SEP (Australia) first national congress

Resolution 6: Defend Julian Assange

9 May 2012

The following is the sixth of seven resolutions passed unanimously at the first national congress of the Socialist Equality Party (Australia) held from April 6 to 9, 2012 in Sydney (see: "Australian SEP holds first national congress").See resolutions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7.

1. This Congress denounces the Labor government's intimate involvement in the conspiracy by the Obama administration to railroad WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to jail. By refusing to defend the basic legal rights of the Australian citizen, the Gillard government has played a crucial role in the operation against him.

2. The persecution of Assange and WikiLeaks is part of a full-scale global assault on basic political and democratic rights. Its aim is to intimidate and silence mounting popular opposition to the program of militarism and austerity being imposed on working people around the world.

3. Internal emails obtained from the US private intelligence firm Stratfor indicate that the Obama administration has had a secret Grand Jury indictment against Assange since December 2010. Detained in Britain for more than a year, he faces extradition to Sweden on baseless sex charges. The entire frame-up is designed to pave the way for Assange's extradition to the US, where he would be tried under the reactionary Espionage Act of 1917.

4. What is in store for the WikiLeaks founder has already been carried out against alleged WikiLeaks source Private Bradley Manning. Manning has been incarcerated in US military brigs for nearly two years, and subjected to solitary confinement, forced nakedness, sleep deprivation and other torture. The purpose is to force him into a plea bargain that will provide a basis for the US government's case against Assange.

5. Washington is campaigning to vilify Assange and destroy WikiLeaks because the site has exposed thousands of documents detailing US killings of civilians and complicity in torture in Afghanistan and Iraq, along with numerous other crimes previously hidden from the world's population. Among the cables made public are those revealing the close involvement of the US embassy with the Labor powerbrokers who ousted Kevin Rudd as prime minister in mid-2010, and installed Julia Gillard.

6. Gillard has backed the persecution of Assange from the outset. In December 2010—just as the Grand Jury was being secretly convened—she publicly declared, without any evidence or legal justification, the WikiLeaks publication of US cables "illegal." Her government did everything possible to assist the US operation, authorising an investigation by intelligence services and the Australian Federal Police to dig up whatever they could find to try and compromise Assange.

7. By throwing Assange to the wolves, Labor seeks to cover up Washington's crimes and the role of Australian governments in them, as well as to keep a lid on the broader machinations of US imperialism and their implications for the working class. The Gillard government is playing a no less pernicious role than the Howard government did when it backed the Bush administration's detention of two Australian citizens, David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib, along with more than 650 other prisoners, at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, in defiance of the Geneva Conventions and international law.

8. The operations against all three men have been part of the ongoing and fraudulent "war on terrorism." Starting with the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, this "war" has provided the pretext for military aggression abroad, and a barrage of police-state

measures at home. Like the Obama administration, which has deepened the far-reaching assault on democratic rights and precedents launched under Bush, the Labor government has escalated and institutionalised the authoritarian "anti-terror" measures initiated by its predecessor.

9. The bipartisan assault on democratic rights has been endorsed by the entire political establishment, including the Greens. The minority Labor government, which is propped up by the Greens, has retained and intensified all the draconian measures introduced since 2000—detention without trial, secret interrogation, military call-out legislation, an unprecedented military intervention into Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory, and ever harsher anti-refugee laws.

10. The record demonstrates the lack of any significant constituency within Australian ruling circles for a commitment to fundamental democratic and legal rights. With barely a murmur in the media, Labor has repeatedly blocked legal actions challenging Canberra's participation in US-led torture, renditions and Guantánamo Bay detentions, as well as arbitrary deportations and ASIO black-bans of refugees, and seizures of the passports of Australian citizens.

11. The deepening crisis of the capitalist system is at the root of these measures. It has become increasingly impossible for the ruling elites to impose militarism, glaring inequality and the ongoing assault on social and working conditions by democratic means.

12. This Congress salutes the courageous stand taken by Assange and WikiLeaks and will fight for their defence. Assange and WikiLeaks have helped lay bare, in the eyes of millions of people globally, the real conduct and character of the US and other governments around the world, including in Canberra.

13. This Congress demands the immediate release of both Assange and Manning. It insists that the defence of their democratic rights is inseparable from the fight to mobilise the working class against the Labor government, which is a direct accomplice of Washington's conspiracy against them. Democratic rights cannot be defended through the decayed façade of parliament, but only through the fight for a workers' government, committed to the reorganisation of society on the basis of human need, not private profit, and the establishment of genuine democracy in every aspect of economic, political and social life.