

Vote 1 Socialist Equality Party in the Australian federal election!

**The Socialist Equality Party
6 September 2013**

The Socialist Equality Party calls on all workers, young people and students to vote for our Senate candidates in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Queensland in Saturday's federal election. A vote for the SEP is a vote for the only party that opposes the US drive to war, the corporate agenda of austerity and restructuring, and deepening attacks on democratic rights (see: "How to vote Socialist Equality Party").

Amid the sharpest global economic crisis since the 1930s, the official campaign of the parliamentary parties, Labor, Liberal, and Greens, has been a fraud from beginning to end. It has been aimed at suppressing discussion of the crucial issues confronting ordinary people, at the same time covering up the essential unanimity within the political establishment for war, for pro-business economic restructuring and austerity spending cuts, and for further attacks on democratic rights. Regardless of who forms the next government, that is the agenda that will be advanced immediately after the election.

A vote for the SEP is a vote for the only party that fights for the independent mobilisation of the working class to establish a workers' government on the basis of a socialist and internationalist program.

The Greens-backed minority Labor government has been one of the few internationally to unconditionally line up behind the Obama administration's preparations for a military assault on Syria. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has echoed all the lies and pretexts for war issued from the White House. From the very beginning of a US bombing campaign in Syria, Australian military-intelligence facilities such as Pine Gap will play an important role. Thanks to the courageous revelations of National Security Agency whistle-blower Edward Snowden, it is now known that Australian intelligence facilities are routinely used not only to bolster the global US surveillance

network but also to target individuals under Obama's illegal drone assassination program.

After spending the past two years fuelling a violent sectarian war via Al Qaeda dominated proxy militia forces, Washington and its allies are preparing to bomb Syria, not because of chemical weapons or concern for Syrian civilians, but to advance the geo-strategic interests of US imperialism. Regime change in Damascus will be the first step in a wider agenda involving a devastating war with Iran, which is ultimately directed against Russia and China. The American ruling elite is attempting to offset US capitalism's economic decline through the use of military violence aimed at preventing any rival power from challenging its global hegemony.

Australia is on the front line of the Obama administration's active preparations for war against China. Rudd's removal as prime minister in 2010 was carried out by US assets within the Labor Party and trade union bureaucracy, in order to fully align Australian foreign policy with the US "pivot" to Asia. During Gillard's tenure, a new US Marine base was opened in Darwin, the Cocos Islands were prepared to station US drone aircraft, and naval bases were readied for wider use by US nuclear warships. These initiatives were taken without even the semblance of a democratic discussion within parliament, let alone among the Australian population. They have since been buried, with the political and media establishment maintaining an unofficial "D-notice" on the US military agenda in the region and Australia's role in it.

A vote for the SEP is a vote for the only party that opposes the US-led war drive against Syria and the military build-up against China. We are fighting to build a new antiwar movement of the working class against the escalating dangers posed by the eruption of US militarism.

The official campaign has been dominated by a

reactionary bidding war between the Labor and Liberal parties over which can devise the most punitive and illegal policies against refugees and asylum seekers. Rudd's decision to permanently deport all asylum seekers arriving in Australia by boat to small, impoverished Pacific islands in flagrant breach of international law is without precedent. This unlawful, repressive treatment of the world's most vulnerable people stands as a warning of the anti-democratic methods that will be used against the entire working class as social tensions rise and major class struggles erupt.

The Labor Party is the most ruthless political representative of big business and finance capital. Since his reinstallation, Rudd has announced a new "national competitiveness agenda"—the relentless driving up of workplace productivity, in collaboration with the trade unions, at the direct expense of jobs and conditions. The industrial agreement imposed last month on General Motors Holden workers shows what this means. There, the trade unions, using as a weapon against the workers the company's threat that it would shut down production, drafted the deal that includes a three-year wage freeze, cuts in work breaks, and mandating company control over holiday leave.

Both of the major parties have prepared detailed plans for sweeping budget cuts, to be unveiled only after the election. As the Australian economy heads rapidly toward outright recession, the corporate elite and the ultra-wealthy are determined to make the working class bear the full burden of the crisis. Working people will see their living standards devastated as public funding is cut for public healthcare, education, welfare, and other basic services. The next government will seize upon the new benchmarks established by the social counter-revolution underway in the US and Europe to drive up the "international competitiveness" of Australian capitalism at the direct expense of the working class.

As in Europe and the US, this agenda cannot be implemented with the democratic consent of the people. That is why, under the pretext of the fraudulent "war on terror" new authoritarian and outright dictatorial forms of rule are being prepared.

The Socialist Equality Party and our ten Senate candidates are alone in speaking for the working class and fighting for its interests in the 2013 election campaign.

The Greens have spent the last three years in a de facto ruling coalition with the Labor Party, and bear responsibility for all of its policies, including the alignment with the US war drive against China, the brutal

treatment of asylum seekers, and every round of the government's budget cuts, such as those impoverishing single parents. The Greens are concerned above all to preserve parliamentary "stability", in the interests of Australian capitalism. None of the record number of single issue, protest, and so-called independent candidates standing in the election represents an alternative—all accept the framework of the profit system and the existing political setup, and have pitched their campaigns toward influencing the major parties.

In opposition to the pseudo-left organisations, such as Socialist Alternative and Socialist Alliance, the SEP insists that it is not the task of the working class to "revive the trade unions", which function as open agencies of corporate management. Nor can workers defend their class interests by voting for the Greens to "punish Labor" in the utterly futile hope that it will cease being a party of big business.

The working class cannot resolve any of the problems it confronts within the existing parliamentary framework. It is necessary to strike out on a new road.

A vote for the SEP is just the beginning. It is a statement of support for the fight to build a genuine political alternative, the fight for socialist internationalism. This means breaking the stranglehold of the financial oligarchy over social and economic life, and establishing a democratically and rationally planned socialist economic system, based on social equality. The mining companies, the banks, and the largest corporations must be taken into public ownership under the democratic control of the working class, and an emergency public works program instituted to end unemployment and provide decent paying jobs to all, along with affordable high-quality housing and free universal health care, education and social services. This perspective can be advanced only through the struggle of the working class to build its own political party, the Socialist Equality Party.

Authorised by Nick Beams, 113/55 Flemington Rd, North Melbourne VIC 3051



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