

The fight for a future free of climate change and war is the fight for world socialism!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality (Australia)
5 May 2022

This week and next, students and youth around Australia are participating in protests opposing government inaction on climate change and the degradation of the environment.

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and its youth and student arm, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), fully support the widest involvement of youth in actions opposing climate change and fighting to secure their futures.

But we warn that the organisers of the events, School Strike 4 Climate (SS4C), are seeking to derail mass opposition and funnel it back behind the very political parties responsible for the environmental crisis. Any suggestion that the upcoming federal election on May 21 will help to resolve climate change, or any other substantive issue facing youth and workers, is a complete lie.

The only party standing in the upcoming elections advancing the interests of workers and youth is the Socialist Equality Party. Our candidates warn that the great problems confronting humanity—climate change, the threat of war, poverty, authoritarianism, COVID-19—can only be dealt with on a world scale and by ending the capitalist profit system which is their cause.

Actions planned this month by the SS4C are deliberately narrow in focus. In the past, rallies—which were attended by hundreds of thousands nationally—were part of global climate strikes involving millions of youth. This time, events planned are small and isolated as a deliberate attempt to smother increasingly radicalised young people.

Many of the SS4C events are specifically advertised as “election climate strikes” with regional centres and cities not even organising events. A number of the actions are not even strikes.

Instead, they are stunts outside the offices of Liberal-National Coalition members of parliament. The perspective is, in the first place, to pressure Coalition MPs. Failing that, it is the replacement of Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s federal government with a government made up of the Labor Party and Greens.

But the record of these parties exposes this political perspective as a cynical fraud. You cannot stem climate change by appealing to the capitalist parties which represent the same

corporate interests that are responsible for climate change in the first place.

The Labor Party, led by Anthony Albanese, is pitching itself as a friend of fossil fuel companies. This is part of a broader appeal to the corporations that Labor is better placed to implement sweeping austerity measures and pro-business restructuring than is the Coalition.

Albanese said last month that a Labor government would not block new coal and gas mines. Labor has foresworn even its own phony half-measures of the past such as a carbon tax. The declaration of net zero emissions by 2050 under Labor is a fairy tale, which it has no intention of implementing.

Greens MP Adam Bandt has repeatedly affirmed his party’s aim—to be a coalition partner of Labor. Despite talk of reducing emissions to zero by 2035, in practice the Greens will work with Labor on every substantive policy point in a government that would faithfully serve the mining barons.

To deal effectively with the consequences of climate change, itself caused by the unbridled and deliberate prioritisation of production and profit over the needs of society and the environment, requires a complete reorganisation of society and the productive forces. Albanese and Labor have already answered that. They are for “renewal not revolution.”

Bandt, in an address to the National Press Club in April, declared that the main task is to “kick the Liberals out,” stating that “Anthony Albanese will be better than the current PM” and that all the Greens needed to do was “keep Labor on track.” On climate change, all Bandt raised was an end to the opening of new coal and gas mines, which does nothing to address existing emissions, and contradicts the policy of Labor, whom Bandt is hoping to align with.

The record of the Greens is for all to see. During the period of the Greens-backed Gillard Labor government, greenhouse emissions actually increased through the implementation of the carbon-tax, supported by the Greens.

The crises of the past three years expose the incompatibility of capitalism with the continuation of life on the planet.

Unprecedented flooding in February and March in the states of Queensland and New South Wales (NSW) have laid waste to entire communities and led to 22 deaths. With no government assistance forthcoming, ordinary people were forced to fend for

themselves.

The floods come after the 2019–2020 bushfires which burned around 30 million hectares, destroyed nearly 3,000 homes and killed 34 people. As climate change worsens and these extreme weather events become more severe and frequent, the response of governments has been to invest ever smaller amounts into climate change mitigation and community support policies.

This is mirrored in the abject disregard for human life expressed amid the COVID-19 pandemic, another devastating exposure of capitalism and the ruling class here and around the world. Over 7,000 Australians have died from COVID-19, more than half in the first few months of 2022 alone.

The murderous “live with the virus” policy of capitalist governments around the world, abandoning scientifically-determined public health measures to stem the virus’s spread, is based on the profit interests of a tiny, wealthy capitalist class. Students have been herded back into dangerous schools and universities as part of the “reopening of the economy” where they are at risk of contracting and spreading COVID.

While thousands in Australia and millions worldwide have died in the pandemic, capitalist governments will have no qualms with more death as they threaten to plunge humanity into a third world war.

The current conflict in Ukraine—a proxy war by the US and NATO against Russia—and the US-led preparations for conflict with China, raise the spectre of nuclear war. Liberal, Labor, the Greens and the entire political establishment in Australia have lined up with US aggression, backing every provocation against Beijing and pledging hundreds of billions to the war machine.

These military preparations have nothing to do with “democracy” or “human rights.” Having laid waste to entire nations, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, American imperialism is preparing a world war aimed at reversing its decline. Russia and China are targets because they are viewed as the principal obstacles to US hegemony.

The drive to war comes not from the minds of individual capitalist politicians, but the objective contradictions of the capitalist system itself, between the socialised nature of production involving billions of workers worldwide and the private ownership of society’s resources by a tiny handful of ultra-wealthy capitalists; and the division of the world economy into competing, antagonistic capitalist nation states.

War abroad also necessitates war against the working class at home. This means to suppress anti-war sentiment while gutting workers’ living and working conditions to pay for ever-expanding military budgets.

None of these existential threats—the pandemic, nuclear war, climate change—can be solved on a national basis. They require international collaboration on a scientific and socialist basis.

Young people must turn to the international working class as the only social force capable of ending capitalism which is leading humanity through one catastrophe after another. Workers, confronted with declining living standards, misery,

mass death and war are beginning to take matters into their own hands.

There is a massive upsurge in working-class militancy around the world. From increased strike action in Europe, Australia and the United States, to mass anti-government protests in Sri Lanka, Sudan and Peru, the working class is once again emerging as a powerful social force.

In order to take the struggle forward, workers and youth must break free of the shackles of the Labor Party, the Greens and all the pro-capitalist organisations, including the fake left and thoroughly corporatised trade unions. All of these forces are there to channel the growing mass anger back behind the capitalist system which is the cause of the existential threat to our planet.

The SEP’s election campaign is aimed at winning workers and youth to the necessary revolutionary perspective of Marxism. We base ourselves on the key historical experiences of the working class in the twentieth century, including the 1917 Russian Revolution led by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, and Trotsky’s fight against Stalinist counterrevolution.

Only through the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism can a planned socialist economy based on social need, not private profit, be built. To join the fight for an egalitarian world free from war, poverty, environmental destruction, pandemics and fascism, we urge you to get in contact with the SEP and IYSSE, support the SEP’s election campaign and join the world socialist movement today.

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