SEP electoral members in Australia denounce premature ending of COVID-19 lockdowns

Our reporters
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Socialist Equality Party (SEP) electoral members have voiced their opposition to the homicidal reopening agendas of Australian federal and state governments. Placing profits before lives, the Labor government in Victoria and its Liberal-National counterpart in New South Wales (NSW) are ending their limited lockdown measures.

The electoral members link these reopening measures and Canberra's involvement in the US-led preparations for war against China to Australia's new anti-democratic electoral laws, which were rushed through parliament with bipartisan support on August 26.

The laws, which target the SEP and 35 other parties that do not have members of parliament, require that these parties submit a list of 1,500 members, treble the previous number, by December 2 or face deregistration. This means these organisations will not appear under their party name on federal election ballot papers.

As part of the campaign to defeat these laws, the SEP is holding an online public meeting on Sunday, October 31, at 1:00 p.m. (AEDT). The meeting will explain the socialist program for the elimination of COVID-19 and its critical connection to the new electoral laws. Click here to register.

To join the SEP campaign against the legislation, sign up as an electoral member today.

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Dolores Martínez, 55, was politicised by her father, Juan, who was born in the immediate aftermath of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939). She was born in Madrid in 1966 and came to Australia in 1969 with her parents.

While Dolores's mother was from a middle-class family, her father came from a poorer family. "He has always had an anti-capitalist outlook," she said, "and was involved in a so-called Communist Party in Geelong where we lived. I developed a communist mentality in my youth."

When she was 25, Dolores met the Socialist Labour League, forerunner of the SEP, in the north Melbourne working-class suburb of Glenroy, during the party's 1993 election campaign.

Party members, she said, explained that "Leon Trotsky was a revolutionary figure of the Russian Revolution, something that I'd never heard during my entire time around the Communist Party in Geelong. I went home and told my dad. We were immediately interested in the party and Leon Trotsky and wondered why he had never previously been mentioned to us.

"As we later learned, Trotsky was seen as a threat because he represented international socialism. The Stalinist Communist Party wanted to rub his name from history," she continued. "Both the Stalinists and the capitalists sought to present the Soviet bureaucracy and its theory of 'Socialism in One Country' as genuine socialism. They presented Stalin's nationalist perspective as socialism."

Stalinism helped save capitalism, Dolores continued, by "ridding the world of the leadership of the proletariat, which was Trotsky and the old Bolsheviks. This was the case in Spain, where the revolution was betrayed by Stalinism.

"It's important to know what socialism really represents, and that it is based on the idea of 'Workers of the World, Unite!' which means forming rank-and-file committees and being guided by an international program fought for by the SEP," she said.

"These historical questions are more important than ever. These are burning issues because the world is confronting a catastrophic situation with climate disasters, the collapse of the ecosystem and the threat of wars.

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"The coronavirus pandemic is claiming tens of thousands of victims daily. Here in Victoria the Andrews government is reopening, even though there are now over 2,000 cases a day. He has gone further than the government in NSW. The media is trumpeting 'Freedom Friday.' It's disgusting…

"The reason they're telling us to live with the virus is because the economy is going downhill, and capitalism has to continue generating profits for companies and businesses. But the consequence of opening up is more infections, illness and deaths…

"I agree with the October 24 meeting because it will explain the dangers of allowing the pandemic to spread and educate the working class with science on how to put an end to it. The Socialist Equality Party is uniting the working class with scientists for the elimination of the virus," Dolores said.

To register for the October 24 meeting click here.

William, 65, is from Molong in regional New South Wales and became an electoral member earlier this year. He has struggled to find work over the past year because of the pandemic and had to try and survive using his savings. He only recently resumed work as a theatre safety inspector.

"Labor is Liberal lite, there is almost no difference," he said, referring to Australia's dominant parliamentary parties. "During the pandemic they have run down the medical side of things and the Pharmaceutical Benefits System has been wiped out.

"While there has also been no support given to education and health, big business, such as Coles, has been given huge support. This has been going on for decades, they say there's never enough money for health, education, the humanities," he added.

Referring to Australia's new electoral laws, William said. "There's a move to fascist governments internationally, witness Trump in the US, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Johnson in the UK. … I think it expresses itself in Australia with the major parties running roughshod over democratic conventions."

John Thomson, 70, is a longstanding SEP electoral member from the NSW Central Coast. "The laws are based on breaking down or eliminating those parties that take votes from the two major parties, both of which seem to be merging together. When you add in the Greens, it's a red, blue and green coalition against the working class," he said.

Commenting on the preparations for war, he added, "My grandfather's brother worked on the wharves in Sydney during WWII and was jailed for going on strike. In order to go to war, workers' rights need to be destroyed. These new electoral laws are directed against the SEP because it's a party that opposes the drive to war.

"Australia is no stranger to wars, and there's quite a long list, going right back to the Boer wars [in South Africa] beginning in the 19th century. Today Australia is making moves to incorporate nuclear submarines; there are more US bases in the Northern Territory, and it is heavily involved in the 'pivot to Asia' announced by Obama to encircle China…

"In the 80s I used to work as a draughtsman in the construction department for the Water Board. There were lots of strikes, but then Hawke and Keating, in conjunction with the unions brought in the Accords. Any gains in previous decades were capped by the Accord, and workers' struggles were suppressed.

"Now the cost of living has increased, the ruling class is demanding things go 'back to normal' and get profits rolling, and the unions are struggling to contain the class struggle," he said.

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