

“The jailing of Assange is an attack on the entire working class”

US workers demand the release of Julian Assange

By Jerry White
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Workers in the United States have reacted with outrage to the jailing of Julian Assange in the United Kingdom and the efforts of the Trump administration to illegally seize the WikiLeaks founder and subject him to detention, possible torture and even death for exposing the war crimes and diplomatic intrigues of the US government.

While the news media and politicians from both the Democratic and Republican parties have hailed the arrest and support the vendetta against Assange, most workers and youth consider Assange, along with former US Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning and former National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden, to be heroes because they defied persecution in order to tell the truth to the people of the US and the world.

“The jailing of Assange is an attack on the entire working class,” Angela, a Fiat Chrysler worker in Kokomo, Indiana and member of the Steering Committee of the Coalition of Rank-and-File Committees, told the *World Socialist Web Site*. “If journalists aren’t safe to tell the truth, then nobody is. The media is smearing Assange as a narcissist. But he is the exact opposite. He is serving us all by telling the truth about what our government is doing. Assange published material about US war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan and what Snowden revealed about the government spying on the American people.”

Angela warned workers “not to get sucked in by the mainstream media.” The corporate-controlled media, she said, “tried to dupe us about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq that never existed.” She continued: “The rule of law is used as a weapon to jail a journalist when it is convenient, and then it is disregarded when it

isn’t. What happened to the right to political asylum? He’s already spent seven years in the embassy, and it looks like they’re trying to pin the label ‘terrorist’ on him. That’s frightening.”

These attacks, she said, did not show the power of the ruling class, but its fear. “The capitalists and the powers-that-be are desperate. They don’t want workers to know the truth. They recognize that the working class is more powerful than we recognize ourselves, and they are afraid of us.

“Julian Assange exposed the ugly truths. Ignorance is not bliss. It is downright dangerous to keep our heads in the sand. We are supposed to have First Amendment rights to free speech, we are supposed to be able to call it as we see it, and we should. We have to unite around Assange, Chelsea Manning, Snowden and all those telling the truth.

“That the mainstream media is bashing Assange just shows its disconnect. What the US did to Iraq and Afghanistan were horrific crimes. The US calls it collateral damage, but if it were your son, daughter or loved ones, you would say it was a crime. Assange showed us what the US government is capable of. If our government can do this to people in the Middle East, they can do this to us in America.”

A Fiat Chrysler warehouse worker in Atlanta, Georgia and another member of the Steering Committee, added, “Journalists and whistleblowers are now being jailed for their bravery. It is clear Julian Assange will not receive a fair trial, as it is being debated in the media if he even is a journalist at all. People must stand up against this outrage and stop the oppressive and heinous overreach of a government that is rapidly declining into an openly fascist state.”

John, a worker at Fiat Chrysler's Kokomo Transmission plant in Indiana, said, "I think it's absolutely critical that this attack on the First Amendment is thwarted. It's an attack on journalism everywhere. It's an attack on everyone's right to know the truth. And it's all being done under the claim that it'll defend 'national security.'"

Assange "did us a great justice," he continued. "He's telling the truth. He brought us information about the many atrocities being done by the American military."

"If whistleblowers don't have somewhere to go, if they don't have that right, journalism's dead, right? That's what Assange is. He's a publisher and journalist, he's not a hacker. Isn't the way they arrested him from the embassy a violation of international law? And the people he's proven to have committed war crimes and crimes against journalists, they're the ones that are still free!"

John derided the media's fraudulent Russia-gate scandal, which has been used to paint Assange as an agent of Putin. "It's McCarthyism," he said. "Ever since the Mueller report came out, instead of letting it die and accepting it, they've ramped it up. The anti-Russia rhetoric is so stupid. And now the focus is on Venezuela, and they're being targeted with lies."

Referring to the role of the corporate press in facilitating the attacks on Assange and on democratic rights, he said, "The fact that the main stream media is not even defending their own jobs... I thought, maybe, since it's their jobs on the line, they'd do something, but they're going along with it."

"It's imperative that we don't lie down on this, that we stand up for what's right and for Julian Assange."

Steve, a trucker from New York State and another member of the Steering Committee of the Coalition of Rank-and-File Committees, said that Julian Assange, Chelsea Manning and "all class-war prisoners should be freed immediately, and the international working class should unite to gain their freedom." He continued: "The facts of their cases are clear to workers everywhere who can see the unfairness and persecution that Assange and all the whistleblowers have endured for exposing the crimes of powerful officials."

"The persecution of these courageous people is an effort to suppress and intimidate those who seek to uncover the serious violations of those in power. The working class, the main defenders of democratic rights,

are becoming aware that basic democratic freedoms are under attack."

He added that the ruling class "lives in fear of a social revolution," as shown by "the militarization of the police, Supreme Court rulings defending the death penalty, the frame-ups and jailing for life of the Maruti Suzuki workers in India, and the police suppression of workers' struggles in Matamoros, Mexico."

Steve concluded: "It is now up to the working class to organize rank-and-file committees independent of the trade unions that will link up with workers internationally in order to defend our democratic rights and free class prisoners like Assange and Manning. The wealthy and powerful, represented by the Democrats and Republicans, are tearing up those rights to maintain their grip on power, as dissent to their rule grows due to the vast social inequality produced by capitalism."

We urge workers and young people to send statements calling for freedom for Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning and supporting the development of an international working-class campaign in their defense. Please send statements of support here.

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Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>