socialistalternative

Statement of Principles

SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE is a revolutionary Marxist organisation. We stand for the overthrow of capitalism and the construction of a world socialist system.

BY SOCIALISM we mean a system in which society is democratically controlled by the working class and the productive resources of society are channelled to abolishing class divisions. Only socialism can rid the world of poverty and inequality, stop imperialist wars, end oppression and exploitation, save the environment from destruction and provide the conditions for the full realisation of human creative potential. A system under the democratic control of the working class is the only basis for establishing a classless, prosperous, sustainable society based on the principle "from each according to their ability, to each according to their need".

STALINISM IS not socialism. We agree with Trotsky's characterisation of Stalin as the "gravedigger" of the Russian Revolution. The political character of the regime established by the Stalinist bureaucracy in Russia most closely resembled that placed in power in capitalist countries by victorious fascist movements – an atomised population ruled over by a ruthless bureaucratic dictatorship masquerading behind social demagogy. We stand in the tradition of the revolutionaries who resisted Stalinism, and we fight today to reclaim the democratic, revolutionary politics of Marx, Engels, Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky and others from Stalinist distortion.

SOCIALISM CANNOT be won by reform of the current system or by taking over the existing state. Only the revolutionary overthrow of the existing order and the smashing of the capitalist state apparatus can defeat the capitalist class and permanently end its rule. A successful revolution will involve workers taking control of their workplaces, dismantling existing state institutions (parliaments, courts, the armed forces and police) and replacing them with an entirely new state based on genuinely democratic control by the working class.

THE EMANCIPATION of the working class must be the act of the working class itself. Socialism cannot come about by the actions of a minority. The struggle for socialism is the struggle of the great mass of workers to control their lives and their society, what Marx called "a movement of the immense majority in the interests of the immense majority".

FOR WORKERS to be won to the need for revolution, and for the working class to be cohered organisationally and politically into a force capable of defeating the centralised might of the capitalist state, a revolutionary party is necessary. Such an organisation has to cohere in its ranks

the decisive elements among the most class conscious and militant workers. Laying the basis for such a party is the key strategic task for socialists in Australia today.

IT IS NOT enough for a revolutionary party to organise the vanguard of the class. For capitalism to be overthrown, the majority of the working class must be won to revolutionary action and the socialist cause. It is not enough to simply denounce the non-revolutionary organisations and political currents in the workers' movement. Revolutionaries have to engage reformist organisations via the method of the united front in order to test the possibility for united action in practice and demonstrate to all workers in a non-sectarian way the superiority of revolutionary ideas and practice. We support all demands and movements that tend to improve the position and self-confidence of workers and of other oppressed sections of the population.

SOCIALISTS SUPPORT trade unions as the basic defensive organisations of the working class. We stand for democratic, militant, class struggle unionism and reject class collaborationism. We also stand for political trade unionism – the union movement should champion every struggle against injustice.

CAPITALIST EXPLOITATION of the working class and the natural world has created a situation where the profit system threatens the habitability of the planet. We oppose attempts to halt climate change and environmental destruction through measures that place the burden on working class people and the poor. We demand instead fundamental social and political change that directly challenges the interests of the ruling class. The environmental crisis can only be solved under socialism, where the interests of people and the planet are not counterposed.

SOCIALISTS ARE internationalists. We reject Australian patriotism and nationalism and fight for international working class solidarity. The struggle against capitalism is an international struggle: socialism cannot be built in a single country.

THE IMPERIALIST phase of capitalism has ushered in an era of military conflict that has no precedent in human history. The core element of imperialism is the conflict between imperial powers, or blocks of capital, which attempt by military, diplomatic and commercial means to divide and redivide the world in their own interests. In the conflicts between imperial powers (open or by proxy), revolutionaries do not take sides, least of all with our own ruling classes. Nor do we call for the resolution of inter-imperialist conflict by the "peaceful" methods of international diplomacy. Instead we fight for international working class solidarity and unity, and embrace Lenin's revolutionary call to "turn the imperialist war between nations into a civil war between classes". In the case of wars waged or diplomatic pressure exerted by military threat by the imperial powers against colonies and non-imperialist nations, we oppose the imperial power and defend the right of national self-determination.

AUSTRALIA IS an imperialist power in its own right. Through its own economic and military strength, and in alliance with US imperialism, Australian capitalism seeks to politically and

militarily dominate its region and project power more broadly. This gives revolutionaries in Australia a special obligation to stand in solidarity with struggles of workers and the oppressed in our region against Australian imperialist intervention and control.

WE RECOGNISE Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the first people of Australia. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and condemn the crimes of genocide and dispossession committed by European colonists and the Australian state. We support the struggle for land rights, sovereignty and economic and social justice for Indigenous people.

WE OPPOSE all immigration controls and support open borders. We fight to free all refugees from detention and for the right of asylum seekers to reach Australia. We oppose racism towards migrants. In particular we reject racism towards Muslims, whose right to religious and political freedom is routinely attacked on the spurious grounds of "fighting terrorism".

WE OPPOSE all oppression on the basis of sex, gender or sexuality. We oppose all forms of discrimination against women and all forms of social inequality between men and women. The struggle for freedom from exploitation and freedom from all forms of oppression includes the liberation of lesbians, gay men, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. We fight for an end to all legal and social discrimination against LGBTI people and all forms of sexist discrimination. We support full reproductive freedom for all women.

ALL THESE forms of oppression, and others like the oppression of the young, the disabled and the elderly, are used to divide the working class and to spare capital the expense of providing for the needs of all members of society. Combating them is an essential part of building a united working class struggle that can win a socialist society. Only a socialist revolution can bring about the genuine liberation of the oppressed and the ability of every human being to realise their full potential.

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