

# Some responses to the SEP's election campaign in Australia

13 November 1998

*The Socialist Equality Party's campaign in the recent Australian elections provoked various responses, both favourable and critical. Emails were sent from different parts of the country, as well as from overseas, to the party's election campaign site, while letters and requests for information were sent in by mail in response to the SEP's eight-page election statement. Approximately 120,000 statements were circulated in Victoria and New South Wales by party supporters.*

*Below is a selection of the correspondence received and some replies.*

Dear Sir,

It was so exciting when I heard about you--a socialist party being in the Australian election campaign. I wanted to help you in the campaign, but I am studying for the HSC [Higher School Certificate].

I am an HSC student, but also a Marxist and a member of the Chinese Young Communist League. I studied Marxism and scientific socialism during the past four years with a lot of Marxist lectures and some comrades (Marxist-Leninist). I accepted Marxism as my political belief and am ready to be a socialist fighter as my life-long ideal.

I didn't join the Chinese Communist Party because I couldn't face their Stalinist bureaucratic political reality and their nationalism as a socialist ideal. Especially, I have more in common with the worldwide socialist movement than with the idea of 'socialism in one country'. I greatly appreciate that you use the concept of the contradiction between world economy and the nation state system as one of the fundamental contradictions of capitalism. I have also been thinking about the great recent concepts of the international integration of production, the international working class and globalisation etc.

I would like to struggle for genuine socialism with you. I want to work for the party and the whole working class. Please send me more details and let me contact you. I hope that you can accept me as a member of your party--the Socialist Equality Party.

Proletarians of the world, unite!

JL

I am 15 years old and I am an ultra left socialist. I want to join the Socialist Equality Party so that I can help prevent the emergence of capitalism in Australia and the increasing pollution of Australia as a result of an enlarging free market. Please send me more information so that I may join the fight against the system controlled by the rich, who manipulate the poor.

CS

The President, SEP

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Party Platform

I picked up the Election Statement 98 of the Socialist Equality Party, which was left on the ground around the letter-box area of the unit where I live. This printed matter became another piece of political junk-mail dropped into householders' letter boxes before the election because it lacks a highly feasible alternative nation building plan to offer to the public.

Look at its content. One can find criticism but no practical solution to offer. This was the reason why minority political groups including One

Nation and Unity Party failed to capture public attention and therefore support.

Labor and Liberal are much the same, playing over the middle ground of the political spectrum and maintaining the status quo. There is no effective challenge against them available as yet.

Is your party able to offer a highly feasible alternative nation-building plan to the Australian public? I have been searching for one and intend to use the next three years to push for its emergence among different political organisations in this nation.

Hopefully, by the next election, we will have some statesman-like figures, not politicians, to offer some clear-cut rebuilding plans for the Australian political economy. We shall also be able to set a successful example for the world political economies to consider following suit.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours Sincerely

BF

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Dear BF,

Your search for a 'highly feasible alternative nation-building plan' is doomed to failure. In fact, all perspectives grounded upon the nation-state system have been shattered by the processes underway in world economy.

Both Labor and Liberal have abandoned the reformist nostrums of the past--because they were based upon a highly regulated national economy, something that has been totally undermined by the globalisation of production and finance. They both now advance the policies required by global capital today--the destruction of welfare, public education and health, and all government-funded services--and that is why they have alienated millions of ordinary people.

The SEP fights for the development of an independent movement of the working class to challenge the very framework of the nation state and profit system. As our election statement points out, we do so on the basis of an international strategy--the fight to unite workers of all countries in the common struggle for a world planned socialist economy. That is the only viable strategy for the working class against the attacks waged by international capital.

If you wish to learn more about our program and perspectives you can visit the *World Socialist Web Site*, which is the internet site of the International Committee of the Fourth International, at <http://www.wsws.org>.

I am enclosing further material published by the SEP during the course of our election campaign, as well as our 1998-99 catalogue, where you will find books and pamphlets dealing with the history of the Marxist movement, as well as contemporary works on vital political, economic and social questions. These can be ordered online or by writing to the address below.

Sincerely,

Linda Tenenbaum

Assistant National Secretary

Hi

Could you please let me know your party's views and policies on welfare. In particular, I would be interested to know your views on the work for the dole scheme, equality and tax reform. I would also like to know how your party stands in relation to One Nation. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

LM

Hello

My name is RB, a final year arts student. I possess a good grasp of understanding with regards to modernity, social construction and the forces which prophet the absence of any available alternative to the current 'universal' paradigm. I generally avoid any contact with things overtly socialist, myself, most likely unlike many others have difficulty overcoming the historical and social stigma attached to the political implications. Understanding the textual impact of particular words on your target audience is critical when you are marketing your product. I am unsure of the national membership of your organisation, though I would still guess that replacing socialist with another respectable warm fuzzy word would catch more inquisitive attention.

This leads me to some questions. What does your organisation define as workers? Are all the unemployed citizens in shrinking rural towns within this category. Does your organisation have any solid strategies for the Australian specific context, or teams working on the development of such plans, for the deathly slow road to the displacement of the monopolist corporation? What is the demographic statistic of your membership? Does your membership contain the variegation in technical expertise to contribute the establishment of a prototype socialist/organic/self-sufficient semi rural town?

Existing small towns with high unemployment and proud people might just be the key to a model modern community?

Are the administrators of your organisation motivated in their positions by the lack a commercial position offering greater remuneration? or the lack of alternate employment full-stop?

Are you serious about change? Or do you spend all your time doing endless administrative work, reading books and sitting at coffee shops talking to people, who already agree with doing something for the helpless undertrodden, just as soon as they can afford to buy their new car?

What does your organisation do, other than reporting all the terrible injustices?

Sincerely yours

RB

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Dear RB,

I am attaching, for your information, a letter we received, and our reply, on the question of what 'socialism' and 'communism' actually are. You are clearly confused about what these terms refer to, so perhaps this is the best starting point.

The 'textual impact' of these terms on the working class has been conditioned by decades of falsifications, distortions and lies, to which we have no intention of adapting. The problem is not one of dreaming up new terminology, but of clarifying, for those who are serious about historical truth, the nature and role of the socialist movement, and its betrayal by both Stalinism and social democracy.

To answer the questions you pose:

1. The working class consists of those who are obliged to sell their ability to work to others--the owners of the means of production--in order to survive. The unemployed in rural towns are certainly part of the working class.

2. As the Australian section of the Fourth International, our perspective is based on the understanding that the economic, social and political problems of Australian workers are essentially international in origin. Only through the establishment of a world planned economy, under the

control of the producers themselves, can the remarkable achievements of technology be utilised to provide for a healthy, fulfilling and comfortable life for everyone, not just the privileged few.

3. Our membership is comprised of all those, whatever their socioeconomic background, place of birth, nationality or profession who agree with the principles of socialist internationalism.

4. The utopian 'socialist' models established by Robert Owen and others in the 19th century, along with the peasant-based communes advocated by the Narodniks in Russia at the same time, failed due to the impossibility of creating socialism on a local or regional scale. They provide no way forward for the Australian and international working class at the end of the twentieth century.

5. The leadership of the SEP is democratically elected by the party's membership on the basis of its adherence to the principles and perspectives of the party.

6. All the SEP's efforts are oriented at reviving a genuine socialist culture and movement among the most thoughtful, critical and self-sacrificing layers of the working class, youth and professional people.

Sincerely,

Linda Tenenbaum

for the SEP

Dear Mr Beams,

I would appreciate it if you could let me know exactly how to vote for you in the Senate. I don't want to make a mistake. I am disappointed that I cannot vote for you in the House of Reps. You don't have a candidate standing in Campbelltown do you?

Many thanks

The E Family

Funnily enough, when I went to the polling booths this year, I was loathe to vote for either Labor or Liberal, am of course not heartless enough to vote One Nation, and disillusioned with the Greens after voting for them one year to see no changes despite the Howard Government's promises to deal with the environmental problems in Australia. So this year when I voted I placed a 1 in the box for the SEP without knowing anything about your political ideology or philosophy. After I left the booth I went through dismay at thoughts that just maybe you were for One Nation, and had all kinds of thoughts that I'd done something terrible. After reading through your site, however, I am both relieved and ecstatic to find a political party that I actually agree with. Thankyou, thankyou...

RS

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Dear RS,

Thank you for your inquiry, and for your comments. The fact that you had no knowledge of our political ideology or philosophy can be attributed largely to the extraordinary blackout of the SEP's campaign by the media. No effort is spared by them in preventing ordinary people from engaging in a critical discussion and assessment of the real issues which confront them and from beginning to develop a serious alternative.

Have you had a chance to visit our international website, the *World Socialist Web Site*? It is the site of the International Committee of the Fourth International, the world party, of which the SEP is the Australian section. It contains daily analysis and commentary on major world events, as well as reviews and critiques of cinema, art, science, social questions, political economy, etc. from a socialist standpoint. It constitutes a genuinely alternative news source.

If you are interested in learning more about the SEP, the best thing would be for you to meet up with representatives from our branch in the Newcastle area, where we hold regular meetings.

Unless I hear from you in the next day or so, someone will phone you to make an arrangement.

With regards,

Linda Tenenbaum

Why is your paper full of gloom and doom stories? Do you think that so called workers would be better off under another system? Perhaps under the control of a communist dictator system? I think you guys are just cashing in on people that are not satisfied with their lives. Cheer up, you live in a country that has a lot of riches and potential for everybody. And if you don't like to live in your country, nobody is holding you back.

Your friend N from USA

For a remedy for your feelings about socialism and workers paradise I recommend a visit to Estonia, a country that was under communist rule for 50 years. Locals will tell you how it was.... I am open for ideas, drop me a line...

Please send me more descriptive information of your beliefs. I too have communistic outlooks and would like to know more about your party.

CS

Hello SEP Australia,

I am a 17 year old student from Perth WA and I am very interested in this party. I am a socialist and believe in your party. I was wondering whether I could get more information about SEP Australia and whether your party sold T-shirts as I would like to purchase one. Keep up the good work as SEP Australia is the only true socialist party in Australia.

From RP

See Also:

1998 Australian Federal Elections and their aftermath

[WSWS Coverage]

A question on socialism and communism

[15 September 1998]



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**