

Vote 1 Socialist Equality Party! Take up the fight for socialist internationalism!

The Socialist Equality Party (Australia)
17 May 2019

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) calls on workers, students and young people to register your support for a socialist and internationalist alternative to war, budget cuts and authoritarianism, by voting for our candidates in the Australian federal election.

The SEP is standing to build a revolutionary, socialist movement of the working class against the entire parliamentary establishment and the capitalist system that it defends.

The election campaign has been dominated by lies, evasions and mudslinging. Amid global economic, geo-political and social upheaval, none of the major issues confronting the working class has been discussed by any of the official parties, or the media.

There has been a complete blackout of Australia's central role in the US confrontation with China, which threatens a catastrophic war. This is despite the fact that the election has been held under conditions of a sharp escalation of the Trump administration's trade war measures and military provocations against Beijing.

Nothing has been said about the imminent danger of US wars against Iran and Venezuela that could escalate into region-wide or global military conflicts.

Nor has there been any mention of the role of successive governments, Labor and Coalition alike, in aligning Australia with a vast US military build-up throughout the Asia-Pacific. All the official parties have supported the expansion of US basing arrangements and the integration of the Australian military into the US war machine, in defiance of mass hostility of workers and youth to militarism and war.

By their silence on the spate of geopolitical crises that have erupted during the campaign, Labor, the Coalition and the Greens have again confirmed that they are pro-war parties committed to the US alliance and to participating in American imperialism's predatory wars.

They have also signalled their support for the suppression of democratic rights and anti-war opposition, by their ongoing refusal to defend Julian Assange.

Following his brutal arrest by British police on April 11, Assange faces the prospect of extradition to the US for his role in exposing war crimes, mass surveillance and global diplomatic conspiracies.

The SEP has been the only party to hold meetings and protests during the election to demand that the government fulfil its responsibilities to Assange as an Australian citizen, by securing his return to Australia with a guarantee against extradition to the US.

The persecution of Assange is the spearhead of a broader assault on the democratic rights of the working class.

Last year Labor and the Coalition came together to pass "foreign interference" laws abolishing whistleblower protections and creating the conditions for the illegalisation of anti-war activity. The legislation was introduced on the basis of a McCarthyite-style witchhunt against Chinese nationals, student groups and Australian politicians as "agents" of Beijing.

The real target of these police-state measures is the working class. Amid a deepening social crisis, the ruling elite is preparing to suppress mass working-class struggles, like those that have erupted internationally.

This election has been the most anti-democratic in Australian history. It has been held in the wake of the purging from parliament of MPs entitled to dual citizenship, on the nationalist grounds that they may have an "allegiance to a foreign power." The reactionary constitutional provisions, supported by all of the official parties, exclude almost half the population from standing for office.

Australian capitalism is mired in a deepening slowdown amid a collapse of the speculative property bubble in Australia, a slump in its top market, China, and worsening global economic turbulence.

All of the official parties are pledging to the corporate elite that they will make the working class pay for this deepening crisis.

The Coalition is declaring that it will slash tax rates for big business and the rich.

Labor, and the unions, are making a cynical populist pitch aimed at diverting social anger behind the big business two-party system. Bill Shorten has made hypocritical denunciations of inequality and corporate tax evasion.

Labor's election promises, however, are a case of smoke and mirrors. Much of its healthcare funding, for instance, is to be rolled out over six years, meaning it is possible that little of Labor's utterly inadequate spending promises will reach a hospital in the next term of government.

As in every previous election, budget promises will be junked after polling day. All of Labor and the Coalition's campaign pledges are based on fanciful predictions of economic growth. The reality was demonstrated by the Reserve Bank's decision last Friday to slash its gross domestic product (GDP) growth prediction for the current financial year from 2.5 percent to 1.75 percent—one of the world's largest downgrades in recent economic forecasts.

Labor has made clear that a Shorten government will intensify

the onslaught on the working class.

Shorten has repeatedly invoked the legacy of the Hawke and Keating governments of the 1980s, which deregulated the economy and destroyed hundreds of thousands of jobs. He has pledged a budget surplus greater than the Coalition and called for a summit with big business and the unions to deepen the assault on jobs, wages and conditions.

The Greens are calling for greater “collaboration” with Labor. They are hailing their de facto coalition with the Gillard Labor government from 2010-13, which aligned Australia with US plans for war with China, slashed welfare, healthcare and education and reopened the offshore concentration camps imprisoning refugees in the Pacific.

This election is also marked by the emergence of a host of right-wing populist and even fascistic parties.

These organisations, including Clive Palmer’s United Australia Party, Pauline Hanson’s One Nation and Fraser Anning’s Conservative National Party, are being actively promoted and legitimised by the political and media establishment. Their role is to channel mounting social anger behind reactionary nationalism and xenophobia and to create a right-wing base that can be mobilised against the working class.

The SEP alone has told the working class the truth. Whichever parties form the next government, official politics will shift ever further to the right. The incoming government will seek to implement sweeping austerity measures and expand Australia’s participation in US-led wars.

This agenda will inevitably encounter growing social and political opposition from below. Strikes and protests, suppressed for decades by the corporatised unions, will reemerge.

But anger, alienation and raw militancy are not enough. Workers must draw political lessons from the experiences they have passed through. The first is that there is no way forward through the existing political set-up, or any of the parties committed to it.

The claims that Labor and the Greens are a “lesser-evil,” peddled by pseudo-left organisations, such as Socialist Alliance, Socialist Alternative and the Victorian Socialists, are lies. These are tried and tested parties of big business. For their part, the various minor parties and “independents” seek to shackle workers and young people to the sclerotic parliamentary establishment.

The worsening social and political crisis will only be resolved through the conscious intervention of the working class into political life.

The SEP is fighting to build a mass revolutionary movement of the working class aimed at nothing less than the reorganisation of society from top to bottom, to meet social need, not private profit.

We are fighting for a workers’ government that would implement socialist policies, including placing the banks and the corporations under public ownership and democratic workers’ control. Trillions of dollars must be allocated to fund universal, free, high-quality healthcare and education, and to guarantee the social right to a well-paid, full-time job for all workers.

The military-intelligence apparatus, used to prosecute predatory wars abroad and suppress the working class at home, must be dismantled. The billions allocated to these instruments of war and repression should be diverted to resolving the deepening social

crisis facing the working class.

This is a global struggle, requiring the unification of workers all over the world, in opposition to the nationalism whipped up by the ruling class to divide the working class. The SEP is the only party which defends the right of all people to live and work wherever they choose, with full citizenship rights, in opposition to the reactionary program of border protection defended by every other party.

In this election, the SEP appeals to workers to vote for our candidates in the Senate and in House of Representatives. The SEP is standing in the Senate in New South Wales (NSW) and Victoria, and in the House of Representatives seats of Parramatta in Sydney, Hunter near Newcastle, Calwell in Melbourne and Oxley in Brisbane.

The SEP does not allocate preferences to any other party, or engage in the horse-trading that is the stock in trade of every other outfit contesting the election.

Due to the anti-democratic compulsory preferencing system, those seeking to cast a valid vote for the SEP should place a “one” next to our candidates, and then number your remaining preferences, in line with the requirements of the Australian Electoral Commission.

Above all, we appeal to all students, young people and workers, who want to fight for a future against war, dictatorship, austerity, and capitalism to study the SEP’s program, join our party and build it as the new revolutionary leadership of the working class.

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