

Free Julian Assange!

Socialist Equality Party (Australia)
20 October 2022

From September 24 to 27, the Socialist Equality Party in Australia held its Sixth National Congress. After extensive discussion, the following resolution and three others were unanimously adopted. The resolutions “Build an international movement of the working class against imperialist war!”, “The COVID disaster and the political crisis of Australian capitalism” and “Build the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees!” were published on October 9, 13 and 17 respectively.

1. The Socialist Equality Party will deepen its protracted fight for the immediate and unconditional freedom of Julian Assange, together with the other sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International and the *World Socialist Web Site*.

2. The situation facing the WikiLeaks founder is more perilous than ever. His longstanding health issues, caused by over a decade of persecution, have caused Assange’s family and hundreds of doctors to warn that his life is in danger. At the same time, the British government and its judiciary are progressing Assange’s extradition to the US, raising the increasingly imminent prospect that he will be dispatched to an American supermax facility.

3. Assange has committed no crime. He has, instead, been hounded, vilified and persecuted by the imperialist powers for exposing their war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, their global diplomatic conspiracies and spying operations directed against the world’s population. This has entailed unprecedented attacks on democratic rights, including the plots of the Trump administration and the US Central Intelligence Agency to kidnap or assassinate Assange when he was a political refugee in London in 2017.

4. The pursuit of Assange is an act of imperialist retribution. It is also the spearhead of a broader assault on democratic rights, especially aimed at widespread opposition to imperialist war. The US and its allies are

targeting Assange, not only because of WikiLeaks’s exposure of their past crimes, but because they are preparing new and greater crimes in their confrontations with Russia and China, which threaten a nuclear world war.

5. The Australian state apparatus and successive governments have played the linchpin role in the assault against Assange. None of the attacks on his democratic and legal rights could have proceeded, as they have, had an Australian government fulfilled its legal and diplomatic obligations to defend Assange as a persecuted Australian citizen and journalist.

6. The Labor government of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is continuing this foul record. Labor has rejected demands that it intervenes to block extradition and secure Assange’s freedom. This is in line with its role, as an attack dog of the US confrontation with China, and a broader turn to authoritarian forms of rule by the Australian ruling elite, targeting the working class. The fight for Assange’s freedom is thus a fight against the Labor government.

7. The perspective of issuing moral appeals to capitalist governments and politicians to free Assange has failed. Promoted by organisations such as the official Don’t Extradite Assange group, this program serves only to create illusions in those responsible for Assange’s plight, to demobilise his supporters and to cut them off from the emerging movement of the working class.

8. The international working class is the social constituency for the defence of Assange and all democratic rights. Throughout the world, workers are entering into struggle against the onslaught on social and working conditions, the criminal “let it rip” pandemic policies, war and authoritarianism. The working class is in combat with the very governments presiding over the lynching of Assange, in the US, Britain and Australia.

9. The SEP will do everything it can to raise Assange's defence in the working class, and to fuse the fight for his freedom with the strikes and struggles that are developing. This requires a continuous explanation that the attack on Assange is directed against the social and democratic rights of the working class itself, serving as the precedent for broader frame-ups and victimisations. The defeat of this persecution and the liberation of Assange will greatly strengthen the working class internationally.

10. The SEP continues to demand that the Australian government immediately exercise its diplomatic and legal powers to secure Assange's freedom. But we explain that an Australian government will only carry this out if it is forced to do so by a mass movement from below.

11. The ruthless persecution of a journalist, for publishing true information exposing war crimes, demonstrates that capitalism is incompatible with the most fundamental democratic rights. The Assange case is a concentrated expression of the breakdown of the profit system—the attacks on the WikiLeaks founder are bound up with imperialist war, escalating online censorship and a broader turn to authoritarianism. This underscores the urgency of a socialist movement of the working class, aimed at reorganising society from top to bottom, as the only means of securing basic civil liberties and expanding democracy to every area of social and economic life.



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