

“Workers are now being forced to die for the economy”—SEP (Australia) electoral members oppose homicidal reopening agenda

Our reporters
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Socialist Equality Party (SEP) electoral members have spoken on the relationship between anti-democratic electoral laws, aimed at deregistering minor parties, and the ruling class program of forcing the population to “live with the virus.”

The legislation passed by Labor and the Liberal-National government in August, compels parties without parliamentary representation to submit a list of 1,500 members, treble the previous number, by December 2.

The laws were rushed through parliament amid the country’s worst COVID surge. With the Delta variant resulting in 2,000 infections in Victoria, and still circulating widely in NSW, state and federal governments are lifting all lockdown and safety measures to ensure full corporate profit-making activities can resume, whatever the consequences in illness and deaths.

The legislation is an attempt to prevent the widespread opposition to this homicidal program among teachers, health staff, students and the working class more broadly, from finding any political expression. The unions, along with Labor, the Liberal-Nationals and all of the parliamentary parties, support the subordination of health and safety to profit.

On Sunday, October 31, the SEP will hold an online public meeting to explain its COVID-19 eradication policies and their crucial connection to the campaign to defeat the electoral laws. [Click here to register](#). To join the SEP campaign against the legislation, sign-up as an electoral member today.

Daniel Bugitti, a 50-year-old glass blower from Nabad in northern NSW, became an electoral member

this year. He found the WWSW two years ago and has been a regular reader. The first article he read was an analysis of the US-backed coup attempt in Venezuela.

“We need fundamental change, it’s as simple as that,” he said, “This is why they are trying to stop the minority parties like the SEP from gaining traction. The preferential system is terrible anyway, but now they are killing democracy.”

Bugitti spoke of his history with the union movement and why workers need to turn to a socialist perspective. “I used to be a delegate of the Australian Workers’ Union (AWU) for BHP at Rooty Hill in the 90s. Australia’s Weakest Union” is what we called them” he said. “We got mediocre gains for massive losses. At the end of the day, unions know where they get their bread buttered.

“I noticed that the [union] leaders would come out to the boys and talk tough, but behind the scenes the company just said to them: ‘You can do what you like but we’ll just sack you and get new workers.’ So, we would get pay rises like 9 percent over three years, but at the same time we were making huge productivity gains;” he stated.

“The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU) used to pester us to swap sides as well, it was one big cat fight amongst unions.”

Bugitti spoke about the union’s role in the pandemic: “From the outset, Sally McManus [secretary of the Australian Council of Trade Unions], Christian Porter [former industrial relations minister] and big business have been in a sort of love triangle. Workers are now being forced to die for the economy. Health and safety must come first. But this can only come from the workforce, not the corporations.

“When I heard recently that the Melbourne construction industry had to pause, I thought, wait a minute, the hospitality industry has been shut down for months. You’re only pausing work now? It shows that unions don’t care about members’ safety.”

He referred to the recent far right, anti-vax demonstrations held in Melbourne in late September targeting the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) offices. “Half of those protesters were a bit dodgy; I don’t think they were construction workers. When it comes to vaccines though it’s simple; everything should be done to keep employees as safe as possible. I used to work for the council, and we had to get hepatitis vaccines. Getting vaccinated was important for my own safety and for others as well.”

John Ritchie, a 58-year-old from the regional town of Wagga Wagga who is studying a degree of Computer Science, has been an electoral member since 2015.

“Can you imagine the hysteria in Canberra if the SEP gained a parliamentary seat? Not only would the SEP be demanding the nationalisation of banks etc. but also the war plans against China would be undermined. There would be a very insecure reaction from the ruling class. The way it’s going they may even move to scrapping proportional representation.”

John took note of the increasingly explosive political conditions on an international scale: “I think what is happening in Australia is part of a general breakdown, particularly in ‘The West’. Ultimately, they are losing control of the situation and are now running out of safety valves. In the UK, America, it is the same thing; they have their own interpretation of this breakdown, but the same principles apply.

“They are worried they are running out of lackeys such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC) from the US for example. She was going to come along and go green and all the rest of it, but when it finally came down to it, she became part of some Democratic committee, and abstained from voting on important issues.”

“In Australia, the Greens are no longer able to fulfill this anodyne form of opposition and voters are increasingly dissatisfied with Labor...they need the semblance of opposition and to divert the working class vote somehow. They need someone who can make all

the right noises but won’t actually fight for it.”

Asked what he thought was causing this breakdown he said, “I think the capitalist system itself is causing it. It’s reaching its used by date. The geopolitical situation has changed; the west is running out of new markets to break into, and China is emerging as the world’s largest economy. In response the US is pushing the envelope and entering into dangerous territory.”



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