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”BEWARE OF THE ANARCHISTS” - The West’s fear of the anarchists and Julian Assange

a Julian Assange online newspaper article

Wolfgang Michal

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Translation of this German online newspaper article into
English by Michael Schreiber

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Europe showered the nationalist Alexei Navalny with compassion, praise and awards. In the case of the Wikileaks founder, however, the EU is cowardly ducking its head. Where does this double standard measurement come from?

At the end of last year, Julian Assange received the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought from the EU Parliament. Shortly before, he had been awarded the M100 Media Award from the European press. Christian Lindner in his laudatory speech: Public and political pressure must be maintained because Assange is only in custody “because he dares to report obvious grievances, abuse of power and corruption.” The EU has therefore decided on tough sanctions against Assange’s oppressors.

Unfortunately, this is all fake news. The EU and the European press are by no means fighting for the anarchist Julian Assange, who is imprisoned in Belmarsh prison in London. Their sympathy, their eulogies and their awards go solely to the nationalist Alexei Navalny, who is being held near Moscow.

The two prisoners are accused of making “confidential documents” (state secrets!) available to the public: one on his disclosure platform Wikileaks, the other on his disclosure platform Rospil. Both sometimes stood out for their political views that were not to everyone’s taste - one was highly libertarian, the other was highly nationalistic. So why does “the West” apply double standards to the two? The West is simply more afraid of anarchists than nationalists. Because nationalists have no objection to authoritarian government, anarchists certainly do. That is why state power – whether democratic or authoritarian – shows extreme severity towards anarchists.

Julian Assange’s anarchist predecessors, such as Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin, already felt this. He took part in the Dresden May Uprising in 1849 and was arrested in Chemnitz. Russia forced his extradition, so Bakunin ended up in the notorious state prison of Saint Petersburg in 1851. Due to strict isolation and inhumane prison conditions, he contracted scurvy. With ruined health, he was exiled to Siberia, from where he managed a spectacular escape in 1861. The tsar would never have pardoned him. US President Joe Biden behaves like a Russian tsar towards Julian Assange.

Pyotr Alexeyevich Kropotkin was luckier. He, too, was imprisoned in Petersburg state prison; he also contracted scurvy, but was able to escape after a few years. When he was arrested again in France and his illness worsened, celebrities such as Victor Hugo raised their voices and called for his immediate release. The protest had an impact. Kropotkin (whose beard was adopted by Assange) was released in 1886. But writing down his experiences “in Russian and French prisons” will hardly cheer up the sick prisoner Julian Assange.

It is a beautiful custom that in revolutions the state prisons are the first to be stormed. This was the case during the storming of the Bastille in Paris in 1789 and during the February Revolution in St. Petersburg in 1917. A storming of “Her Majesty’s Prison Belmarsh” is unlikely – in the absence of a revolutionary situation. But the EU could finally demonstrate its previously merely asserted sovereignty and campaign for Assange’s release with the same vehemence as it did for Navalny. The same applies to the European media and party leaders like Christian Lindner. It discredits their commitment to Alexei Navalny if they always cowardly duck their heads when it comes to Assange.