Socialist Equality Party (Australia) resolution to AEU mass meeting

13 February 2013

The following resolution will be moved by SEP supporters at tomorrow's mass meeting of Victorian teachers and Education Support workers. (See: "Australia: Victorian teachers prepare for mass meeting and third one-day strike")

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1. This meeting rejects the proposed AEU campaign of ineffectual bans and protests at the offices of Coalition politicians. It is designed to use teachers' opposition to the attacks on public education as a means of pushing for the re-election of the Gillard Labor government, the very government responsible for driving these attacks! It is also designed, like every AEU-sponsored industrial campaign in the past, to wear down our determination to fight, while a sell-out is negotiated with the Baillieu government behind our backs. This has already been signalled by the union's decision to drop the 30 percent wage claim without any consultation with the membership.

2. The AEU's so-called opposition to the Baillieu government is a fraud! In the 2008 agreement the AEU endorsed the former state Labor government's "Blueprint" for education, which entrenched standardised testing and imposed a regime of "continuous improvement", aimed at pitting schools against each other. Baillieu's agenda, as outlined in *New Directions* and *Towards Victoria as a Learning Community*, has seamlessly continued Labor's assault. His next round of attacks includes the sacking of teachers deemed to be "under-performing", a differential pay system, pay for performance, and the imposition of business managers as school principals to monitor school benchmarks and achieve further budget cuts—all measures that federal Labor supports.

3. We oppose the Gillard Labor government's NAPLAN standardised testing and MySchool. They are nothing but a means of scapegoating schools and teachers for the crisis in public education. We call for a boycott of the NAPLAN testing regime and the federal government's National Plan for School Improvement. These measures are based on Obama's "Race to the Top", which has resulted in the privatisation of entire areas of public education across the US, along with mass school closures and teacher sackings.

4. This meeting therefore resolves to take matters out of the hands of the AEU, turn out to parents and students, the community and other education workers, who are facing similar far-reaching attacks, and launch a genuine fight to defend public education. This requires the establishment of rank-and-file action committees of teachers, education workers, students and parents in every school community to plan out a coordinated industrial and political campaign against both the Baillieu and Gillard governments, and to defend the right of all young people to a free, high-quality public education.

5. The assault on public education is part of the austerity agenda being imposed by governments around the world to make the working class pay for the global failure of the capitalist profit system. A fight to defend public education must be directly linked to the political struggle for a socialist program, aimed at defending and extending all the hard-won social rights of the working class.

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