

IYSSE calls on students in Australia to join the demonstrations in defence of Julian Assange

The IYSSE (Australia)
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The following statement will be mass distributed to thousands of students at university campuses in Sydney and Melbourne over the next three weeks.

Join the rallies in defence of Julian Assange! Oppose the drive to war and dictatorship!

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) calls on all students and young people to take part in rallies defending WikiLeaks publisher and Australian citizen Julian Assange in Sydney on March 3 and in Melbourne on March 10.

The IYSSE is co-sponsoring the protests with the Socialist Equality Party (SEP). They will demand that the Australian government use its undeniable diplomatic powers and legal discretion to secure Assange's safe passage to Australia, with a guarantee against extradition to the United States. The rallies will be addressed by SEP and IYSSE speakers. In Sydney, well-known and respected journalist and filmmaker John Pilger will also be speaking.

The defence of Assange is at the cutting edge of the fight against growing authoritarianism and an assault on democratic rights around the world. For the past eight years, the WikiLeaks founder has been subjected to an unprecedented vendetta by the most powerful governments in the world, including the US, Britain and Australia.

Assange has been relentlessly attacked because he played the central role in WikiLeaks' exposure of Washington's illegal intrigues in countries around the world, the war crimes committed in the predatory, US-led invasions and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, vast corporate corruption and the mass surveillance of the population by the intelligence agencies.

Assange carried out the elementary responsibilities of a genuine publisher and journalist. He was forced by state

persecution to seek asylum in the small Ecuadorian embassy in London, where he now has lived without direct sunlight or adequate medical care since June 19, 2012—nearly seven years.

Since March 2018, Assange has also been denied internet access and restricted access to visitors, because the Ecuadorian government, under pressure from Washington, has lined up with the campaign against him and is seeking to force him out of the embassy.

If he leaves the building, he will be arrested by the British police to face extradition to the US, where he would be put on a show trial for “espionage” or “conspiracy”—charges that could result in a sentence of life imprisonment or the death penalty.

Successive Australian governments have participated in the witch-hunt of Assange. This began when the Greens-backed Labor government of Julia Gillard branded WikiLeaks a criminal organisation in 2010.

Labor is totally committed to the US-Australia military alliance so refused to lift a finger to defend an Australian citizen who had revealed the crimes of both US and Australian imperialism. The Liberal-National Coalition has the same position. Since taking office in 2013, it has fully collaborated with the US and Britain against Assange—under Abbott, Turnbull and now Morrison.

For their part, the Greens, the trade unions, left-liberal journalists and the pseudo-left organisations, such as Socialist Alternative and Socialist Alliance, have all abandoned whatever past protests they made about the treatment of Assange. As the US and Australia are openly trying to provoke conflict with China over economic and strategic dominance of Asia, they have all lined up with the ruling class and repudiated any support for a persecuted publisher who exposes and opposes militarism.

The ruling elites and their defenders particularly hate

Assange because of the contribution WikiLeaks has made to the politicisation of young people.

At the end of 2010, hundreds of thousands of youth took part in the protests that toppled the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia, in what the US *Foreign Policy* journal nervously labelled the first “WikiLeaks Revolution.” Cables published by WikiLeaks had exposed the corruption of the regime and its close ties to the US. Weeks later, Egyptian youth and workers rose up and overthrew the Mubarak regime in Egypt, also influenced by information published by WikiLeaks.

That is why so much effort has been devoted to slandering Assange and trying to discredit him.

All those who refuse to defend Assange justify their position on the basis of claims that have been thoroughly exposed as lies. The Swedish “investigation” into supposed sexual misconduct allegations was dropped in 2017, in a tacit admission that it was a frame-up from the start. Assange was never charged with any crime. Official documents have since revealed that British authorities repeatedly demanded that Swedish prosecutors not drop that case, as it provided them with their pretext to violate Assange’s fundamental democratic rights.

The McCarthyite claim that Assange collaborated with Donald Trump and the Russian regime of Vladimir Putin in the 2016 US election is no less of a lie.

In reality, WikiLeaks published leaked documents that proved the Democratic National Committee had rigged the Democratic Party primaries against self-proclaimed “socialist” Bernie Sanders in favour of Wall Street’s handpicked candidate, Hillary Clinton. WikiLeaks also revealed secret speeches delivered by Clinton to major banks, pledging to do their bidding and to expand illegal US wars abroad.

Moreover, far from being an agent of Russia, WikiLeaks has published hundreds of thousands of documents exposing the criminality and corruption of the authoritarian Putin regime.

What is the situation?

The Australian government has the power to compel Britain to allow Assange to leave the Ecuadorian embassy and return to Australia, if that is what he chooses to do, with full protection from any request by the US for his extradition.

Julian Assange will only be freed, however, as the by-product of a movement from below, a movement of the working class. The IYSSE is not appealing to the Australian government to intervene. We are appealing to workers and young people to *force* the Australian

government to intervene. It will only act if it is more afraid of the actions of Australian workers and youth than it is of the backlash it would likely get from Washington.

The only way a mass movement of the working class will be built is through a direct rebellion against Labor and the trade unions that have completely betrayed all the interests of working people and fully integrated themselves with the corporate elite and the military-intelligence apparatus. After decades of attacks on jobs, wages and social services, presided over above all by Labor and the unions, the richest one percent of the population owns more wealth than the poorest 70 percent, while young people face a future of precarious, low-paid work and lower living standards than their parents.

The IYSSE is the only organisation on university campuses defending Assange, because it is the only student movement that resolutely defends democratic rights and opposes social inequality and militarism. The IYSSE fights for the development of a mass international movement of the working class, the great revolutionary force in society, to end the cause of exploitation, dictatorship and war—the capitalist profit system.

The fundamental problems facing humanity, including the threat of a nuclear world war and the danger of climate change, can only be resolved by the socialist reorganisation of society by the international working class.

We appeal to all students to defend Julian Assange! Demonstrate in Sydney on March 3 and Melbourne on March 10! Join the IYSSE and take up the fight for internationalism and socialism.



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