

How to fight militarism and war....

Nick Beams addresses SEP election meetings

**Nick Beams, Socialist Equality Party candidate for the Senate in New South Wales
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The following report was delivered by Nick Beams, national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (Australia) and a member of the International Editorial Board of the World Socialist Web Site to an SEP election meeting in Melbourne on October 21. Beams is heading the SEP's Senate ticket in NSW and is the party's national spokesman in the 2007 federal election.

October 7 marked the sixth anniversary of the invasion of Afghanistan, an operation codenamed Enduring Freedom. The result has been an enduring and escalating disaster for the people of that country.

Next March will mark the fifth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. The consequences have been even more devastating—a society destroyed, more than one million people dead, four million people made refugees, more than 3800 American soldiers killed and thousands wounded, many with horrific injuries.

Iraq has been destroyed and Afghanistan turned into a “narco” state, run by warlords, who provide 93 percent of the world’s illegal heroin.

But, like some kind of deranged pyromaniacs, the political incendiaries in the White House, together with their allies in Australia and other countries, are preparing new attacks on Iran. The plans are well advanced. The only question, it seems, is what will be the pretext—the claim that Iran is seeking to acquire nuclear weapons, a retaliation for alleged attacks on US military forces in Iraq or a combination of both.

Whatever the pretext, the consequences will be enormous. Just how far reaching can be gauged from remarks made by President Bush at a White House news conference on October 17. Bush suggested that if Iran did acquire the knowledge to make nuclear weapons it could lead to World War III. While the White House said later the comment was “rhetorical,” the fact that it was made at all shows the increasingly tense character of international relations, in which the chief danger of global conflict comes not from Iran, but from the United States.

In the five years since the invasion of Iraq all the pretexts on which it was launched have been exposed—the lies about weapons of mass destruction, the nuclear program, and the connections of the Hussein regime with Al Qaeda.

But there is still lingering confusion over Afghanistan. This is presented as the “good war” where the real fight against terror is being waged. One of the major criticisms made by the Labor Party of the Howard government is that the war in Iraq has diverted resources from the struggle against terrorists in Afghanistan.

The Bush administration, however, is not given to such distinctions. Bush has insisted repeatedly that Afghanistan and Iraq are but different theatres in the same global war, as no doubt any attack on Iran will be designated.

Anyone with lingering illusions about Afghanistan need only examine the events of the past few weeks to dispel them. Last month, the president of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai, the head of the puppet regime installed by the US, made an extraordinary appeal. He called on Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban forces, and his warlord ally, Gulbuddhim

Hekmatyar, to enter peace negotiations.

Addressing them as “esteemed gentlemen”, he said there was no need for them to come to Kabul for discussions. If he had their address he himself would travel to get in touch with them. All he wanted was a settlement, in return for which the “esteemed gentlemen” would be guaranteed a place in the government.

Such an appeal could not have been made without the support of the United States. So much for the “war on terror”. Mullah Omar, the alleged protector of Osama bin Laden, will be removed from the “most wanted” list, and even given a place in the puppet regime itself, providing he recognises the US occupation. Nothing could more clearly show that the invasion of Afghanistan was not undertaken to hunt down terrorists, but to advance the geo-political interests of the United States in Central Asia.

Afghanistan invaded, Iraqi society destroyed and now Iran threatened ... and not so far in the background the danger of World War III. Not since the days of the Hitler regime in the 1930s have we seen such an eruption of imperialist gangsterism and such dangers to the future of mankind. How is this to be explained?

In the 1930s, the aggressive military actions of the Nazi regime were not simply a product of Hitler’s fevered brain. They were rooted in the struggle by German imperialism to establish its “place in the sun”, to establish a base from which it could compete with its two great rivals—the British Empire and the rising transatlantic power, the United States.

Just as it would be a serious mistake to employ a “bad Hitler” theory of history to explain the crises of the 1930s, so it would be equally erroneous to employ a “bad Bush” explanation for the present-day political situation and the enormous dangers it contains.

In any event, any such attempt collapses as soon as one examines the role of the Democrats.

Despite receiving an overwhelming mandate from the American people in the November 2006 congressional elections to end the war in Iraq, the Democrats have voted hundreds of billions of dollars to continue it. The leading Democratic presidential candidates have all made clear that, so far as they are concerned, US troops will remain in Iraq indefinitely. Anyone who tries to maintain that the Democrats are opposed to the war is either deluding themselves or trying to fool others.

On Iran, the Democrats are even more bellicose. Hillary Clinton, the leading presidential contender, has declared that the use of nuclear weapons against Iran cannot be taken off the table.

The eruption of US militarist violence is not a product of individual politicians. It is rooted in the historical problems confronting American capitalism, just as Hitler’s wars of aggression were bound up with the crisis of the regime he headed.

Militarism is the means by which the American ruling elites, whatever tactical differences they may have among themselves, are seeking to maintain US hegemony within the global capitalist order.

In order to understand this phenomenon and its origins, we must approach it historically.

The US emerged from World War II as the pre-eminent capitalist power. To be sure, it enjoyed unsurpassed military might, but in the final analysis, its domination was based on its overwhelming economic superiority. Indeed, the very economic strength of American capitalism provided critical support for the stability of the world capitalist system.

What a far cry from the situation today. American industrial supremacy, associated with names such as US Steel and General Motors, is a thing of the past. Now the deep-going problems in the American financial system, as revealed by the sub-prime crisis and ensuing credit crunch, are a major source of instability for world capitalism as a whole.

Desperate to maintain its position, the US ruling class has turned to the one area where it still enjoys superiority—military might. But the assertion of American military power takes place under conditions where the old capitalist powers in Europe and Asia, together with the new rising powers—China, Russia and India—are seeking to establish their position in the global order.

A global struggle is the result. We have entered a period not unlike that in the first decade of the last century. Then, great power rivalry led to the eruption of World War I, followed by two decades of bloody conflicts, culminating in the even greater destruction of World War II.

For more than four decades after the conclusion of that war, international relations, at least among the major powers, were more settled. They were regulated within the framework of the Cold War and under conditions where the United States enjoyed unchallenged supremacy. Now those conditions have gone and great power rivalry has resumed.

This fact is openly recognised and discussed in ruling circles. Let me point to an address by the French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner to a meeting earlier this month organised by a well-known American think tank, the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The landscape in the Middle East, Kouchner said, was “one of increasingly interdependent crises” with increased tension spreading out in an arc from Afghanistan to Lebanon, through Iraq, Syria and the Palestinian territories.

Furthermore, the clock was “ticking” on the “dreadful alternative” posed by French president Nicolas Sarkozy of “the Iran bomb or the bombing of Iran.”

Transatlantic relations could not be discussed, he said, cut off from the rest of the world, which was “bubbling around us.” “Emerging powers are flexing their muscles and revisionist views are challenging the current orders.” New actors were emerging and there was a return to great power politics.

Becoming more specific he added: “Every week, it seems that Russia announces a new weapons system, and we have yet to draw all the implications for our collective security on the anti-satellite test performed by China on January 11 of this year.”

The old framework of the Cold War had broken down but “we have not managed, as we did after ’45 to create a new world order or even to adapt the previous one satisfactorily.”

In fact, he continued, rather than moving towards stability, international relations were going in the other direction and were marked by increased tensions.

The processes to which Kouchner points have their origins in the contradictions of the world capitalist system.

The globalisation of production, which has gone forward in leaps and bounds and transformed the world economy over the past quarter century, has raised to a new peak of intensity the fundamental contradiction of world capitalism: that between the global economy and the division of the world into rival capitalist nation-states.

In 1914, Leon Trotsky explained that, in the most fundamental sense, World War I arose from the attempt of each of the capitalist great powers to resolve this contradiction in its own interests, giving rise to a conflict of

each against all. Now this conflict has erupted again, in an even more powerful form. It determines international relations in every region of the world.

Consider the situation in this region. One of the motivating factors for the series of military and police interventions by Australia—ranging from East Timor, to the Solomon Islands, PNG and Fiji—has been to maintain control over valuable raw materials and resources.

But geo-political and strategic factors play a decisive role as well—above all the rise of China, which is transforming international and political relations.

Take the all-important question of oil. Since the year 2001 it is estimated that some 40 percent of the increase in the global demand for oil has come from China alone. The Chinese government, as a matter of economic policy, must attempt to ensure stable supplies by setting up agreements for pipelines, exploration, and production with foreign governments. But this necessary economic policy has political consequences.

According to former National Security Council policy adviser on the Middle East, Flynt Leverett, this strategy, “is rapidly becoming a source of geopolitical tensions between China and the United States” with China’s search for oil making it a new competitor for influence in the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa.

And we could add the South Pacific, because a necessary component of the Chinese strategy to ensure supplies is the securing of sea lanes. That raises the question of the development of a navy, and a navy raises the question of naval bases, especially in Pacific.

American imperialism has already fought one war with a rising Asian power for control of this region. Now another clash is in the making.

It is within this global context that the Howard government’s military, police and political interventions in this region take on their full significance.

The eruption of Australian militarism and colonialism is aimed at ensuring that the small, but strategically important, states in this region do not fall under the sway of China.

Government leaders have made this crystal clear. On December 31, 2006, Prime Minister John Howard warned that Australia could not walk away from the countries of the South Pacific, where there was a battle for influence going on between China and Taiwan, because “you’ll end up with these places being taken over by interests that are very hostile to Australia.” And, as Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer commented after the recent APEC summit, China was entitled to have relations with the countries of the South Pacific but it should “reinforce the work we’re doing there” and not undermine it.

In every region of the world—from the South Pacific to the North Pole—there is a conflict between the major powers for resources and markets, for strategic influence and control. The conflicts in the Middle East are the most violent expressions, to this point, of this global process.

Where is it leading? History provides the answer—towards another world war. Human civilisation survived the conflicts of the twentieth century, although it was a close thing. World War II ended with the use of nuclear weapons. Today, the use of nuclear weapons against Iran is on the table.

How is the plunge into militarism and war to be fought? How can the growing threats to civilisation be defeated? These are the issues which are at the heart of the SEP’s election intervention.

The struggle against war and militarism cannot be waged as some kind of single issue protest—opposition to the war in Iraq—because that war is only part of a broader conflict.

Nor can it be conducted as a protest to the ruling class, or as a campaign to replace one capitalist party with another by means of the ballot box. It has to be based on the fight for a socialist program which has as its goal the unification of the international working class in a political struggle to end the profit system and the division of the world into rival nation-states.

The purpose of the SEP's election campaign is first and foremost to begin the development of such a movement and to build the party necessary to lead it.

This movement cannot be developed through a few simple slogans or agitation. It requires more painstaking work, above all, the clarification of the role of all the parties and tendencies that work, in one way or another, to subordinate the working class to the existing order.

This means exposing, not only the role of the Labor Party, but of all those parties and organisations that work to keep the working class trapped within Labor's orbit.

Let us start by dispelling the remnants of the still lingering illusion that the Labor Party, in some kind of ill-defined way, has opposed participation in the Iraq war.

In 2002 and 2003, when the invasion was being prepared, the Labor Party repeated all the claims about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction when, as millions of people around the world knew, they were lies.

Here is the current Labor leader speaking on the television program "Lateline" on September 24, 2002: "There is no debate or dispute as to whether Saddam Hussein possesses weapons of mass destruction. He does."

Labor's only objection to the war was that it should be carried out under a UN mandate. But once it was launched, Labor swung behind it, on the grounds that it was necessary to support the troops.

In January 2004, just ten months later, there was not even an item on Iraq at the Labor Party's national conference. And when Western Australian Labor "left" Carmen Lawrence, at that time ALP national president, was asked by SEP member Terry Cook whether she was going to move a resolution calling for the withdrawal of all American and Australian forces, she walked away claiming not to know what Terry was talking about.

Later that year, then Labor leader Mark Latham dropped a remark in a radio interview about the troops being home by Christmas if Labor came to power. But in the 2004 election campaign, the Iraq war was barely mentioned, a fact Howard said later had caused him some surprise, and, no doubt, relief.

Under Rudd's leadership, the Labor policy stands for a "negotiated, staged withdrawal of Australia's combat forces from Iraq." This involves about 550 troops out of the total 1575-strong Australian force in and around Iraq.

That is, around 1000 troops of the present force will remain and the withdrawn combat forces will be replaced by hundreds of "training" troops, which, while stationed outside Iraq, will be involved in training the forces of the puppet Maliki government.

This means that under a Labor government there will be at least the same number of Australian forces, and possibly more, supporting the US occupation as there are at present. And troop numbers in Afghanistan, which Rudd claims is the real theatre for the "war on terror," are likely to increase.

Far from opposing militarism, Rudd emphasises that Labor is the party of war. Addressing the question of whether he could make the decision to send young people to war, he declared: "Labor in government ... has led this country through the bulk of the First World War, the bulk of the Second World War and also we were in government when we committed troops to the first Gulf War."

The differences between the Howard government and the Labor Party on Iraq are of a minor, purely tactical, character.

On the sweeping legal changes accompanying the "war on terror"—laws that have vastly increased the power of the state and eroded long-established basic democratic rights—there is complete agreement.

Likewise on the deployment of the military in the Northern Territory, the persecution of Dr Mohamed Haneef, the racist exclusion of Sudanese refugees ... and the list goes on.

Such is the degree of collaboration that new terms have had to be invented, such as "bear hug politics" and "me-tooism". But even these do not fully capture the degree to which any differences between Labor and Liberal have been obliterated.

What are the reasons? We cannot resort to a "bad Rudd" explanation. Such a process must have deep social roots. And these are to be found in the deep alienation from, and hostility to, the entire political establishment felt by broad sections of the population. These sentiments are compelling the major parties to draw closer and closer together.

No one should delude themselves by thinking that Labor's coalitionism is a clever ploy by Rudd to ensure election, after which things will change. Rudd's "me-tooism" is a declaration to the ruling elites that a Labor government will be committed to implementing their demands, no matter what the consequences. Far from being a "lesser evil" a Labor government will be more militarist, and more socially regressive, than the Liberals.

Labor's positions have propelled numbers of people towards the Greens, on the basis of the illusion that they, somehow, represent an alternative, especially on the question of Iraq. The Greens' program does call for an "immediate end" to the occupation of Iraq. But this is far from an antiwar party.

The Greens do not oppose the occupation of Afghanistan. In fact Greens' leader Bob Brown supports the deployment of additional US forces to that country.

The Greens' opposition to the Iraq war has always been based on what they regard as the real interests of Australian imperialism—which, according to them, lie in the South Pacific. In February 2003, during the mass demonstrations protesting the imminent invasion of Iraq, Brown insisted that Australian forces should not be deployed there but, instead, in "our" region.

Having already backed the Australian intervention in East Timor in 1999—under the guise of "humanitarianism"—the Greens were extending their horizons. Australian forces were needed in the Solomons, Brown declared. Three months later, in June 2003, his demand was met when the Howard government, in collaboration its New Zealand counterpart, sent in the RAMSI force to the Solomons.

The positions of Brown and the Greens are part of an international tendency. In 1999, when the "humanitarian" military intervention was being planned in East Timor, the German Greens, then part of the Schroeder government—their leader Joschka Fischer was the foreign minister—provided the crucial rationale for military intervention in the Balkans—the old stamping ground of German imperialism.

In July 2003, New Zealand Greens' leader Keith Locke welcomed the involvement of that country's police and military in the Solomons and proposed to extend it.

A "peacekeeping school" should be set up in New Zealand, he said, which would "increase our ability to do this peacekeeping work and to be able to work with other police and other military in our region towards resolving situations like we see in the Solomons today."

What a perspective—a school for "humanitarian" colonialism!

Four years on, the RAMSI forces are still operating. Their so-called peace-keeping role has not been to assist the people of the Solomons but to ensure the semi-colonial domination of Australia and New Zealand in their old sphere of influence.

Before we leave the Greens we should examine their record on the anti-terror laws. The Greens are adept at making denunciations of the Howard government in regard to these laws, which have had a certain resonance because of the absence of any opposition from the Labor Party.

Their real position was revealed on November 3, 2005, however, when the Howard government reconvened parliament in an emergency session to pass far-reaching new laws.

Brown attacked the Labor Party as a "compliant opposition" and

insisted it was necessary for a “democratic parliament” to defend rights, privileges and freedoms. Here was the time and place to do just that.

NSW Greens Senator, Kerry Nettle declared the anti-terrorism laws were aimed at “secret arrests, secret detention, secret interrogation, by secret people.” Fine words. But the Greens voted in favour of the legislation.

One question that often comes up is the following: why can't the various groups calling themselves socialist all come together—at least for the elections? Surely, the argument goes, this would present a much broader based opposition to the establishment parties. Aren't you all fighting for the same thing?

The short answer is no. Our differences are not over words, but express fundamentally opposed class interests. Nowhere is this law of politics more clearly demonstrated than in the case of the so-called Democratic Socialist Perspective (DSP), publishers of the *Green Left Weekly* and the main component of the Socialist Alliance.

A sure test of the class basis of any tendency is the attitude it takes to the military actions of its “own” government, especially when those actions are undertaken on “humanitarian” grounds. At such times, socialists are responsible for exposing the real motives behind military action, no matter what popular support there may be for it, and in that way for politically arming the working class.

In 1999, the Australian troop deployment in East Timor was presented as a necessity to prevent a massacre of the Timorese people by the armed thugs of the Indonesian military. Normally, the government has to wind up its propaganda machine to churn out its “humanitarian” line. In this case that role was assumed by the DSP.

Here is what they wrote in a statement issued by the party's national executive on September 6, 1999: “If the United Nations Security Council continues to argue that an international military force cannot be sent to East Timor without the Indonesian government's agreement, then the Australian government should act unilaterally and send its armed forces into East Timor to end the TNI/Polri-organised terror campaign.”

The DSP campaign did not go unnoticed or unappreciated within ruling circles. As the *Australian Financial Review* noted at the time, the call for “troops in” had, for the first time in decades, given “broad legitimacy to the proposition that Australia should be able to intervene militarily outside its territory.”

This policy was no mistake. Eight years on, the DSP leaders and their allies in the Socialist Alliance defend it, insisting that it advanced the national liberation struggle of the East Timorese at the time, and forced the government to act against its will.

The historical record shows otherwise. As the American historian Andrew Bacevich recounts, the Clinton administration was anxious to secure stability in East Timor, fearing that Indonesia could slide into chaos, but was wary of taking direct responsibility.

Accordingly, “Washington sought a partner willing to take a lead in restoring order to East Timor, with US forces playing an essential backup role. The government of Australia dutifully volunteered.” Canberra, Bacevich continued, could claim the lion's share of the credit for the success of the intervention but it “would never have got off the ground had Washington not provided communications, intelligence, transportation and logistics” (Andrew Bacevich, *American Empire*, p. 157).

In addition to military aid, the Clinton administration played the decisive role in clearing the way for Australian troops by threatening to “crash” the Indonesian economy if the Habibie government opposed their entry.

In other words, the DSP functioned as nothing less than a secondary, but nonetheless politically important agency of US and Australian imperialism, revealing the chasm that exists between its opportunist politics and the program of genuine socialism.

In the Melbourne electorate we are standing against a candidate from the Socialist Party, the organisation led by Yarra Council member Stephen Jolly, who first came to prominence in radical circles with the occupation of Richmond Secondary College in 1992.

Shortly after the Socialist Equality Party published its list of election candidates, we received an email from the Socialist Party proposing a discussion on the campaign in the seat of Melbourne. We rejected the proposal because there are deep and unbridgeable differences between the politics of the Socialist Party and the SEP.

These differences go to the most essential question of the day: how to undertake the construction of a new mass party of the working class.

The Socialist Party is in favour of a new party. No matter who wins the election, it writes, the Socialist Party will “push harder for the creation of a new mass leftwing workers' party in Australia”. This party must involve the trade unions, community groups and activists with a clear “left wing, anti neo-liberal program.”

Notice that this mass party is not defined as socialist. It is described as leftwing, progressive and anti neo-liberal. The characterisation of its program is left deliberately vague and this speaks volumes about the perspective of the Socialist Party.

Leon Trotsky always insisted that a fundamental requirement of a genuine revolutionary tendency is to state what is. The characteristic feature of all opportunist tendencies is to fudge over and obscure the most vital questions of program and principle.

This is precisely what the Socialist Party does. This is no mistake but the modus operandi of the international organisation to which it is affiliated, the so-called Committee for a Workers International (CWI), led by Peter Taafe.

Taafe sets out the CWI's opportunist method of party-building in an article published on October 5, written as the introduction to the Portuguese edition of his book “Marxism in Today's World.”

There he points out that the CWI has “never perceived the creation of mass parties as a panacea or an end in itself. Any new mass party today represents, from a political point of view an arena of ideological clarification and struggle; for the working out of a program to rearm the working class for the coming battles.”

The CWI claims to follow in the path of Lenin and Trotsky. But the method outlined here is diametrically opposed to the Marxist conception of party building, which insists that the only way of establishing the political independence of the working class is the continuous exposure of the role of all those tendencies which, in one way or another, seek to subordinate it to the capitalist order.

According to Taafe, the program develops out of the party. Trotsky insisted on the exact opposite conception.

“The revolutionary party,” he wrote, “begins with an idea, a program, which is aimed against the most powerful apparatus of class society. It is not the cadre that creates the idea, but the idea that creates the cadre.”

Of course the masses do not come to the revolutionary party as a result of some kind of pedagogical exercise. As Trotsky explained, they “undergo their own experiences that permit them to choose and to progress along the revolutionary road, but on condition that they find a vanguard that, at every stage of the struggle, explains the situation to them, shows them the objectives to be obtained, the methods to use and the ultimate perspectives.... Without that, even the most numerous aggregation of workers would have no future” (*Trotsky Writings 1933-34*, p. 292).

If every major difference is, in the final analysis, a class difference, we must pose the question: what class interests are served by the CWI's opportunist theory of party building.

The clearest answer to that question is provided in Latin America. Under conditions where the traditional parties have become discredited, and support for them has disintegrated, the ruling elites are increasingly reliant

upon “left” formations to block the movement of the working class.

In Brazil, the section of the CWI, along with other “radical” tendencies, used to operate in the Workers Party (PT) of Lula, holding out the prospect that its coming to power would represent a step towards socialism. Since Lula has become president, the PT has become the chief mechanism for imposing the dictates of the financial and corporate elites.

The PT has become so discredited that new mechanisms are required. And so the Brazilian section of the CWI is now repeating its earlier role, when it promoted Lula and the PT, this time as a component of the Party of Socialism and Liberty—the new, updated, amalgam of various radical groupings.

These experiences should not be looked upon as some kind of isolated development, confined to Latin America. At a certain point ever-growing alienation, dissatisfaction and anger will lead to a revolt against the entire political establishment, and the stability of the capitalist order will depend on the creation of precisely the type of opportunist mass workers’ party advocated by the Socialist Party.

Let me bring this report to a close by focusing on the essential character of the Socialist Equality Party’s campaign.

The 2007 election is taking place amidst a growing political shift involving millions of people the world over. There is deep-going concern about the eruption of militarism and the growing danger of even more terrible wars. Climate change threatens to unleash catastrophic events, vital infrastructure is in a state of decay, there is unending and ever-deepening social polarisation—the accumulation of fabulous wealth at one pole and the growing indebtedness of working class families at the other—worsening attacks on democratic rights ... and the list goes on.

But this movement can find no expression within the existing political framework.

In the United States, millions voted against the war in Iraq. But the war goes on, while attacks on Iran are in the making.

There is a movement against the Howard government. But if this movement results in Howard’s defeat, the outcome will only be the installation of an even more right-wing and militaristic Labor government.

Here is one of the crucial points of difference between the SEP and the various radical tendencies. We reject their contention that the Labor Party represents, in some way, a “lesser evil”. In fact, in conditions where the Howard government is visibly disintegrating, the return of a Labor government is the preferred option for significant sections of the ruling class.

The last Labor government, which came to power with the collapse of the Fraser government in 1983, carried out an onslaught against the social position of the working class—something the Liberals were unable to implement. And when the call came for the first Gulf War in 1990-91, the Hawke-Keating Labor government was one of the first to sign up.

A Rudd Labor government will ruthlessly implement the measures demanded by the ruling elites. This is the real significance of the parachuting of a series of trade union officials—Greg Combet, Bill Shorten and Doug Cameron—into top positions.

The prices and incomes accord of the Hawke-Keating government, through which national income was redistributed from wages to profits, was policed by the union leaders. And when Howard came to power, largely as a result of the hostility generated by the policies of the Labor government, the ACTU and union leaders played the key role in suppressing opposition to it. Now they are about to be brought onto the front bench, to implement new attacks under Rudd.

The crucial question confronting the working class is not the defeat of the Liberals, but the development of a genuine socialist and internationalist movement through which it can articulate and fight for its own independent interests.

That involves not only a break from the Labor Party, and all those who work in one way or another to prop it up, but a break from electoralism,

and the conception that real social and political change can be brought about through the parliamentary system.

The SEP is fighting for votes at this election. But our campaign has a much wider purpose. It is aimed at developing an independent political movement of the working class and building the party to lead it.

On that basis I urge that you support our campaign in every possible way and give the most serious consideration to joining our party to prepare for the immense struggles that lie ahead.

Authorised by N. Beams, 100B Sydenham Rd, Marrickville, NSW
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