

Resolution for the Eighth Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (Australia)

The SEP and the fight against war

Socialist Equality Party (Australia)
12 October 2026

We are publishing here the first of five resolutions adopted unanimously by the Eighth National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (Australia), held September 26–29, 2026.

1. This Congress is convening amid a breakdown of global capitalism marked by an eruption of imperialist militarism, a turn by the ruling elites to dictatorship and an assault on the social and democratic rights of the working class unprecedented since the 1930s. A new world war is not a future danger but a present-day reality, metastasising across the globe with multiple fronts already ablaze, posing the threat of a nuclear catastrophe. The same underlying crisis of capitalism that gives rise to war is driving a dramatic intensification of the class struggle and a broad political radicalisation among workers and young people. The Socialist Equality Party's task is to intervene into this developing movement and arm it with a socialist and revolutionary perspective.

2. The global crisis finds its sharpest expression in the United States, the centre of world imperialism. The actions of the Trump administration, militarism everywhere and a trade war against the world, have accelerated the breakdown of all the mechanisms established after World War II to suppress the inherent tendencies of capitalism to economic crisis and world war. In place of the old order of international "cooperation" and law, which was always a veil for the domination of the imperialist powers, there is a new order based on brazen lawlessness, an open return to neo-colonialism and a program of each against all. The world is once again dividing into rival trading blocs, inter-imperialist rivalries are growing and there are continuous economic upheavals. The attempts by Trump to erect a fascist dictatorship demonstrate that this program is incompatible with democracy and is inseparable from a war against the population itself.

3. The US-led war against Iran, initiated on February 28, marks a historic turning point. The sneak attack, launched amid negotiations between the US and Iran, was utterly illegal from the standpoint of American and international law. As the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) has stated, the launching of a war of aggression, involving the murder of Iran's head of state and the blanket bombardment of the country's military and civilian infrastructure, constitutes the same "crime against peace" for which the leaders of the Nazi regime were tried in 1946. That has been made explicit by Trump's genocidal statements, including his April 7 declaration that "A whole civilization will die tonight, never to be brought back again" and his repeated threats to "completely destroy" a country of more than 90 million people.

4. Attempts to explain the deepening global crisis by reference to Trump's personality or the makeup of his administration are utterly false. The policies being implemented by Trump are those of the entire political establishment and the corporate oligarchy that it represents. All the imperialist powers have either openly or tacitly supported the criminal war against Iran and are participating in the redivision of the world, of which

the war is a part. Trump's program of global war, moreover, is a continuation of a decades-long project of American imperialism, waged under successive Democratic and Republican administrations.

5. The ICFI has explained that the war against Iran is the culmination of a 35-year period, initiated by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. In its final betrayal of the working class, the Stalinist bureaucracy liquidated the remaining gains of the October Revolution and restored capitalism. Notwithstanding the counter-revolutionary character of the Stalinist regime, the dissolution was viewed by the strategists of imperialism as the removal of any obstacle to unbridled militarism. American imperialism, already confronting a decline in its global position, sought to establish its hegemony through a program of endless war, with a succession of military interventions in Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Ukraine.

6. The attempt to overcome the inherent contradictions of capitalism—above all between an integrated global economy and the division of the world into rival nation states—through military might has failed. The US, the principal creditor of the post-World War II period, is now the prime debtor, with an astronomical debt of \$40 trillion. After decades of financialisation, the industrial base that was the source of its earlier pre-eminence has greatly eroded. The only way out of the crisis is global war, above all targeting Russia and China, which are viewed as the chief obstacles to the dominance of US capitalism.

7. This is not unique to the US. All the imperialist powers, confronting the same underlying economic slump and the same social tensions stemming from massive inequality, are seeking to offset their own crisis at the expense of current and future rivals. In Europe, the old imperialist powers, Germany, the United Kingdom and France, are embarking on their greatest militarisation since World War II. So too are the powers of the Indo-Pacific, including Japan and Australia.

8. The ICFI warned, at the time, that the post-1991 eruption of imperialist militarism was leading to a new world war. In 1991, it defined the US assault on Iraq in the first Gulf War as "the beginning of a new imperialist redivision of the world." In 2016, David North wrote in the preface to *A Quarter Century of War*: "The last quarter century of US-instigated wars must be studied as a chain of interconnected events. The strategic logic of the US drive for global hegemony extends beyond the neocolonial operations in the Middle East and Africa. The ongoing regional wars are component elements of the rapidly escalating confrontation of the United States with Russia and China."

9. The war against Russia has already begun. The conflict in Ukraine has nothing to do with a defence of "democracy" and "human rights" against Russian aggression. The Putin regime's reactionary invasion in February 2022 was deliberately stoked by the US, through the relentless expansion of NATO up to Russia's borders and the transformation of Ukraine into a garrison state of the imperialist powers. The four years of

war have been armed, funded and directed by the US and the NATO powers, with the aim of inflicting a strategic defeat that would result in regime change in Moscow and the dissolution of Russia. In pursuing this program, the imperialist powers have sacrificed hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian and Russian lives and have openly risked nuclear war.

10. The US-led war throughout the Middle East, extending from Israel's genocide of the Palestinians to its attacks on a host of regional states and now the assault on Iran, is another front of this global war. So too is the Trump administration's attempt to dominate the Americas, including through the assault on Venezuela, with which it began 2026. The aim of both is to establish regions of dominance as a base for war against China, the principal target of American imperialism, and to decapitate regimes with which Beijing has maintained ties.

The militarisation of the Indo-Pacific and Australian imperialism's role

11. While the US and its allies have not yet launched a military assault on China, it is already the indirect target of the wars underway and the central target of the global trade war of the Trump administration. Within the Indo-Pacific region, all the conditions have been created for a devastating war that would eclipse the horrors of the two world wars and threaten the very future of humanity.

12. The US has ringed China with a series of aggressive military alliances, all directed at preparing such a war. The Quad, which brings together the most powerful militaries of the Indo-Pacific—the US, Japan, India and Australia—is directed against Beijing. So too is AUKUS, the pact between the US, Australia and the UK, aimed at the militarisation of the Indo-Pacific. Under the umbrella of its alliance with the US, Japan, which laid waste to China in the 1930s and 1940s, is dispensing with the restraints of its post-World War II pacifist constitution and is rapidly remilitarising. South Korea is a major component of the Pentagon's war planning and military operations in East Asia against China.

13. Not only are the alliances and war materiel being assembled, but the fuses for war against China have also been set. The US and its allies have deliberately inflamed a series of flashpoints, each of which could serve as a *casus belli* for war.

14. Successive US administrations have moved to overturn the One China policy, which effectively recognised the Beijing regime as the government of all China, including Taiwan. They have expanded the weapons trade with Taipei, in a program explicitly aimed at transforming Taiwan into a proxy for war with China, analogous to the role played by Ukraine against Russia. In the South China Sea, American imperialism has inflamed decades-long territorial disputes between China and several regional states, creating the conditions for a clash that could trigger all-out war. The US has stoked border disputes between India and China, as well as conflicts between China and Japan in the East China Sea. Those flashpoints intersect with continuous military exercises in the region, including US-led incursions into Chinese-claimed waters, and massive drills that have taken on the character of a mock war against Beijing.

15. This year marks 15 years since the announcement of the pivot to Asia, the enormous US military build-up in the Indo-Pacific against China that has continued ever since. The pivot was announced by Democratic Party President Barack Obama from the floor of the Australian parliament in 2011, under the Labor government of Prime Minister Julia Gillard. She had come to power the year before in a backroom coup against Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, carried out by Labor and union apparatchiks who were later exposed in documents published by WikiLeaks as "protected sources" of the US embassy. Rudd was committed to the US alliance and

had even given secret assurances that in the event of a war with China, Australia would participate. His tactical proposal that the US make some limited accommodation to China's rise in the Indo-Pacific to avert economic and military disaster was nevertheless viewed as beyond the pale under conditions of the preparation of the "pivot." The coup and Obama's subsequent announcement in the parliament underscored Australia's central role in the preparations for war against China. In a plethora of strategic documents, it has been described both as a "rear base" for US and allied imperialism and a launching pad for aggression throughout the Indo-Pacific.

16. The central policy of the current Labor government is to complete Australia's transformation into such a staging base. The 2023 Defence Strategic Review (DSR) and the two National Defence Strategies released in its wake outlined a new doctrine of the aggressive and more open pursuit of Australian imperialist interests globally. Any pretence of limiting the activities of the military to the continent's approaches was dispensed with, in favour of "impactful projection."

17. That is being realised through the largest military build-up since World War II. The planned acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines under AUKUS is only the tip of the spear. Every branch of the military is being equipped with strike capabilities, above all missiles. The structure of the military is being transformed, with ever greater resources being directed to the navy and air force, on the explicit grounds that they would be crucial to an air and sea war fought in the Indo-Pacific.

18. The Labor government has allocated more than \$14 billion to northern Australian bases over the coming decade, creating a continent-wide network of airfields, ports, fuel depots, munitions stores and logistics facilities designed to enable US and allied forces to mount and sustain "high-intensity military operations." What began under the Gillard Labor government in 2011 with fewer than 200 US Marines rotating through Darwin has expanded into annual deployments of around 2,500 Marines and sailors. The basing arrangements now extend far beyond the Marines. There are eleven separate facilities near Darwin, to station, service and equip US bombers, fighters and surveillance aircraft. HMAS Stirling, near Perth, is being transformed into the most important US base adjacent to the Indian Ocean, with a vast new facility being built to station US nuclear-powered submarines and 2,000 or more US personnel. The joint Pine Gap base in Central Australia is a major war planning centre for American imperialism, processing information from satellites that cover much of the globe, including Asia and the Middle East. Pine Gap is key to the Five Eyes surveillance network—of which Australia is a part—that spies on the world's population, as whistleblower Edward Snowden exposed in 2013. The Northwest Cape base is indispensable to radio communications for the US fleet and its allies throughout the western Pacific Ocean and eastern Indian Ocean.

19. Throughout the region, Australia is operating as an attack dog, hectoring countries to align with the anti-China aggression. Australia is particularly targeting the historically oppressed and impoverished countries of the Pacific. That underscores the reality that Australia is an imperialist power. Its alignment with the US build-up against China is bound up with the fact that Australia, as a middle-order imperialist power, has always advanced its own predatory interests under the umbrella of an alliance with the dominant power of the day, first Britain, and then, with the opening of the Pacific theatre in World War II, the United States.

20. Australia's role in the global war is not limited to the Indo-Pacific. Under conditions of mounting rivalries and tensions between the US and the European powers, Australia is a key partner of American imperialism internationally. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was among the first world leaders to endorse the criminal attack on Iran and the Labor government was one of a handful that committed military forces, including through the deployment of troops, air-to-air missiles and an advanced command warplane to the Middle East. That followed Labor's

unwavering support for the Israeli genocide in Gaza, including through the ongoing export of weapons components. Australia is among the largest non-NATO contributors to the war against Russia, with its commitment approaching \$2 billion, the bulk of it in weaponry. Together with Japan, South Korea and New Zealand, Australia has attended annual NATO summits since 2022, connecting militarism in the Indo-Pacific with the war in Europe.

21. As is the case globally, war abroad means a war against the social and democratic rights of the working class at home. The Labor government is seeking to subordinate every aspect of civil society to the military, under the authoritarian concept of a “whole of nation” war effort. The implications have been made clear through a ruthless assault on opposition to war, including attempts to outlaw mass protests against the Gaza genocide. A particular focus is tying the entire educational system to the war drive, including through stepped-up censorship of students and educators and school curricula glorifying militarism. Funding for universities is increasingly dependent on their courses being in line with “national security” and war-related sectors, while in the schools, government programs—including the School Pathways Program—openly aim to funnel children into the military and war production, including by giving access to weapons corporations. The vast sums allocated to the military, already \$60 billion a year and set to grow, will be paid for by the working class. That is the significance of the savaging of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, kicking hundreds of thousands of disabled people off any support in a brutal austerity policy that will claim the lives of some of the most vulnerable.

The resurgence of the working class and the fight against war

22. While the imperialist powers are once again returning to the path of war, the international working class is embarking on the road of the class struggle. All over the world, workers are entering into struggle against the very governments and corporate elites that are responsible for the developing war. That war, in turn, is intensifying the social crisis through economic disruption, surging inflation and the imperatives of austerity.

23. The processes of globalisation, which have heightened the contradiction between the world economy and the nation-state system to a breaking point, have greatly increased the size and social power of the international working class, which now numbers at least 3.6 billion. The ICFI as the world party of socialist revolution, and all of its sections, including the SEP in Australia, are alone in fighting to unite this vast social force on the basis of its common class interests, as the only means of ending imperialist war and the capitalist system that gives rise to it.

24. The SEP in Australia, in collaboration with the SEP of Sri Lanka and the Socialist Equality Group in New Zealand, has a particular responsibility to fight for the unification of workers throughout the Indo-Pacific, who comprise a decisive battalion of the working class globally, numbering as many as 2 billion. The SEP must relentlessly expose the machinations of the imperialist powers throughout the region, including against the oppressed masses of the Pacific Island states, and the stoking of nationalism by every government.

25. This is a political struggle against not only the Labor government, but the entire political establishment and all of its satellites, which are either openly pro-war, or seek to politically neuter anti-war sentiment and prevent its intersection with a socialist perspective. That includes the Greens, a capitalist party that has aided the military build-up against China, and pseudo-left organisations such as Socialist Alternative, which are in the camp of imperialism, expressed in their support for the US-led regime-change operations against Syria and Libya and the war against

Russia and their continuous promotion of Labor, the preeminent party of Australian imperialism, as a “lesser evil.”

26. The SEP opposes the pseudo-left’s designation of Russia and China as imperialist powers as an anti-Marxist exercise in war propaganda. Such a designation is antithetical to the scientific Marxist understanding of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism, opened up by the First World War of 1914 and characterised by the domination of finance capital in the imperialist centres of Europe and the US. Whatever the ambitions of their ruling elites, Russia and China have a history entirely distinct from that of the imperialist powers and are locked out of control of those financial centres. The pseudo-left’s denunciations of Russian and Chinese “imperialism,” never based upon an analysis of history or the realities of the global economy, serve as justification for aligning with US-led wars and aggression including the proxy war in Ukraine and the military build-up in the Indo-Pacific.

27. The SEP also opposes the fraud of “multipolarity,” which presents Russia and China as a counterweight to US and global imperialism. As the history of the 20th century demonstrates in blood, the decline of a dominant imperialist power does not result in an indefinite balance between “multiple poles,” but in world war. The Russian and Chinese regimes, moreover, based upon capitalist restoration and utterly hostile to the working class, can only respond to imperialist encirclement with their own military build-up, which heightens the danger of war, and pathetic appeals to the imperialist powers themselves for a deal. The theory of “multipolarity” accepts the capitalist nation-state system, which is the cause of war, and opposes the only viable perspective to end it, the mobilisation of the international working class on a socialist program.

28. The SEP demands the immediate and unconditional cessation of all US, Israeli and allied military operations against Iran and the lifting of the naval blockade; the end of the genocide in Gaza; the withdrawal of all US and allied forces from the Middle East; the ending of the war against Russia; and the dismantling of the machinery of world war being assembled against China. We condemn the Labor government’s role in the global war and demand an immediate end to the US-Australia alliance; the abolition of US basing arrangements; and the abolition of the Australian national-security apparatus, which exists not to defend the population, but to advance the interests of the ruling elite, against the peoples of the region and the working class domestically. The SEP fights every form of nationalism and xenophobia, used to divide the working class and promote the war drive, including anti-China witch-hunting and the official demonisation of Muslims. We spearhead the struggle against attempts to dragoon young people into war, including moves to introduce conscription or other forms of “national service.”

29. The SEP advances these demands, not as an appeal to the Labor government or the capitalist state, but in opposition to them. The SEP does not advance an “anti-war policy” as something separate and apart from the fight against the capitalist system. Its strategy has nothing in common with the protest movements that appeal to the conscience of imperialist governments, or with popular fronts that subordinate the working class to one or another faction of the bourgeoisie. The fight against war is a fight for the political independence of the working class. It is the most concentrated expression of the struggle of the party to build a revolutionary movement of the working class.

30. This Congress fully endorses the resolution of the SEP in the US opposing war, and adopts its conclusion as our own: “This Congress resolves to fight for the unity of the workers of all countries against imperialism; to connect the fight against war with the developing strike movement of the international working class and the fight for its political independence; and to build the international anti-war movement of the working class on the program of world socialist revolution. More than a century ago, amid the slaughter of the First World War, Rosa Luxemburg warned that humanity confronted the alternative: socialism or barbarism.

Barbarism is no longer a warning but a present reality. Whether it consumes civilization, or is overthrown by the international working class, will be decided by the resolution of the crisis of revolutionary leadership. This Congress therefore resolves, above all, to build the Socialist Equality Party and the International Committee of the Fourth International as the revolutionary leadership of the working class—the party through which the fight against imperialist war becomes the world socialist revolution.”

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