“Free Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange now!”

Support continues to pour in for Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning

Our reporters
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Workers and young people across the world continue to speak out against the jailing of whistleblower Chelsea Manning, who courageously refused to testify in a secret grand jury against WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange. WikiLeaks and Assange brought to light the war crimes of US imperialism in Iraq with the publication in 2010 of the “Collateral Murder” video, among other leaked documents of US war crimes.

Students and young people spoke out at demonstrations and meetings across the US sponsored by the *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE).

The IYSSE in New York held a rally Thursday on the steps of New York University’s Kimmel Center to demand freedom for Manning. The rally was attended by students and other supporters of Manning and Assange.

“I support Chelsea Manning,” said Phoebe, a drama therapy graduate student in NYU. “I support her courage as a whistleblower. She deserves justice!”

“I support Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange for many reasons,” Anna explained. “I think it is so cruel what has been done to both of them. It is difficult to imagine the hardship they are going through. We must ask, where will this go? If they start imprisoning truthtellers, who is next? What about my family or other families? People will keep speaking up and we can’t wait until it’s too late.”

Chintan, another NYU student, noted, “It’s important that we are covering Chelsea Manning’s arrest. No one else was covering it except the IYSSE and the *World Socialist Web Site*. If we hadn’t covered it many people wouldn’t have noticed.”

Gandhi, a freshman at NYU, said he attended the IYSSE rally to defend Manning and Assange because “if you just sit in silence and ignore it then we are giving our permission to the government to hide things.” Gandhi added, “Not only that, but if we ignore Chelsea Manning then we’re ignoring the innocent lives massacred by the US government.”

At San Diego State University (SDSU) in California, students expressed their outrage over the attacks on Manning and Assange and demanded their immediate release.

Linda, a psychology major at SDSU, said, “I think it’s imperative that workers and students come to the defense of Chelsea Manning and demand her release.

“The fact that she is being jailed for uncovering the murderous war crimes of the US and refusing to testify against Julian Assange is disturbing and should concern everyone,” Linda added. “Her imprisonment has far-reaching consequences and implications for us all and for anyone willing to put their life on the line for exposing the truth about the US military apparatus.”

Angel, a political science graduate at SDSU, noted the complicity of the Australian government in the attacks on Assange. “One of the things that stuck out to me,” Angel said, “is the duty that the Australian government has towards protecting its citizens is not being enforced. If it was any other citizen [aside from Julian Assange] that was held captive, the government has a diplomatic right to bring him home. Because the Australian government is in the pocket of the British and American governments, it’s not going to do that.

“There’s this notion that in the US you at least have some legal rights—you get a lawyer, you get your day in court—but what we’re seeing now [with Chelsea Manning] is that crumbling,” Angel added. “If you’re

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deemed an enemy of the state, the government isn't going to protect those rights. You can be an American citizen but if you're deemed an enemy combatant abroad, you can be killed by drone strike, no questions asked. Due process is simply a group of henchmen in the executive branch deciding your fate without any proof or transparency."

Students and workers in Portland, Oregon, also spoke out in defense of Manning and Assange this week.

Blake, an engineering student and IYSSE member at Portland State University (PSU), explained why he supports Chelsea Manning, Julian Assange and WikiLeaks. "By revealing the crimes that governments committed, they are the criminals? It doesn't make any sense. In other contexts, exposing crimes is a good thing that is offered protection."

While the US government is alleging WikiLeaks collaborated with the Russian government in the 2016 elections, Blake said it is an absurd argument that "goes against what WikiLeaks is about. They are for freedom of information and the truth, and that's what they got out."

Blake then explained how the defense of whistleblowers and democratic rights is inseparable from the struggles of the working class. "It makes it harder to fight for what you need and believe in when you don't know what's going on," he noted. "You can't fight for something you don't know about. Those democratic rights are your tool."

A food worker at the PSU cafeteria, who wished to stay anonymous, stopped at an IYSSE display table Tuesday and said, "The government is so hypocritical. Assange and Manning are representing the principles that the United States was founded upon, for democracy and truth and opposition to tyrannical governments."

The WSWS has also been receiving letters from readers about why they supported the defense of Assange and Manning.

Tamlyn wrote, "FREE CHELSEA! Brave protector of government transparency and press freedom! I admire you, Chelsea! STAY STRONG. THE PEOPLE ARE WITH YOU."

"Chelsea Manning is being punished for telling the people the truth about what is being done in their name," Josh noted. "She must go free!"

Jayantha wrote in to explain his support for the campaign to free Manning and Assange: "Chelsea Manning sacrificed herself in refusing to testify against Julian Assange and it is inspiring for the working class and youth to take the fight to free Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange, which is also defending the democratic rights for the working class around the world. I am contributing to the IYSSE and SEP to help organise rallies and meetings to free Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange."

"Your characterization of Julian being a class war warrior is correct," Ron explained, "because his persecution is the result of his publication of historical truth which is vital for the working class in understanding the way forward. A united front with organisations and individuals who want to defend democratic rights and freedom of expression will find a strong response in the working class. Your exposure of the fake lefts has been very powerful!"

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