

SEP meeting attendees speak out in defence of Julian Assange

Our reporters
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Workers, students and young people responded with enthusiasm to announcements at a Socialist Equality Party meeting last Sunday that the SEP will hold rallies next March in defence of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.

Those in attendance expressed their hostility to the role of the Australian political establishment in the persecution of the publisher, and their admiration for WikiLeaks' exposure of US-led war crimes and illegal diplomatic intrigues.

James, a mature-aged history student, said he attended the meeting, because he "felt a responsibility to support a hero who is under fire, someone who is a very important figure, a world-wide figure. Someone who is telling the truth and exposing corruption.

"The photo of Assange's current condition outraged me. It made me realise how much he has been suffering especially in the last couple of years in the embassy. He has committed no crime, he has exposed the truth.

"Assange is being victimised because the American war machine has to go on. They can't stop it. It's their main source of income. They need wars. We've got business people dictating to governments. Assange is a very dangerous figure because he's making these things transparent.

"We're living through a stage of history with mass rumblings and opposition from below. We've had things like 40 million people go on general strike in Brazil last year and now the emergence of the Yellow Vest movement in France. Under these conditions, workers need people like Julian Assange exposing the truth more than ever."

Gus, a construction worker, came to the meeting after attending a lecture by WSWs international editorial board chairman David North on the 80th anniversary of the Fourth International earlier this month.

He said: "Assange is a journalist. He should be released. His detention is obviously a result of geopolitics. I believe in freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

"It's not in the interests in the mainstream media, of the capitalist class, to have this campaign to free Julian Assange in the open. Their agenda is to keep the working class ignorant.

"Assange is an ongoing threat to the elites, because he reveals the behind-the-scenes of corporate and political corruption. They're afraid of him because they know an informed working class would be a force against capitalism. I don't see anything that compares to WikiLeaks in its capacity to actually bring down those in power, given that the information that it has revealed is both vast in its implications and in its content."

Anwar, a Western Sydney University student and part-time electrician, said: "I came to the meeting because I've been reading through the US diplomatic cables and the war logs on the WikiLeaks website. They show that these wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East have been about oil, resources and money, not human rights.

"I used to think that Australia was a decent country, but after the meeting today, I see there are dirty things going on behind the scenes everywhere. More young people need to get involved and come to these sort of things."

Mia, a retired cleaner, came to the meeting after seeing a poster in the working class suburb of Bankstown. "I wanted to see what kind of movement was defending Julian Assange," she said. "I want to help Julian Assange get free.

"I follow up information on him whenever I can. He is the person fighting for the right to knowledge. This is

the most important thing in life, to know the truth.

“I saw at the meeting today that there is an interest in Assange. It’s not going to be swept under the carpet. It’s going to come up, definitely. I’m getting older, but everyone has to fight until the last minute of their life.

“We are all connected now. People here are looking at the Yellow Vest movement. It touches on our way of living. We never know when the yellow vest is going to be on our street here. The bourgeois Macron wants to give everything to the big banks, that’s where he gets all his money from. It’s the same here.

“The demonstrations in defence of Assange that are going to be held in March are wonderful. Everyone should come and join. If you believe in rights, participate. You never know how the attacks are going to strike you or your family or anyone else around you. This is a fight for the truth.

“This has to go around the whole world. This can be a wonderful thing for society and the young generation because they don’t have anything to lose. They finish university and then face unemployment. What’s the point of that?”



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