

Join the fight for international socialism!

To halt climate change, capitalism must be abolished

Tessa Pietsch: SEP Senate candidate for Victoria
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This Friday, high school students and youth around Australia will participate in national protests demanding immediate action to stem climate change and environmental destruction. The event follows mass rallies last year, and in March, which are part of a globally-coordinated movement.

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and its youth wing, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), supports the broadest expression of opposition to the looming environmental catastrophe, as well as the other major issues facing youth—war, social inequality and attacks on democratic rights.

We warn, however, that demonstration organisers, including the Australian Youth Climate Coalition (AYCC), are seeking to politically neuter this emerging movement, by confining it within the parliamentary framework and subordinating it to the Labor Party and the Greens.

This is why today's protests are being held outside the offices of parliamentarians.

But the record demonstrates that Labor and the Greens are not a “lesser-evil” to the Liberal-National Coalition.

The Greens-backed federal Labor government of Julia Gillard, in office from 2010 to 2013, did nothing to stem carbon emissions. Under its carbon tax policy, Australia's emissions actually increased. According to Labor's own modelling, if the tax had remained in place, annual emissions would have grown from 582 to 621 million tonnes from 2012 to 2020.

The various international agreements, backed by Australian governments, such as the Paris Accord, have all proven useless in addressing the environmental crisis. At one international summit after another,

governments, whether they claim to be “left” or “right,” have opposed serious action on climate change for fear of reducing the profitability of “their” nation's corporations and major businesses.

In this election campaign, Labor and the Greens have outlined a series of “climate policies.” They all centre on cash subsidies to big business, and “market-based” solutions, which have failed to reduce emissions wherever they have been implemented, and only led to the enrichment of the financial elite.

It is the same on all the other major issues. The Greens are once again signalling that they will work with Labor after the elections. A Greens-backed Labor government would intensify Australia's involvement in US-led wars and force the working class to pay for the deepening economic crisis.

Successive governments, particularly since the global financial crisis of 2008, have used the claim that there is “no money” as an excuse to slash social spending on education, healthcare, arts and culture, welfare and the environment. Meanwhile, they continue to siphon billions of dollars into predatory wars abroad and the strengthening of the military-intelligence apparatuses.

All the official parties are seeking to channel the climate protests behind the parliamentary establishment. The AYCC is acting as self-appointed political censor. At the last demonstration in March, it unsuccessfully sought to prevent IYSSE campaigners from distributing leaflets outlining a socialist perspective.

These attempts to suppress political discussion and debate must be rejected. The issue of climate change is inextricably linked to all the other political questions facing young people.

The developing movement of youth and students in Australia and internationally on climate change is part of the political radicalisation of an entire generation. Young people today have grown up amid environmental destruction, perpetual US-led wars in the Middle East, and wholesale attacks on democratic rights.

The question is posed: What political perspective is required to end war, exploitation, authoritarianism, and the destruction of the environment?

The SEP and IYSSE state unambiguously that the only way to halt the destruction of the environment, as well as to end war, poverty and the attacks on democratic rights, is to abolish capitalism and reorganise society along socialist lines.

Capitalism is an outmoded system, based on the division of the world into antagonistic nation-states, and the dominance, over every aspect of social life, of the profit dictates of the corporate elite. Capitalism prevents any rational, global plan to carry out the necessary drastic and rapid reversal of climate change, while protecting the living standards of the world's population.

In its election statement, the SEP states:

The first step, therefore, in halting a climate disaster requires that the major corporations, above all those bearing central responsibility for pollutants, be taken out of private hands, and placed under public ownership and democratic control. Such a program necessitates international collaboration and control. It can only be developed in struggle against all the parties of the political establishment—Labor, Liberal and the Greens—that defend the profit interests of the major corporations, financial institutions and their 'own' national state.

This fight, in turn, requires the construction of a mass revolutionary movement of the working class internationally. The SEP and its sister parties of the International Committee of the Fourth International are the only political force seeking to develop such a movement.

We invite all students and youth who want to fight for

a future to attend our world movement's annual International May Day Online Rally on May 4 and we urge you to contact the SEP, get involved in our election campaign and join and build this party.

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