

IYSSE at San Diego State University holds rally to defend Chelsea Manning

**International Youth and Students for Social Equality at San Diego State University
29 March 2019**

On Tuesday, members of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and its student and youth wing, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), held a rally at the center of the San Diego State University (SDSU) campus to demand the immediate release of the courageous whistleblower Chelsea Manning.

Manning was imprisoned on March 8 for refusing to testify before a secret grand jury which has been impaneled to bring frame-up charges against WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange. She has been held in solitary confinement for 22 hours a day for three weeks.

Manning spent seven years in prison from 2010 to 2017 for leaking classified documents to WikiLeaks which exposed US war crimes in the Middle East, including video of an attack by a helicopter gun ship in Iraq which killed two Reuters journalists and multiple other civilians dubbed “Collateral Murder” by WikiLeaks.

Tuesday’s rally advanced an international strategy to mobilize youth, students and the broadest layers of the working class against the imprisonment of Manning and the witch-hunt against Assange. The event was part of a series of rallies and meetings organized by the SEP and IYSSE throughout the US and around the world in defense of Manning and Assange.

The opening speaker, IYSSE at SDSU President Anthony del Olmo, spoke to attendees about the US imperialist war crimes Chelsea Manning exposed in 2010:

“The documents that Manning and WikiLeaks released exposed the ‘War on Terror’ as a complete lie, giving the US military the green light to trample over international law and democratic rights to inflate military budgets and stock portfolios to the tune of over \$1 trillion.

“Her courageous decision to reveal the war crimes being covered up by the Bush and Obama administrations, with the full support of the corporate media, is truly heroic and proves that the ruling parties in this country, who speak only for the ultra rich, would rather see

innocent people die than have any infringements on their conquest for global hegemony.”

Del Olmo went on to expose the horrific conditions facing Manning today as she has once again been thrown in prison: “For over two weeks, Chelsea has been detained in the Truesdale Adult Detention Center in Alexandria, Virginia, for exercising her First and Fifth Amendment rights by refusing to participate in a secret grand jury convened by the Trump administration to prosecute Julian Assange and WikiLeaks.

“The imprisonment of Chelsea Manning is cruel, criminal and totally unjustifiable. The White House wants to set a precedent for jailing whistleblowers and journalists who publish information critical of the military and state apparatus.”

Del Olmo concluded by connecting the silencing of whistleblowers and destruction of democratic rights with the systematic elevation of fascistic and right-wing governments across the world by official bourgeois parties.

“From New Zealand to Pittsburgh, Germany, Poland and elsewhere, anti-Semitic and xenophobic violence is resurging with a vengeance at a time when far-right governments and individuals in power are being promoted by state functionaries and capitalist donors while left-wing and oppositional voices are being silenced.

“But there is no mass base for fascism. In nearly every country on the planet, youth and workers have gone on strike or protest against right-wing violence, against attacks to their living standards, against government inaction to climate change, and every other ill created by the capitalist system.

“The fight to defend democratic rights goes hand in hand with the fight against authoritarianism and fascistic violence both of which require the political mobilization of workers and youth independent of all the organizations of the capitalist class, Democratic and Republican alike.”

The next speaker, Kevin Martinez, a member of the Socialist Equality Party, continued by highlighting the abandonment of Manning by supposedly “left” organizations and the role of the Democratic Party.

“I remember watching Collateral Murder when it was released and being absolutely sick to my stomach. This is what the ‘brave’ US military was doing to people around the world in my name and with my tax dollars, in your name and with your tax dollars.

“Only our party has continued to defend these class war heroes—Assange, Manning, Snowden and others. Everyone else has abandoned them. The fake left, the International Socialist Organization (ISO), the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) and all the rest have remained silent on Manning’s imprisonment.

“Not a word was said when Obama and the CIA bled Syria and Libya white. They supported it. They called it a genuine revolution. Obama bailed out the banks. Obama deported more immigrants than any other administration in history. And we wonder why people didn’t run out in droves to vote for Hillary. Obama’s greatest legacy is Trump.

“The pseudo-left represents the upper middle class, not the working class. Their obsession is with sex, race and gender with no talk of war, capitalism, and socialism.”

The final speaker, Norisa Diaz, also a member of the Socialist Equality Party, concluded the rally by placing the suppression of Manning and Assange in the context of the emerging struggles of the working class and youth around the world. She explained that, “the attempt to paint whistleblowers as criminals is part of a larger campaign of censorship and an assault on fundamental democratic rights underway around the world.

“The working class and youth are on the move. From France, to Algeria, Mexico and the US, teachers and autoworkers throughout the world are fighting back. Millions of young people around the world are becoming politicized, participating in protests against climate change and to put an end to mass shootings which have become normalized on the campuses.

“However, the capitalist oligarchs and their governments are terrified that a mass movement of the working class and young people is developing internationally against ever widening social inequality and the growing danger of nuclear world war.

“It is this fear of growing hostility towards capitalism, particularly by young people, that is compelling the ruling elites to turn to dictatorial forms of rule, relying on the far-right fascistic elements to suppress the fight against

austerity, capitalism and imperialist war.”

The rally drew a crowd of students and faculty who spoke to our reporters on the importance of the rally and the defense of whistleblowers.

Cid, a sociology student, said: “The rally was a great way to bring attention to the injustices put on those who speak out against the actions of the military and those in power. It’s crucial to bring attention to these political prisoners as the establishment media and pseudo-left organizations continue to stay silent. These tactics of suppression from the elites contribute to the growing fascist threat world wide.”

Betty, a political science graduate student, told reporters that, “the speeches given were very insightful, detailing many reasons why students and workers should stand up for whistleblowers like Chelsea Manning.

“I think the rally demonstrated the fundamental right to freedom of speech which in today’s world is becoming more and more limited. Censorship is one of the gravest problems assisting in the erosion of our democratic rights.”

On April 9, the IYSSE at SDSU will be hosting Christoph Vandreier, Deputy National Secretary of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) in Germany, a respected leader in the fight against fascism in Europe.

The meeting will address the role of the SGP in exposing the network of pro-fascist academics and state intelligence operatives who are paving the way for the far right. The meeting series will also take up the historical lessons that must be learned in order to build a mass working class movement capable of preventing the return of fascism.



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