

May Day 2025

The Australian election and plans for war against China

Max Boddy
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This speech was given by Socialist Equality Party (Australia) assistant national secretary Max Boddy at the International May Day 2025 Online Rally, held Saturday, May 3.

We are celebrating May Day amid a massive breakdown of global capitalism, as comrades have detailed. The official campaign in the Australian federal election, held yesterday, was a dirty conspiracy of the ruling elite and its political representatives to conceal this reality from working people.

Labor and the Liberals, the traditional parties of capitalist rule, entered the campaign in a crisis, with masses of people viewing them correctly as the corrupt instruments of the banks and the corporations. Their campaigns consisted of banalities and lies, haggling over a few dollars a week in tax or fuel concessions under conditions of the worst social crisis in decades.

The ideological core of the election con job was the claim that Australia is an exception. In Labor Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's words, it is "uniquely placed" to weather the geopolitical and economic storms epitomised by Trump's trade war.

Nothing could be further from the truth. As the Socialist Equality Party alone raised in our campaign, Australian capitalism is "placed" for a battering. The bourgeoisie is completely dependent on mineral exports to China, the central target of Trump's trade war. The economy is already in a slump, and the working class has been hit with the biggest reversal in living standards since World War II.

Albanese and Liberal leader Peter Dutton tried to avoid mention of Trump at all costs. He is political poison. According to polling, up to 70 percent of the population is hostile to Trump and his program of

economic war, militarism and dictatorship. But, try as they might, he intruded. Some media outlets noted there were really three figures in the Australian election campaign, Albanese, Dutton and Trump.

When the major parties did mention this fascist gangster in the White House, it was to compete over who could best work with him, above all in the confrontation with Beijing. That is because dominant sections of the Australian bourgeoisie view their own predatory interests, especially in the South Pacific, as best served through involvement in the US war drive against China.

Completing Australia's transformation into a frontline state for war with China has been a central focus of the Albanese Labor government over the past three years. That includes the \$368 billion purchase of nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS pact with the UK and the US; equipping every branch of the military with missile strike capabilities; and vastly expanding US basing, including for bombers that can carry nuclear weapons.

In this campaign, all the pro-capitalist parties have come out as warmongers. The Greens have dropped their pacifist mask, outlining their own program for missiles and drones directed at China. Last year, they correctly raised that the Labor government was complicit in the Gaza genocide. Now, their national leaders won't mention it because they are begging for a coalition with Labor. They denounced the slaughter to win popular support. Now that they want to join a pro-genocide Labor government, the dead Palestinians are an inconvenience.

The official position of the pseudo-left Socialist Alliance is to "halve" military spending—these

Pabloites, in other words, are happy for \$28 billion a year to go to the war machine.

But much more is being demanded. In the corporate papers, it is raised every day that after the election, military spending must be increased by tens and tens of billions a year. And they say that the money will have to come through massive austerity cuts and a productivity drive to increase the exploitation of the working class.

This is a program that will produce enormous struggles by the working class. The Labor government already sought to criminalise pro-Palestinian protests and almost all strikes by workers. The electoral authorities barred the SEP from official registration, despite our meeting the onerous membership requirements. This meant that our party name did not appear on the ballot.

We did not allow this to prevent us from standing candidates. We won a response because workers and youth want a real alternative. They are seeing through the lies. They want a political movement that really fights against war, austerity and dictatorship. They want a future of peace and social rights. As we insisted, that will not come from the rotten parliament or the capitalist parties. It requires a revolutionary movement of the working class.



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