Joe Lauria, editor-in-chief of Consortium News, endorses Free Assange demonstrations

2 March 2019

Joe Lauria, the editor-in-chief of the left-wing, anti-war publication Consortium News, *has sent the following statement endorsing and urging participation in the demonstrations called by the Socialist Equality Party in Sydney on March 3 and Melbourne on March 10, as well as the March 10 rally outside the Ecuadorian embassy in London, where WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange is being arbitrarily detained.*

Lauria is a distinguished journalist and author, and an outspoken defender of freedom of speech and democratic rights. He is currently the co-host, along with Elizabeth Vos of Disobedient Media, *of the Unity4J online forums, which are dedicated to advocating for the freedom of Julian Assange and supporting all independent and critical media.*

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Julian Assange is a wanted man because he has published classified information given to him by whistleblowers that has revealed the crimes and corruption of government officials around the world, not just in the United States.

But it is the US, the supposed beacon of freedom and democracy (and press freedom) around globe, that wants him extradited to the United States for the crime of publishing. He has interfered with the interests of some of the most powerful people in the world by revealing their machinations to the public. And they want him to pay.

In the Pentagon Papers case, US Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black wrote: “In the First Amendment the Founding Fathers gave the free press the protection it must have to fulfil its essential role in our democracy. The press was to serve the governed, not the governors. The Government’s power to censor the press was abolished so that the press would remain forever free to censure the Government.”

And that is what WikiLeaks and Julian Assange have done on behalf of the governed—censured the government, using governments’ own words unmasked from secrecy. Supporting Assange and WikiLeaks is supporting the people against the state.

It is now up to the people being served to get out to rallies like those called by the Socialist Equality Party in Sydney on March 3 and in Melbourne on March 10, and the rally in London on March 10. Stay in the streets until Assange is freed.

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