

SEP (Australia) public meeting: Free Julian Assange! Oppose imperialist war!

23 May 2024

The Socialist Equality Party in Australia is holding a meeting entitled “Free Julian Assange! Oppose imperialist war!” in Sydney and online on Sunday, May 26 to discuss the urgent struggle to free Julian Assange, defeat a broader turn to authoritarianism and fight an eruption of imperialist militarism worldwide.

WHEN: 2 p.m. (AEST) Sunday, May 26
WHERE: Belmore Senior Citizens Centre,
38 Redman Parade, Belmore, NSW

Register here to attend.

Can't attend in person? Register for the Zoom livestream at this link.

The Socialist Equality Party is pleased to announce the two speakers for the meeting: Thomas Scripps, assistant national secretary of the SEP (UK) and Oscar Grenfell, a member of the SEP National Committee in Australia. Scripps and Grenfell are prominent writers on the *World Socialist Web Site* and have both written extensively on the ongoing persecution of Julian Assange.

The meeting is being held less than a week after two British judges granted Assange the right to appeal his extradition to the United States. The original decision to bar his extradition on mental health grounds in January 2021 was overruled in December that year. Since then, Assange's legal team has mounted an appeal on numerous points, including his rights to life, due process of law and freedom from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

The recent judgement is a victory, however, Assange's life still hangs in the balance. He confronts the danger of extradition to the US where he faces 17 Espionage Act charges and a maximum sentence of 175 years imprisonment.

Assange has committed no crime. Instead, as the publisher of WikiLeaks, he played a key role in

exposing the mass killings and other war crimes of the illegal US-led attacks and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as Washington's global diplomatic conspiracies, human rights abuses and spying operations.

The SEP and the ICFI has insisted that the persecution of Assange is part of a broader attack on democratic rights internationally. The barbaric and genocidal war in Gaza being perpetrated by Israel with the funding and support of the US, Germany and all imperialist governments including the Australian, has been characterised by the targeted murder of health care workers and journalists. The first to ensure the population has no opportunity to recover from war wounds, starvation and disease, the second to silence those who would report the war crimes of Israel to the world's working class.

The US attempt to prosecute Assange must be defeated, not only to save the life of a courageous journalist, but because it is a key component of an onslaught on democratic rights associated with new wars.

The US and its imperialist allies, including Australia, are arming, funding and backing the Israeli genocide of Palestinians in Gaza. That is one front of a developing world war. In Europe, the US and NATO have instigated the largest military conflict since World War II. The proxy conflict in Ukraine is increasingly evolving into an open war with Russia, posing the threat of a nuclear catastrophe. In the Indo-Pacific, Washington's war strategy involves a massive military build-up in preparation for war with China.

This program, stemming from the breakdown of capitalism, is incompatible with democracy. War abroad means a war against the social and democratic rights of the working class everywhere.

This process is exemplified by the arrest in Ukraine

of 25-year-old socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk, who was detained late last month and imprisoned. Syrotiuk has been targeted by the fascistic US-backed Ukrainian regime because he opposes the war and the governments that have instigated it at the expense of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian and Russian lives. He fights for the unity of Russian and Ukrainian workers with the multi-million masses worldwide. If convicted he faces 15 years up to life imprisonment.

Syrotiuk has carried out this struggle as a leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik Leninists, which is in solidarity with the International Committee of the Fourth International, the world Trotskyist movement, and fights for an internationalist and socialist program as the only means to prevent the descent into imperialist world war. The ICFI and the WSWS are waging a global campaign in the working class to secure his immediate release.

In the US and elsewhere, protests by students and others against the Gaza genocide are being met by a major police crackdown and mass arrests.

The attempt to silence Assange and make an example of him is inseparable from this broader context.

As with the fight against war, the struggle to defend democratic rights cannot be waged through plaintive appeals to the capitalist governments who are turning to imperialist barbarism and dictatorship. That includes the Labor government in Australia, which is a party to the Gaza genocide, the US-NATO proxy war in Ukraine and the plans for conflict with China. As part of this militarist program, it has abandoned Assange while targeting domestic anti-war opposition.

What is required to free Assange and Syrotiuk and fight war is the independent mobilisation of the working class. Its vast social power must be brought to bear. That requires the development of a new political leadership in the working class, directed against all of the pro-war capitalist parties and based on a socialist program to abolish the source of militarism, war and authoritarianism, the capitalist system.

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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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