. Your real fear is associating with someone whose plight is due to the actions of Keir Starmer. Starmer was DPP when the persecution of Assange began. Assange represents everything that is rotten and subservient about Britain's relationship to the American state. The persecution of Assange is a metonym for Britain's client relationship with the United States.

At the Labour Party conference last year you took a day trip to the left. Let me remind you of what you said at a rally of the Socialist Campaign Group:

> This has been a goddamn awful conference with a goddamn awful leadership. And the problem is that he [referring to Starmer] might be a very nice man...

At which point the audience began shouting that he wasn't and you made it clear with your facial expressions that you agreed with them. There were shouts of *'Keith, Keith, Keith'* and you smiled broadly. You continued:

> 'But, he is not a politician for the Labour Party. I'm afraid that is a reality.... No politician worth their salt would wage an internal war on the party when we have one of the worst governments in history... No longer can the NEC in snap elections or byelections like they did in Hartlepool select and parachute candidates in. Now the decision is by your local branches.

Nor was this all that you said. You went on:

> "I was struck by members who feel alone in our party at the moment. I want to apologise, from me in particular, because if we have made you feel like you are alone, if we have not reached out our arms enough in these tough times when you are being purged or set up with false allegations, I not only apologise, I will endeavour to do better because we have to support each other. "

I was one of those who were purged. Indeed I was the first Jewish person to be expelled from the Labour Party. You were Chair of the local Labour Party at the time, a party which had passed policy in my support. What was your reaction? To secretly write to General Secretary Iain McNicol and his minions urging that my expulsion be speeded up! It was only because of sloppy redaction in response to a Subject Access Request that this correspondence saw the light of day.

Nor was I the only one. Amanda Bishop, an anti-apartheid activist, called for people to march on synagogues in reaction to the continuous false allegations of anti-Semitism. Possibly not the wisest call but it was no more anti-Semitic than I was anti-Christian for picketing anti-abortion churches. Yet you denounced her.

The same with Daniel Harris, who was suspended for putting the faces of 3 right-wing councillors onto a Chanukah video. This too was 'anti-Semitism'.

So yes you did indeed make all 3 of us feel alone because you failed to offer even a smidgen of solidarity and instead did your best to undermine us.

Of course there was an immediately hostile reaction by the Zionist Right to your speech. The Spectator started the ball rolling with an article on 2nd October *Will Starmer move against the Socialist Campaign Group*? There was an article in Jewish News and then it was reported that the Whips Office was considering removing the whip from you and that Labour Against Anti-Semitism had submitted a formal complaint.

https://youtu.be/Qk-z2OOrmWw

Lloyd's speech to the 2021 Campaign Group Rally

I think it is fair to say that you panicked and have subsequently spent the time since Labour conference rowing back from your speech. Nothing else explains your refusal to have anything to do with the most important issue of press freedom issue in living memory.

It is also reported that you have formed a 'New Left' group which is seen by some as heralding your departure from the SCG.

I note that among your interests is 'poverty reduction' and 'arms control'. Could I suggest that poverty will only eliminated when capitalism is replaced. If you are serious about arms control then the United States, which is going after Assange, is the world's largest supplier of arms and weapons as part of its desire to retain its position as the world's foremost military and economic power.

Julian Assange is just one casualty of the American war drive which we see most clearly in Ukraine where they are pouring in billions of dollars of arms in their proxy war with Russia?

To refuse to give even token support to Assange, which is what signing an EDM means, is despicable.

And no. I have no interest in standing against you as an MP however I will happily support a socialist challenge to you as your political direction of travel is clear.

Regards,

Tony Greenstein