

Australian protests against Trump: The fight against fascism is a fight against capitalism!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality (Australia)
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Protests are being held in capital cities across Australia on Saturday against US President Donald Trump.

The demonstrations express a growing global hostility to Trump and the reactionary agenda that he embodies. Masses of people around the world have been shocked by the scenes coming out of the US, from anti-war students being snatched off the streets by federal agents and locked up without due process, to mass roundups of immigrants and an unprecedented assault on social programs overseen by the wealthiest man in the world, Elon Musk.

These are not a collection of disconnected reactionary policies. Taken together, they are an attempt to abolish all democratic rights, overthrow the framework of nominal Constitutional rule and establish a presidential dictatorship on behalf of the oligarchy.

On a global scale, Trump is dispensing with any pretence of adherence to international law. His administration represents the intensification of neo-colonialism in its most naked form. Trump declares that his government will forcibly acquire Greenland, the Panama Canal and even Canada, to openly advance the interests of American imperialism. The genocide in Gaza is likewise presented as an opportunity for the US property moguls and banks to acquire waterfront real estate.

The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), the world Trotskyist movement, has described Trump's ascension as a turning point in world history. For the first time, there is a concerted attempt to establish a fascistic dictatorship in the United States, the centre of global capitalism.

Such a development poses the most fundamental questions to workers and young people worldwide. How has this come to pass? What is the connection between Trump's war on democracy and the socio-economic relations of society? What is the relationship between the turn to authoritarianism and the eruption of militarism globally over the past thirty years?

And the most fundamental question of all: How can the threat of fascism be fought and defeated, not only in the US, but internationally?

In answer to these questions, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), the youth movement of the ICFI and the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), recalls the words of the German playwright Bertolt Brecht. "Those who are against Fascism without being against capitalism, who lament over the barbarism that comes out of barbarism, are like people who wish to eat their veal without slaughtering the calf."

The reality is that Trump's rise, sponsored by powerful sections

of the American ruling class, is only the sharpest expression of a breakdown of the global capitalist system. In response to the capitalist crisis, the ruling elites everywhere are once again turning to the program of the 1930s, involving economic and trade war, genocide, an onslaught on the social and democratic rights of the working class, and ultimately world war.

The conditions that we confront today are the same as those that compelled millions of workers and young people to take up the fight for socialism in the first half of the 20th century. Once again, the alternatives posed are socialism or barbarism, but with the amendment that the advent of nuclear weapons means the choice is between socialism or the destruction of humanity itself.

These fundamental issues are being covered up by the organisers of the protests in the Students for Palestine grouping, which is largely a front for the pseudo-left Socialist Alternative organisation. Advertising for the rallies has stated that their primary demand will be a call for the Australian Labor government to "cut ties with Trump's America."

The perspective was summed up in particularly crude terms by Jordan van den Lamb, the frontman for Socialist Alternative's electoral project, the Victorian Socialists. He declared, "Trump's America is not good. I don't wanna be associated with this shit and neither should you.... We also need to say to all the Trump wannabes that we don't want their far-right shit in Australia."

For someone with a university education, the confected backwardness is designed to lower the political level of discussion and underplay the real dangers posed by Trump.

Van den Lamb's statement, however, is not simply obnoxious. It sums up the political dead-end advanced by the organisers of the protests. Their perspective is an acceptance of the capitalist order that is responsible for Trump and fascism, and that all young people and workers can do is appeal to the Labor Party or the Democratic Party, which have remained prostrate before Trump's attacks on the living, working and democratic rights of workers, immigrants and youth.

The policy of Anthony Albanese, the newly elected Labor prime minister, is that he won't comment on anything Trump does. This includes the "final solution" of the annihilation of the Palestinian people in Gaza by Israel and the US.

Like the Democrats in the US and much of the corporate media, the organisers present Trump as though he came out of the clear blue sky. In reality, Trump's open turn towards dictatorship represents a qualitative leap that builds upon the policies of

successive US administrations, which, for the past forty years, have attacked democratic rights, while waging a successively widening series of wars.

As with those administrations, including the Democratic Party governments of Obama and Biden, Trump's fundamental aim is to offset the historic economic decline of American imperialism through the use of its overwhelming military might. That decisive sections of the American ruling elite now see the only way forward as being through dictatorship is because the program they are advancing, including a war against Russia and China, is incompatible with even nominal democracy.

And this is not an American phenomenon. Around the world, as they turn to a massive military build up and to social counter-revolution, the ruling elites, from Germany, to France and Japan, are building up and promoting far-right and fascistic forces. In periods of war and capitalist crisis, the fundamental program of the capitalist class is nationalism.

And that is essentially what Van den Lamb and the organisers are promoting. To Trump's program of "America First," they counterpose a no less reactionary policy of "Australia First," addressed to the Labor Party and behind it, the Australian corporate and financial elite.

The call for an "independent" Australian foreign policy means the defence of Australian imperialism and the prosecution of its predatory interests, above all against the impoverished masses of the Pacific. This line has been advanced by a minority wing of the ruling elite itself, expressed by such right-wing militarist figures as former Labor prime minister Paul Keating and former foreign minister Bob Carr.

This wing of the ruling class is not anti-war or anti-militarist in the slightest. They simply fear that a complete commitment to US-led war with China will threaten the interests of the Australian bourgeoisie, both because of its dependence on trade with China and because such a war would provoke massive struggles by the working class.

Indeed, the proponents of an "independent" foreign policy are themselves the advocates of an aggressive military build-up. That goes beyond Keating and Carr.

In the last federal election, the Greens outlined their first costed military policy, including the acquisition of medium-range missiles and drones directed against China. And the Socialist Alliance organisation has called for the Australian military budget to be halved—i.e., these pseudo-left frauds support at least \$28 billion being allocated to the war machine every single year.

The truth is that the pseudo-left is a pro-imperialist movement. Socialist Alternative for years supported the CIA regime change operation against Syria, and has celebrated its fruition in the coming to power of an Al Qaeda linked dictatorship with the closest of ties to Israel and to Trump. Socialist Alternative and Socialist Alliance have similarly backed the US-NATO proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, which is one plank of the drive to US global hegemony that includes the advanced preparations for war against China.

The pseudo-left's pro-imperialism is not a mistake. It is a product of the class character of these organisations. They represent, not the working class, but affluent sections of the upper

middle-class, which seeks to advance its own privileges within the capitalist system, especially through the use of identity politics based on race, gender and sexual orientation. The pseudo-left is tied by a thousand threads to the parties of capitalism, including the corporatised union bureaucracy, the Greens and Labor itself.

That is why they are once again insisting that workers and young people opposed to Trump and to the Gaza genocide appeal to the Labor government. For the past 19 months, the pseudo-left has neutered and sabotaged the mass movement against the genocide, by insisting that all that it could do was to issue fawning pleas to the very Labor administration complicit in the historic war crimes.

Now, the pseudo-left is seeking to subordinate hostility to Trump to a Labor government that has already pledged to work with the fascist in the White House, and whose central policy is preparation for war with China in league with Washington.

The IYSSE calls on young people to reject the nationalist and pro-capitalist poison of the pseudo-left. The great lesson of the 20th century is that the fight against fascist reaction requires the independent political mobilisation of the working class, based on a socialist and revolutionary program aimed at reorganising society from top to bottom. The subordination of workers to the capitalist parties, be they the Democrats in the US or Labor in Australia, simply creates the political conditions most conducive to the victory of the fascist reactionaries.

We call on students and youth to turn, not to the rotten Labor government, but to the working class in Australia and internationally. That includes the American working class, which is already entering into struggle and will be propelled into mass class battles against Trump and the oligarchy he represents.

Take up the fight for a socialist future! Join the IYSSE and build the International Committee of the Fourth International and the Socialist Equality Parties as the new revolutionary leadership of the working class!



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