SEP meeting resolution on the Bankstown fire

16 October 2012

The following resolution was adopted unanimously by the participants of the October 16, 2012 public meeting of the Socialist Equality Party, "The Bankstown fire: critical issues for workers, students and youth."

1. This public meeting of the Socialist Equality Party extends its deepest condolences to the family and friends of Pingkang "Connie" Zhang, who tragically lost her life in the September 6 fire in the Euro Terraces apartments in Bankstown. We send our best wishes to Yinuo "Ginger" Jiang, who is recovering in hospital, and to Jianwei "Jason" Zeng, who also survived the terrible events. We condemn the Gillard Labor government for its deportation of Jianwei to China on October 11. This was a callous act that is aimed at undermining any genuine investigation into the causes of the fire.

2. We insist that all Euro Terraces residents forced to leave their homes should have access to emergency accommodation, counselling and financial assistance, and condemn the Gillard and O'Farrell governments, along with the Bankstown City Council, for the contempt they have demonstrated toward the plight of the Euro Terraces victims.

3. The fire has raised far-reaching economic, social and political questions, including building safety standards; the circumstances surrounding the construction of the apartments; the housing crisis facing international students; the running down of fire and other emergency services by state and federal governments; the relationship between governments, banks and financial institutions, developers and construction companies; and the lack of availability of affordable, safe and decent housing for millions of ordinary people.

4. This meeting warns that any official investigation, including a coronial inquiry, will be nothing but a whitewash, aimed at exonerating all those responsible for the events of September 6. Only an inquiry organised and carried out independently by the working class itself can establish the truth of the causes of the Bankstown fire.

5. This meeting therefore calls for the establishment of a committee to independently investigate all the circumstances surrounding the fire in Euro Terraces Building B. We call on workers, unemployed people, students and youth throughout Sydney to participate. We make a special appeal to building workers, fire fighters, council and legal workers, and others with specialist knowledge of the accommodation crisis confronting the working class, to join the committee and help clarify how and why the Bankstown tragedy was able to occur.

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