Australian postal workers support SEP candidates in federal election

Postal Workers Rank-and-File Committee
18 May 2022

The Postal Workers' Rank-and-File Committee gives its full support to the candidates of the Socialist Equality Party in the upcoming Australian federal election.

The SEP is the only organisation seeking to unite Australian workers with their class brothers and sisters internationally, to fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, austerity and the accelerating US/NATO-led drive to war against Russia and China.

Since the start of the pandemic, Labor and the unions have worked hand-in-glove with the Liberal-National Coalition to keep workers on the job, maintaining the flow of profits while the pandemic spreads like wildfire among working people, causing mass illness and death.

The reopening drive, which has resulted in more than 5,600 deaths this year alone, would not have been possible without the complete agreement of Labor, especially the Victorian state government of Daniel Andrews.

Now, with the US and NATO threatening world war against Russia and China, Labor is attempting to outflank the Morrison government from the right. Albanese has been at pains in his election campaign to assert that Labor is the party of war and will play its historical role—to ruthlessly prosecute the interests of the Australian ruling class.

Workers are already bearing the cost of the war and the pandemic, which have triggered an unprecedented crisis and accelerated the breakdown of the capitalist system. Around the world, the cost of living is rising rapidly, while workers face stagnant or declining wages.

For most young workers, owning a home is a pipe dream. In fact, cases are now being reported of young families living in tents, as a result of soaring rents and an acute shortage of public housing. Young working-class families who have taken on huge debts to buy a home are now confronted with interest rate hikes that will place unbearable pressure on them as they struggle to make ends meet.

The unions, which long ago ceased to be workers' organisations, are doing everything in their power to save capitalism by propping up and supporting the big-business Labor Party. The Communications, Electrical and Plumbers' Union (CEPU) is currently parading Labor politicians around Australia Post facilities, as other unions are doing at workplaces throughout the country, to promote the dangerous illusion that the election of a Labor government will somehow benefit workers.

Nothing could be further from the truth. In recent decades, Labor governments, in close collaboration with the unions, have spearheaded the destruction of hundreds of thousands of jobs, as well as the slashing of pay and conditions throughout the working class.

Beginning in 1983, with the election of the Hawke-Keating government, Labor implemented a series of pro-business reforms along the same lines as those put in place by the conservative Reagan and Thatcher governments in the US and Britain. The union-Labor Prices and Incomes Accords brought unprecedented cuts to real wages, slashed conditions and broke up all forms of independent workplace organisation, while the unions were transformed into an industrial police force.

The introduction of enterprise bargaining in 1991 took Labor's assault on workers to a new level. The purpose was to atomise the working class, isolating workers' struggles to individual workplaces and outlawing industrial action except during narrow windows every few years.

These already draconian industrial relations laws were further sharpened by the Rudd-Gillard Labor

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government with the 2008 “Fair Work Act.” This granted the anti-worker industrial courts the power to ban strikes, even during the bargaining period, and impose compulsory arbitration.

This is the legacy to which Albanese aspires. The Labor leader has made clear to big business that, if elected, his government will undertake a program of “productivity increases” along the lines of the Hawke-Keating governments. For workers, this means jobs, pay and conditions will be slashed in order to shore up the profits of Australian capitalism. Labor and the unions will again tell workers this is a necessary sacrifice to keep Australian capitalism “internationally competitive.”

The PWRFC warns that a union-backed Labor government will deepen the assault on the working class, further advance the drive to war and continue the homicidal “let it rip” COVID-19 agenda.

The PWRFC endorses the socialist program of the SEP and the demands set out in its election statement. These include an immediate rise in all pay, automatic monthly wage adjustments to keep pace with the cost of living, full-time permanent jobs with decent wages and conditions for all who want them and a living wage for those unable to work. In addition, the SEP calls for an end to imperialist war and a global fight to eliminate the COVID-19 pandemic.

To carry out this program, the SEP and its candidates are advancing the fight to build rank-and-file committees throughout the working class, independent of the unions, management, and the government.

The PWRFC urges workers to take up the struggle to nationalise the major industries under workers’ control—including Australia Post—utilities and financial institutions, and to fight for a workers’ government to reorganise society along socialist lines to meet the needs of the working class, not the corporate and financial oligarchy.

We call on workers everywhere to study the SEP statement, vote for its candidates, and above all to apply to join the SEP in order to advance the fight for this perspective.

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