

Support for Assange and SEP Australia demonstrations evokes strong international response

James Cogan
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The statement made by former Pink Floyd songwriter and vocalist Roger Waters, in support of the Socialist Equality Party rallies in Australia to secure the freedom of WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange, has reached a significant global audience and been warmly welcomed. The rallies will be held on March 3 in Sydney and March 10 in Melbourne.

The statement, “Acclaimed musician Roger Waters calls on people to demonstrate in Australia to defend Julian Assange,” was published first on the *World Socialist Web Site* on February 11. For a number of days last week, it was the most viewed article on the WSWS.

Waters’ appeal was posted to the SEP Australia Facebook and Twitter accounts, as well as the WSWS Facebook and Twitter feeds and was shared widely and enthusiastically commented on. On the SEP Facebook page alone, it has been shared over 220 times. On Twitter, it was retweeted or republished by WikiLeaks, Unity4J, the Courage Foundation, the Defend Assange Campaign, Christine Assange and dozens of other organisations and hundreds of individuals who defend Julian Assange.

On February 17, the statement was posted on Roger Waters’ Facebook page, which has some 2.1 million followers, and a link to it was published from his official Twitter account, which has 277,000 followers.

The postings have evoked a strong response. From his Facebook page, it has been shared over 290 times and liked more by more than 1,200 people. On Roger Waters’ Twitter account, in less than 48 hours, it has already been retweeted 2,700 times and “liked” over 5,800. A tweet by WikiLeaks, linking to Waters’ Facebook statement, has had over 1,100 retweets and

been “liked” some 2,500 times.

Stories about his statement were accurately published in English by *Sputnik News* and *Russia Today* and, in Spanish, by newspapers in South and Central America. Water’s appeal, however, at this point, is still being subjected to censorship by the mainstream Australian, British and American media.

The WSWS also published last week an endorsement of the SEP demonstrations by highly respected Australian retired academic and human rights’ advocate, Professor Stuart Rees. His statement has also been widely shared and retweeted. Professor Rees will be one of the speakers at the March 3 rally in Sydney, at 2.00 p.m. in Martin Place Amphitheatre, in the centre of the city.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and American political commentator Chris Hedges issued a public endorsement that the WSWS published on February 16. It has likewise been widely shared via social media.

SEP National Secretary James Cogan took part, on February 16 Australian time, in the 17th online Unity4J vigil and elaborated the aims of the demonstrations that will take place in March. (See here for the YouTube video of Cogan’s remarks)

Yesterday, the WSWS published the call by journalist and filmmaker John Pilger for people to support and join the demonstrations in Sydney and Melbourne.

John Pilger, one of the most well-known international opponents of imperialist neo-colonialism and defender of democratic rights and Julian Assange, will deliver the concluding speech to the SEP rally in Sydney on March 3 to demand the freedom of the WikiLeaks publisher.

The movement in defence of Assange is developing

in conscious opposition to the slanders and lies that were developed by the US state apparatus and the official media to justify his persecution.

These range from establishment attempts to still vilify Assange over “rape,” when the manufactured Swedish prosecution allegations that he had to answer “questions” over “suspicion” of possible sexual crimes were discredited years ago. No charges of any kind were ever laid against him.

More commonly, the state agencies and media carrying out the anti-democratic vendetta against Assange denounce him over the publication by WikiLeaks of information during the 2016 US presidential election. WikiLeaks published leaks that exposed how the Democratic National Committee (DNC) was conspiring to undermine the campaign of self-styled socialist Bernie Sanders, in order to assist the right-wing, militarist campaign of Democratic Party candidate Hillary Clinton.

The top DNC officials were forced to issue apologies to the 13 million people who had voted for Sanders in the primaries and resign from their positions.

Assange is nevertheless absurdly accused by the Democratic Party, CIA, FBI and NSA of being a Russian tool and responsible for Trump’s election, without a shred of evidence of purported “collusion” ever being presented or uncovered by the protracted “investigation” by special counsel and former FBI chief Robert Mueller (see: “Stone indictment presents no evidence of links between WikiLeaks and Trump campaign”).

The truth is that WikiLeaks published leaks in their possession that were truthful and clearly in the public interest.

The Democratic Party is responsible for Trump’s victory. It selected Clinton as its candidate—a despised, right-wing and anti-working class figure, who denounced workers whose jobs and communities had been ravaged as “deplorables.”

Despite winning over three million more votes than Trump, Clinton alienated working class voters in a handful of key states, who, faced with the choice of a billionaire oligarch and an establishment warmonger, did not vote at all. Trump scraped into the presidency via the arcane vagaries of the American Electoral College.

As the international working class enters into mass

struggles, with strikes and political actions around the world, it is transparent why the ruling elite hate Assange and WikiLeaks, and are censoring and seeking to silence all critical, independent and left-wing media. The capitalist financial and corporate oligarchy is terrified of an informed, politically conscious movement of workers and youth that will not accept social inequality, the danger of war or the prospect of devastating climate change.

The ICFI and SEP urge every reader of the WSWS to promote the demonstrations in Australia.

Julian Assange is an Australian citizen. The Australian government can be pressured by a movement from below—a movement of the working class and youth—to intervene and compel the British government to allow Assange to leave his effective imprisonment in the Ecuadorian embassy in London and return to Australia, with guaranteed protection from any extradition to the US on false charges of espionage or conspiracy.

Oppose the isolation and silencing of Julian Assange, a courageous journalist and publisher!

Rally on March 3 in Sydney and March 10 in Melbourne to demand Assange’s freedom!

Fight internet censorship and defend democratic rights!

The author also recommends:

Rally to demand the Australian government acts to free Julian Assange!

Sydney Martin Place Amphitheatre, 2pm, March 3!
Melbourne State Library, 1pm, March 10!



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