

The persecution of Assange is an attempt to silence mass anti-war sentiment

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Below is the speech delivered at the June 17 rally in Sydney by Evrin Yazgin, president of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality at the University of Melbourne. Yazgin explained the global impact of the WikiLeaks exposures on young people and all those fighting against dictatorship and war.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality fully supports the fight to free Julian Assange.

This is a decisive struggle for our generation. We have grown up amid a relentless barrage of pro-war lies and falsifications by the corporate media and all the parliamentary parties.

The first political memory of many people my age was the US invasion of Iraq. Based on lies about weapons of mass destruction, the US and its allies, including Australia, launched an aggressive war for oil that killed up to a million people.

The 2003 invasion set the model for every predatory war since. Whether in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, the Ukraine, Africa or the Asia-Pacific, the media claims that the US and Australian governments are dropping bombs, waging war and preparing military interventions out of humanitarian concern and for self-defence.

WikiLeaks and Julian Assange have acted in direct opposition to this war propaganda. The *Collateral Murder* video, the Iraq and Afghan war logs, and the hundreds of thousands of diplomatic cables published by WikiLeaks, have opened the eyes of millions of young people to the brutal reality of imperialist war.

WikiLeaks has contributed to the politicisation of an entire generation.

At the beginning of 2011, hundreds of thousands of young people took part in protests that toppled the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia. Many of them had read cables, published by WikiLeaks, exposing the corruption of the

regime and its close ties to the US. Representatives of the US government warned that this was the first “WikiLeaks revolution.”

Weeks later, Egyptian youth and workers rose up and overthrew the Mubarak regime in Egypt. They were influenced by cables published by WikiLeaks, exposing the government’s torture program, the billions of dollars it had looted from the people, and its intimate ties to the CIA and the US military.

The impact of WikiLeaks is global. WikiLeaks collaborated with Edward Snowden, who revealed that the US National Security Agency, and its partners in the “Five Eyes,” including Australia, were spying on all of us through our computers and our phones. Last year, WikiLeaks published Vault 7, demonstrating that the CIA is the biggest purveyor of malware in the world.

Everywhere, young people face a future under capitalism of war, authoritarianism, poverty and unemployment. The ruling elite knows that these conditions will produce mass social struggles of students and youth.

Their response is to try and suppress the truth. By persecuting Julian Assange, they want to intimidate young people and silence mass anti-war sentiment. They are terrified of WikiLeaks, because they know, as Leon Trotsky, the great Russian revolutionist once said, that “the truth is revolutionary.”

It is up to us to demand freedom for Assange. The IYSSE is oriented to the working class, fighting to mobilise students and young people all over the world. Our international youth movement is raising the defence of Assange with thousands of students and youth in India, Sri Lanka, the US, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and throughout Europe. Over the coming months, we must intensify our campaign, and

the fight to build an international movement of the working class against war, austerity and dictatorship.



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