Free Pablo Hasel!

We are reproducing this article from the Republican Socialists blog.

The Republican Socialist Platform condemns in the strongest possible terms the imprisonment of Catalan rapper Pablo Hasél.

Pablo was convicted and now imprisoned in connection with tweets and songs taking aim at the Spanish establishment, including the disgraced former king Juan Carlos I, who has been implicated in extensive corruption in recent years. Far from being an exceptional case, this outrageous use of the law to suppress and criminalise political dissent is consistent with the Spanish state's typical response to democratic and socialist challenges from below.

Article 578, one of the laws which Pablo supposedly violated, ostensibly criminalises the "glorification of terrorism" but is widely understood to instead criminalise political speech, songs, art and satire. It is regularly weaponised against the left but rarely against the ascendant Spanish far-right.

The Spanish state's authoritarian impulses have been displayed perhaps most clearly in recent years in Catalonia. Since the independence referendum in October 2017, Catalans have been forced to contend with police violence and political trials, including the unjust imprisonment of political and civil society leaders. The independence movement in Scotland has often extended support and solidarity to the Catalan movement and we reaffirm that internationalist position today.

Since Pablo was taken by force from an occupation at the University of Lleida last week and jailed, mass street protests have taken place every single day in cities across the length and breadth of the Spanish state, from Barcelona and Madrid to Seville and A Coruña. Many of these protesters have been beaten, arrested and denounced in the Spanish press and by the far-right as vandals and hooligans.

As Pablo himself wrote on Friday from his jail cell: “You cannot put on the same level the violent repression of the state, with its police brutality, and the struggle of the protesters against that and so much more.” We salute the protesters’ courage in taking to the streets in defence of fundamental democratic rights and freedoms in full knowledge of how harsh the response was likely to be. The Scottish independence movement could learn a great deal from their tenacity.

As republicans, socialists and internationalists, we support the call for the immediate release of Pablo Hasél and all political prisoners in the Spanish state; for the dismantling of the anti-democratic laws used to suppress dissent; and for full respect for the right to self-determination.

Llibertat Pablo Hasél!

Free Pablo Hasél!

You can obtain Free Pablo Hasél stickers from the Republican Socialist Platform for distribution in Scotland in exchange for a small donation by contacting treasurer@republicansocialists.scot.

This statement is also accessible in Català, Español/Castellano and Galego.