

The rally on Friday in Brisbane was a great success. Cathy Newnam of the Revolutionary Social Party (I think) spoke brilliantly and with great fire and passion. One line in particular in her speech will live with me a long time - "How dare they recruit our struggle against rape to their struggle against Free Speech? That deservedly got the loudest cheer of the day. I spoke as per the speech I circulated earlier to the list.

I know this list is poised over a precipice and we could descend into a flame war, the last thing we need. S.Artesian, Machtera and Les are very unhappy. Meanwhile Assange is in prison faced with the very real threat of assassination, or a life of imprisonment in the US "Justice" system.

My take on this is that the charge of rape was precisely chosen for a very particular reason. More than other charge possibly it was always the one most likely to de-mobilize the Left. At this time nothing is more important for the Ruling Class. For instance there have been two highly successful rallies in Brisbane called by the Socialist Alternative and the Socialist Alliance. Both are minuscule grouplets in number terms but they have both given an object lesson in how at the right juncture correct politics and courage can make contact with and direct popular unrest.

Go to Lenin's Tomb blog and watch the video of the student demonstration. It begins with a brilliant fiery speech by Simon Hardy of the National Campaign against fees and cuts. The politics are perfect and so is the passion. But many of us on the left have spoken for the last thirty years with similar fire passion and politics. What is different now is that there were thousands listening to Hardy. While he addressed the fears and anger of his audience the traditional leadership of the student movement was huddled elsewhere around candles. Aaron Carter and his smooth talking hangers on were rendered irrelevant by the class struggle. Hardy has been propelled to the front.

Similarly in Brisbane Kathy Newnam, the most uncompromising of Leftists and the least given to even the slightest of populist gestures, was deservedly cheered by a Brisbane crowd to the very echo.

Why? Because she was addressing popular unrest and anxiety about what our rulers are doing to us.

And there is plenty of unrest about at the moment. The common sense of ordinary people is beginning to understand, admittedly still through a glass darkly, the politics of the financial crisis. Nevertheless more and more people are beginning to understand that according to the world view of our masters the banks are too big to fail and we the people are too small to succeed.

This new popular common sense rejects this and as a consequence it is

leading us into the days of rage. The fear of the ruling class is as palpable as the hysteria on Camilla's face. Here I was inspired by the sight of the young students, sat in the midst of a kettle at their lap tops. Back in the street protests of the 70s here in Brisbane, the police used to confiscate our megaphones so we could be left isolate3d and directionless.

Doesn't work any more now. There were the students row upon magnificent row of them at their lap tops. Physically confined but spatially free thanks to the internet. There has never ever been anything like it a protest before. This is truly the shock of the new and it is shocking the ruling class to their rotten core.

It is the spontaneous recognition of the importance of the internet and the free flow of information and the coming reign of no more secrets that make this time so exciting. It is also what has drawn hundreds of thousands to the defence of Assange. Thus it seems to me that the Wikileaks revelations too are disrupting business as usual at the worst possible time for our rulers.