

# **What Socialists Stand For**

**An introduction to the  
Democratic Socialist Party  
& Resistance**

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# Introduction

The best way to explain socialism is to ask first: What is socialism? What distinguishes socialists from other people?

First of all, socialists are people who care very deeply about the injustice, human misery and environmental destruction in the world. But we don't have a monopoly on compassion. What distinguishes socialists is that we don't think that it has to be this way. And we think we can change it.

This booklet is an introduction to how capitalism works and how to change it.

The problems capitalism has spread — from unemployment, racism and sexism, to deforestation and global warming — now threaten not only people's everyday lives but humanity's future.

The time has come to declare a challenge to that system. In Australia we have to build an alternative to the Labor and Liberal parties. We have to build a movement that fights against the government and big business attacks on our rights and living standards. This is what Resistance and the Democratic Socialist Party are all about.

The facts and figures included in this booklet are taken from a range of United Nations source books, papers from the United Nations Earth Summit in Brazil 1992, journals and magazines. We would like to especially thank the staff of *Green Left Weekly* for their hard work in investigating the real facts about Australian society. Readers who wish to read further on the points raised here should consult the bibliography at the back of this booklet. ■

# 1. Tomorrow Is Too Late

## **A system with no future**

Humankind may be an endangered species due to the rapid and ongoing destruction of the natural environment. The forests are disappearing. The deserts are expanding. Billions of tons of fertile soil are washed into the sea every year. Numerous species are becoming extinct. Seas and rivers are poisoned. The air is polluted. The ozone layer is being depleted and global warming threatens catastrophe.

This has been the warmest century in 600 years, and the hottest years in recorded history have been this century in 1990, 1995 and 1997. The greenhouse effect threatens a rise in sea levels of between 15 and 90 centimeters by the year 2100, which would flood many coastal zones, placing some nine million people at risk.

It's not just a problem of the future. That may look dim but so are the environmental conditions under which most people live today. In many urban centres pollution is reaching life threatening levels.

In the United States more than 1 billion kilograms of toxic chemicals are released into the air each year. More than half of the US population live in areas where pollution levels exceed government standards.

In Sydney, fish caught outside the major sewerage outfalls are contaminated with pesticides averaging more than 120 times recommended safety limits — pesticides that could cause cancer. Beach pollution, toxic waste dumps, oil spills and workplace pollution are everyday problems worldwide.

Such pollution hazards are many times worse in the Third World. Close to 30% of the Third World population do not have access to safe drinking water.

The developed capitalist countries are exporting the ecological crisis to the Third World, by dumping toxic wastes and establishing some of the most environmentally destructive industries in Africa, Latin America and Asia.

In Mexico City, one in a hundred children are born mentally sick because of the lead levels in the air. Transnational companies run thousands of factories which spew out poisons and exploit cheap Mexican labour. And it's all guaranteed by Third World governments that serve the interests of the rich countries who dominate and exploit

the Third World economically.

In the Third World, where the immense majority of people subsist in conditions of extreme poverty, the main endangered species is humanity itself. So poor are many that they have no choice but to cut down the forests to use for firewood and farming. Firewood is often their only source of energy. Lack of modern technology means they use it inefficiently, burning open fires to cook and use for heating. When the big corporations take their land to use for ranching and to provide meat for the fast food industry, the poor farmers are forced to move further into the forests, destroying more land and trees.

## **What causes environmental destruction?**

Some say that overpopulation is the main problem. But twice the current world population could live better than the majority do now without destroying the environment. The world already produces more food than is required to sustain the existing population. And the technology exists and is being developed that could do away with the most environmentally damaging ways of producing goods and energy. Technology itself is not the problem; it's how it's used or abused.

Environmental devastation is the inescapable result of an economic system where the conditions of life for the great majority of people are determined by production for profit. Privately owned companies compete with one another to maximise their profits. The cheaper the production process, the more money they make.

So it doesn't pay to introduce environmental safeguards, even though the technology already exists to prevent or reduce pollution. An example is the emission of sulphur dioxide, the major cause of acid rain. For a couple of decades efficient methods have existed for cleansing air of sulphur dioxide, yet thermal power stations and blast furnaces continue to release millions of tonnes every year.

The drive for profits leads to a desperate search for new markets, to the production of new goods and "services" regardless of their environmental impact. To make more money you have to beat your rivals to the sale. Companies compete for markets, for the consumer dollar. They can't be satisfied with a static market or costs, for fear of some other company moving in and cutting their profits. The law of money making doesn't care for the laws of nature.

## **An inhuman system**

### **Spreading the poor around**

Capitalism acts like the kind person who says: "I'm so fond of poor people that I never think there are enough of them". In Brazil alone, the system kills a thousand children

a day by disease or hunger. With or without elections capitalism is anti-democratic — most people are prisoners of need.

Four fifths of the world “officially” live in poverty, and the system keeps them there. Most of the Third World is prevented from developing economically. Instead of getting help from the industrialised countries, Third World countries are drained of their wealth by these imperialist powers.

In 1995 the Third World received \$59 billion in official aid. That same year \$230 billion went from the Third World to the imperialist countries just to service foreign debt payments.

The technology and money needed to industrialise the Third World is monopolised by the transnational companies in the rich countries. Less than 700 such companies control most of the world’s production. To extract the raw materials and sell agricultural



*Haiti: Western capitalism keeps the Third World in desperate poverty.*

products to the developed countries, Third World economies must work through the transnationals, who take most of the profits. Then the finished products, the manufactured goods, are sold back to the Third World.

Transnational control of technology and finance allows developed countries to dominate the manufacturing industries. If that's not enough, trade blocs and military force make sure of it.

The Third World economies provide cheap labour and raw materials and consume what the multinationals sell them. To stay competitive, transnationals increasingly pay less for raw materials and demand more for goods. So naturally enough the poor get poorer.

At the beginning of this decade the average income of those in the Third World was just 6% of the average income of people in the rich imperialist countries. When recessions come, the force greater competition for company profits, condemning a growing number to abject poverty.

In 1981 the United Nations classified 31 countries as "least developed countries". By 1997, 17 more countries joined this list of the most wretched of the earth.

One Third World isn't enough. Capitalism needs to spread the poverty around. There's now a "third world" in the First World.

In the rich First World there's a growing number of newly unemployed and low-paid workers. At least 12 million US workers earn less than US\$5 a hour or less.

In Australia there are more than 2 million people living under the poverty line and more than 2 million who would work if they could. In the United States poverty in the 1990s is back to 1960s levels. One quarter of the population live in poverty; not just the unemployed. One third of the hundred million-strong US workforce are wage earners in a low wage ghetto just suspended above the official poverty line.

## Unemployment

More and more people are poor because they're unemployed. But why can't people looking for work find it? There's certainly plenty of work to be done. There are houses, schools and hospitals to build, clothes to make, recreation areas to develop, food to grow, areas to reforest, rivers to be cleaned. And of course the more people who work, the more there is to pay them with — more houses, food, clothes, services. That's all that money represents anyway. It should be a straightforward task matching up the people with the jobs. What's the problem then?

Between the people who want to work and the machinery they need to do the work stands a tiny group of capitalists, otherwise known as business people. Their business is to make money. And you can't use the machinery they own unless it will do

just that — make them money. They prefer to run their factories at 50 or 75% capacity, to keep products more scarce and their prices high. And they need to keep people unemployed to keep wages low. Workers who fight for better wages can always be sacked and replaced with someone on the dole queue. Capitalism can't let the people who can build houses go to work and build enough for all. It has to put the construction workers on the dole and the homeless on the streets.

Unemployment is inevitable in a society based on profit-making. The primary aim of production is not to meet people's needs, but to produce as fast as possible and as cheaply as possible. In this way companies can maximise their profits in the marketplace.

In the process capitalism produces too much; too much food, too much clothing, too many buildings, too much furniture. Then they "have to have" a recession to get rid of the least competitive companies and boost profits for the rest.

And we have to pay for it with lower wages and cuts to our living standards.

It's not that workers are producing more than is needed, only more than can be sold at a profit. That puts pressure on prices to drop, threatening the profits of other capitalists.

And when the capitalists can't sell their products at a profit, they cut back production. Cutting back production means they need fewer workers.

New technology also means unemployment. Not because it should, but because in the hands of capitalists it's not introduced to allow everyone to work less for the same pay, but to lower the capitalists' wage bill.

## **An irrational system**

Capitalism means the land, natural resources, machinery and factories — the "means of production" — are owned by private individuals. They don't get any of this by working hard. They never did.

Modern mass production developed over the last couple of hundred years, as technological progress created the potential to mechanise production. These new machines were too big to be used by one person and too expensive for most individuals to buy. Some people were able to accumulate enough money to have such machines built and factories constructed to keep them. These were the capitalists, the people with the capital. They didn't get this capital by working hard and saving. That wouldn't have provided a down payment on the factory door.

In the history of modern fortunes, you will find that most of the early industrialists got their nest eggs through piracy and theft or by kidnapping other people and selling them as slaves.

The capitalists found dispossessed agricultural workers and poor crafts people



and hired them to come to the factories to use the new machines. People who continued to produce by hand found they could not compete with the new system of production. Many were forced to abandon their trade and earn a living by working for the capitalists. A modern workforce was created, a workforce of people who no longer owned all the tools they used or worked in their own time, a workforce of people who had nothing to sell but their ability to labour.

Capitalism socialised the process of production. Production ceased to be a private, individual act. It became a cooperative effort, a social act.

Everything we use, everything we eat or wear, our car, our housing — we don't make any of these things. We don't produce these things as individuals. We produce socially. We have a division of work in Australia, and in the whole world. People in one part of the world make things which people in another part of the world use. Just think how many workers in different countries are involved in the production of just one bolt in a car — mining, forging the steel, shaping it, transporting it.

But, even though we produce socially, through cooperation, we don't own the means of production socially.

This affects all the basic decisions made in this society about what we produce. The vast majority of people have no say in what or how things are produced. Decisions made about production are made not by or for a majority but by a minority and for them.

Capitalists never say, "We need this many beds, of these types, in Australia, so I'm going to produce this many". They say, "How much money am I going to make if I produce this many and these types of beds". It doesn't matter how many people are sleeping on park benches. If food was produced on a rational needs basis, the United States alone could feed the entire world.

Fulfilling human needs is a "luxury" the capitalist system can't afford. And it's not just that it can't meet the needs that exist. Things are getting worse. The hunger of the system, the drive for profit, only breeds more hunger among people.

While the rich get richer the poor get poorer, and the gulf between the rich and poor nations is widening. In 1960 the gap separating the richest 20% of the world's population and the poorest 20% was one to 30. In 1993 it was one to 61.

## **What's war good for?**

This is a system so irrational that the fantastic potential to improve all human life is used to destroy it. New technology and science are used to produce things that kill life, not improve it, that defend the interests of the rich at whatever costs. The neutron bomb, which saves things and annihilates people, is a perfect symbol of our times.

When the poor and exploited try to improve themselves, they risk violence and war, repression and dictatorship. Look at what happened in Vietnam. The United States dropped 150 kilograms of explosives per person every year for the period of the Vietnam War, killing nearly a million people. The US government spends around 25% of its annual budget on improving its killing machine. The Gulf War in 1991 was a small display. The US and Britain launched 109,876 air sorties on Iraq, killing tens of thousands of people.

Who benefits from all this war and destruction? Certainly not the populations it rains down upon, nor the populations at home. The Australian government spends more on the military than on education and health, and ten times what it spends on housing. The world spends two million dollars each minute on arms for war while each minute it kills 30 children with hunger or curable illnesses.

The United Nations estimates that the cost of providing universal health-care services would be \$25 billion per year — just 3% of the \$800 billion currently devoted to military expenditure — and this after the end of the Cold War.

We're told that this militarism is needed to "defend democracy". The United States government invades Third World countries under the guise of humanitarian aid and restoring democracy, but spends more on the military operations than it does on economic aid to the poor. They set up new dictators they can control, not democracies where people have options. These dictators, like former Indonesian president Suharto, are called democrats, until they become embarrassing. Then they get replaced.

When people and governments oppose the rule of the big companies, like in Cuba, they come under military threat. The capitalist system doesn't hesitate to use violence to meet any challenge or danger to itself. Under capitalism, while the cost of living goes up and up, the cost of life goes down and down. ■

## 2. How Capitalism Survives

### Who rules?

In capitalist society there is a group that has the real power. It's not a big secret where the power resides in Australia. It basically lies in the hands of the people who determine investment decisions — what's produced, what's distributed. They staff the government, choose the planners, and set the general conditions for keeping everyone in their place. They are the ruling class.

Throughout most of human history societies have been split up into classes. In ancient Rome there were patricians, plebeians, slave owners, slaves. In the Middle Ages there were feudal lords, vassals, guild masters, journeymen, apprentices, serfs. The development of capitalist society didn't do away with class divisions but, typical to how capitalism treats people, it made them more efficient.

Capitalism has increasingly divided society into two classes: ruling class and working class, oppressor and oppressed. The vast majority of people in one way or another make their living by selling their labour to the capitalists who own the businesses and the land. If you work for one of the remaining “public” state-owned companies, capitalists are still indirectly profiting from your labour — through the subsidies governments give business, out of the profits of state companies and your taxes.

The rulers abide by the economic law of capitalism, “all for ourselves and nothing for anyone else”. They organise society according to this rule too. So although the rulers are few and the ruled many, they are the ones that count.

### Is there a ruling class in Australia?

This is the “lucky country”. It's just that some are more lucky than others. The richest 2000 people in Australia own more wealth than the poorest 2.5 million.

Some people are always better off than others and a lot of these people would like to think they are part of the social elite. But often they only share restaurants and their political views with the real capitalists. There are only several thousand people in Australia who own most of the company shares and assets. This wealth gives them enormous power.

Decisions about “national priorities” aren’t made by the nation. When did we vote to cut company taxes, to introduce fees for education, to close hundreds of schools, or to send troops to Bougainville or the Gulf War? You can vote Liberal or Labor out of office, but you can’t vote Packer and Murdoch out of power.

The rich and powerful in Australia don’t have an “egalitarian” streak either. They compete as hard as the rest of them to keep on top, which means they are constantly trying to maximise their profits at our expense. During the 1980s, wage cuts and welfare cuts transferred \$35 billion a year from workers’ wages to corporate profits.

Not all the rich stay on top, some sink in the competition. Then others pick up the remains and get richer and more powerful. While the rich get richer and fewer, increasing numbers of the lowest paid workers are slipping below the poverty line to join the more than 2 million traditionally poor Australians — unemployed people and Aborigines, single parents, some recently arrived migrants, people with disabilities and the elderly.

## How the ruling class rules

In previous societies the ruling classes were proud of their role. They paraded around with feathers in their hats, or fancy robes and things. They were always prepared to slay some peasant or slave publicly, as a sign of their authority. When they went down the street, people would notice. These days the ruling class is more powerful than ever. They can slay not one or two workers but tens of thousands at the push of a button. But they rule in disguise. They have to, given just how small the capitalist ruling class is in relation to the rest of society.

So capitalism sets up a whole “Democratic Show”. The average citizen plays no role in running the giant corporations that govern economic life. In the political sphere it’s only these same corporations that play any major roles in the selection of “our” political leaders. Their control of the media determines what political options and messages are presented to the “voters”.

For capitalism, the Democratic Show is what’s all important, not democracy. Everyone has the right to vote, but no one has the right to decide. The decisions are made for you. They’re made by all the different institutions of the capitalist state.

## What is the state?

The state is the ruling class’ ruling apparatus — parliament, the public service, the judiciary, the police and the armed forces. All the top personnel in these political institutions are loyal to the wealthy class. They’re paid huge salaries to keep them that way.

In all these state institutions there is a very well established way of going up the career ladder. On the way up people sell their individuality and commit themselves to the system. And they learn very fast that in return for commitment and discipline in their work they get privileges.

The higher up you go in a corporation, in a government department, the judiciary or the army, the more privileges you get. Not surprisingly, the closer to the top people are the more consciously they support the system. At the very top are usually those recruited directly from the ruling class. These are the army officers, government department heads, the judges who wouldn't hesitate to use any means to maintain the system.

### Parliament & the 'law'

The regular functioning of the system relies on its legal and parliamentary institutions.

On the street the law is kept by the police force. The police protect private property above all else. Especially the private property of the rich. The police remind everyone of what can happen to them if they step out of line, sometimes by just driving around neighbourhoods, other times by beating people up or breaking up strikes and marches.

Right behind the police is the judiciary. This is the institution that judges who has broken the law and, frequently, what the law actually means. Judges are not elected and are totally unaccountable. They are there to protect the system. They make sure that robbing a bank is heavily penalised, while robbing the country gets a small fine.



Corporate crime is seen as just being a bit rude, not criminal.

Judges can maintain the law and still decree that a woman permitted her own rape. This is because while some laws call for human rights to be respected, others authorise their violation. Rape is illegal, but paying women on average around 70% of the male wage isn't.

At the head of the capitalist legal system is parliament. Parliament, it's claimed, is a "representative" body, it represents ordinary people. The truth is that it's just part of the Democratic Show. Ordinary people get to vote for one or another politician, most of them consciously pro the system.

Who can tell the difference between Labor and Liberal? Any real alternative candidates won't get much financial or media support to run for parliament. At most parliament discusses the issues facing the ruling class, how much to cut wages by, what services to slash. It doesn't exist to discuss whether this or that social system might work better for the benefit of most people. If this ever gets raised in parliament, the ruling class always has a back-up. The Australian constitution, for example, doesn't allow parliament to nationalise private companies.

When every legal means fails to protect the system, the ruling class is not known for its better judgment. In 1975, the Australian ruling class wasn't taking any chances. Key sections of the army were placed on alert at the time of the Governor-General's dismissal of the Whitlam Labor government. In the less stable capitalist countries of the Third World military rule is the norm, and when parliament is meeting, it's usually under the "protection" of the army.

### **The system of thought control**

But the most important guarantee of capitalism is not the army or even parliament, but the whole structure of thought control. Capitalism trains people not to think. The education system teaches you to obey authority and keep to the rules, and the media makes sure that you never forget it.

What you are taught at school is enough knowledge to be an efficient worker, how to count and how to read. It's not considered necessary that you understand how society works, except to know the chain of command. School "sorts" you out. The system calls it "streaming". It means if you go to the "right" school you might be taught how to "move up in the world", or at least be sold the illusion. The education system is much less about education than about indoctrination, about making the social values of capitalism, competitiveness and obedience, habits.

We aren't taught how to develop informed opinions, opinions are made for us. That's the role of the media.

The mass media is owned and controlled by the rich. In Australia, only a few rich men control most of the newspapers, television and radio stations. All the editors and program controllers are appointed by the company boards. The editors appoint their own deputies and heads of departments. It's all done to ensure that the mass media play a stabilising role for the system.

All the camera angles are from the side of the rich. You never see a US soldier killing a poor peasant. You only see the peasant trying to defend himself and the media will call it aggression. When US soldiers die it's called a killing. When the poor residents of a Third World city get shot or bombed, it's "collateral damage".

The mass media isolates and separates people. The TV "viewer" is only connected to the rest of the world if they watch *Melrose Place*. Information technology that could link people, that could help cultures interact and learn from each other, that could encourage creativity, is used instead to numb people.

### **Why capitalism oppresses women**

Women are oppressed, not because it's "natural", but because the system requires it. In most previous societies, except the earliest forms of hunter gatherer communities, a women's role has been determined by the family to which she belonged and the man who "headed" the family. In these societies the family played an important role in maintaining class divisions, making sure that the rich passed on their wealth and the poor their humility.

The family system institutionalised the oppression of women. The word family itself comes from the original Latin *famulus*, meaning household slave, and familia, the totality of slaves belonging to one man.

### **The family under capitalism**

Capitalism wasn't going to junk a good thing. Early capitalists were keen to make some quick profits by employing women and children in their factories. But they soon learnt that keeping women at home and preserving the family was much more profitable.

Unpaid domestic labour — cooking, cleaning, washing, caring for children — was recently calculated by the Australian Bureau of Statistics to equal 65% of the Gross Domestic Product.

So the family reproduces the workforce that capitalism needs at the cheapest price. Imagine how much profit capitalists would lose if their factories had to provide quality child-care and food.

Just as importantly, the family perpetuates the social norms that fit with the system. It moulds the behaviour of children to obey authority, respect their "superiors", to be

competitive, to look after “number one” and “get ahead”. It also keeps society’s moral code. It represses and distorts sexuality, keeping sexual expression within the boundaries of “raising a family”.

Gay and lesbian sexuality is taboo. Only heterosexual sex is considered “natural”, because it preserves the family. The system needs everyone to be “straight”. So sexual expression is repressed and distorted from infancy. Not surprisingly, sexuality for young people involves so many fears, tensions and prejudices.

The family unit also holds capitalism’s reserve pool of labour. Women can be drawn into the workforce, like at war time, and then sent back home “where they belong”, whenever it suits the system. The widespread acceptance of sexist ideas also allows capitalists to give women the least creative jobs with the lowest pay.

### **Second class citizens**

Never shameful of innovation when it comes to making money, capitalism makes the most of sexism by selling the “beauty myth”. Women not only have to wash and clean, they have to look like the latest fashion industry model. They have to pay to lose weight even if it causes them ill health, they have to pay for that special dress, perfume, haircut, jewellery, underwear.

It suits the system to turn women into objects, to keep women as second class citizens. Women aren’t even allowed the elementary right to control their own bodies. In Australia, abortion is still a crime in all states and territories.

Feminism is about fighting for women’s equality, to fight that inequality which helps the ruling class divide and rule, which undermines the united action of working people and all those oppressed by the system.

### **Why capitalism needs racism**

The social pyramid of capitalism is black at the base and white at the top. In South Africa it was legally instituted this way. Elsewhere slavery has been outlawed for a century, but still the richest are the whitest and the poorest the blackest.

Racism suits capitalism. It’s an important way of justifying economic discrimination. It’s no accident that wherever you find racism someone seems to be taking advantage of it to make money.

In 1492 Columbus colonised the Americas. Here, he said, “all of Christianity will do business”. The indigenous people were enslaved and massacred where they resisted. According to Columbus, they were only useful “for ordering and putting to work, farming and doing everything necessary, building houses and learning to wear clothes and use our customs”.



In Australia the British did the same. Australia was declared *terra nullius*, land belonging to nobody, nevermind the hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. The British needed another colony to get rid of prisoners and later as a source of raw materials. No indigenous population was going to get in the way. Aborigines were only recognised as citizens and given the right to vote in 1967!

Now, in place of the early colonialism, we have imperialism. The US freely walks into Third World countries to save the people from themselves. No one is enslaved by law, but their wages are kept to a dollar a day, as in the Philippines and Brazil, to make sure they don't go anywhere.

Spreading racism also helps capitalism get away with superexploiting migrants, and racial and ethnic minorities at home. It helps Australian business to preserve myths like, "Those wogs don't mind dirty, hard work, and they'll be glad to get any wages at all". And it's another way of dividing worker from worker. When unemployment is on the rise it's always handy to blame people of a non-Anglo background for taking jobs away from "real Australians".

## Capitalism alienates people

Capitalism is a brutalising system. It condemns people to live warped, stunted and impoverished lives, not just economically, but emotionally, intellectually and culturally as well. For most people life is just a process of ever-deepening alienation — from their work, from their families, from themselves.

In selling their labour power, whether manual or intellectual, people sell their creativity. Workers become cogs in the capitalist machine. Everything produced is owned by capitalists. The worker, separated from the product of their labour, is just a consumer.

Capitalism reduces our life purpose to the individual act of consumption. A whole multi-billion dollar advertising industry is devoted to selling people their "happiness". Satisfaction is to be found in a Coke can.

Capitalism not only multiplies poverty to multiply wealth, but it multiplies solitude to multiply compliance. Alone, competing against each other for jobs or for school grades, people become greedy, prejudiced and self-centred. The capitalist likes nothing more than the worker who scabs on workmates to get a promotion.

But alone, alienated from everyone including themselves, people only find frustration rather than meaning. Is it any wonder, then, that in this society there is so much hate and violence, not just on the street but in the home? ■

## 3. The Socialist Alternative

### **Workers' & community control of the economy**

By socialism we mean a society where individuals will enjoy not only the abstract right, but the economic means and the political liberty, to determine the course of their own lives.

This means replacing capitalism with a system where the economy is not run in the private profit interests of a few, where production is based on human needs and interests, for this and future generations.

Society's productive resources will be owned cooperatively, so decisions about what and how things are produced will have to be made democratically. The knowledge of modern science will not be limited to experts tied to profiteering but will be at the service of humanity. People then, rather than economic forces, will decide the priorities of society.

### **How would it work?**

Capitalism itself makes socialism possible. Spurred on by the industrial revolution capitalism generalised social production. The new technology and use of division of labour made it possible to produce goods and services on a scale never before imagined. The level of productive resources achieved can provide for the material needs of everyone and free people from spending the bulk of their time simply working to make a living.

Capitalism also produced its own gravedigger: a collective workforce that doesn't need capitalists. The owners of industry have no function except to rob workers of the product of their labour. They call it private "enterprise". A factory can produce without capitalists but not without workers. There are many historical examples of this.

In Chile 1972, the ruling class staged a "capitalist strike" in order to bring down a democratically elected popular government. Workers simply took over the factories and in most cases increased production.

Likewise in France during the 1968 general strike, workers kicked out the capitalists from a large number of factories. They produced what they needed at the time, such

as walkie talkies for strike coordination. Strike committees controlled traffic and issued credit tokens that were accepted as currency by many shopkeepers. Agricultural cooperatives also joined strike committees to organise food distribution directly to factories.

A socialist system would socialise the ownership and control of production, distribution and services. Workers in each factory and office, local communities, special interest groups would all come together on a national scale to plan the economy. They would also coordinate internationally.

Given the chance, no socially planned economy will choose to have unemployment, poverty and waste. Mistakes will be made. Too many goods may get produced but then we can give them away or begin producing more wanted things. We won't throw millions of people out of work, leave machinery idle, or toss desperately needed food into the ocean.



## **Socialism & democracy**

The first and primary objective of a socialist government in Australia will be the restructuring of political life. To establish a decision-making structure in which workers and communities themselves participate on a completely democratic basis.

For socialism, democracy is not a mere trimming but a necessity. Socialism needs democracy in practice. When profit no longer motivates production, it must be people's own needs and interests that do.

The community — workers, the aged, young people, Aborigines, artists, sportspeople — will have to decide what and how things are produced. Otherwise the wrong things will be produced, or at the wrong time or in the wrong proportion. Socialism needs to extend democracy into all areas of life. When production has to be decided on democratically, so do working hours, prices and environmental safeguards.

For capitalism, democracy is just a word. Capitalism needs to keep democracy to a show. When production is for the profit of a few, decisions have to be kept to the few. So there are no provisions for collective control in the capitalist political system. There is no community control of industry, finance, the public service, the law courts, the education system, the police or the army. Much less are we allowed to decide whether we want an army or not.

The capitalist system of representation makes it impossible for the electorate to exercise any control over its supposed representatives. Politicians claim to represent the tenant as much as the landlord, the worker as much as the boss, the unemployed as much as the employer. Since the interest of these groups are not the same, the politician has a speech for every occasion. But in practice, whether Liberal or Labor, they don't step on capitalist toes. Sometimes they argue against war but never against the military budget. They're always full of sympathy for the unemployed, but not enough to stop sackings.

For capitalism, political participation means voting every few years, if that. Even then capitalist politicians have to work hard to make sure people forget their previous promises. They turn elections into circuses. At best we only vote on how we lose pay and rights, and how quickly. Murdoch and Co. decide why.

## **Socialism means participation**

“Rule by the people” is the ancient meaning of the word democracy, not rule by some people.

Unlike capitalism, socialism is fundamentally about participation. It's about the right of all people to participate in determining the direction of society. Just as importantly, it's about the right to choose what we want to do with our own lives.

The massive potential of modern technology can free people to develop their human creativity. But we will still have to organise an economy. There will have to be plans. And people will need to implement them.

A socialist society will need administration. It would be impractical and pointless for the whole population to try to oversee the details of production and distribution at each factory and supermarket. So there will be administrators. But people with the responsibility of administration will have no special privileges or powers over the rest of society. There will be no life tenures and no untouchable authorities. Administrators would be subject to recall by the community if they didn't do their job or abused their position.

The efficient administration of the economy will be guaranteed by community interest and involvement, not the bosses' whip. What people want and need will be produced as required because that will motivate the working of the economy, not the fear of losing your job if you don't meet a production quota.

The organisation of such an economy will require a political system that involves people, that maximises participation. How will people decide local and national priorities? For example, do we need another local library or could we do without while we build a local pool? And if our local community doesn't have all the resources to build a pool, will other regional or national bodies assist? Does the country need more stringent pollution laws? Can Australia allocate more resources to help our poorer neighbours?

Because capitalism has never developed any mechanisms to make such decisions, socialism will have to be innovative.

A socialist political system might include neighbourhood committees, factory and office committees and special interest group committees. All these could elect delegates to local, regional and national bodies. The office of delegate wouldn't be a position of privilege. They would not have any more rights or get paid more than the average wage of the people they represent. Delegates could regularly be rotated and would be subject to recall. Regular meetings of committees would let delegates know what they wanted.

The rights of petition and referendum would also be greatly extended under socialism. In a socialist society we could decide to have direct votes on issues often.

It would be easy enough to have periodic national votes on society's priorities. Experts could go on TV and present alternatives: "If we devote so much money to new sources of energy, within 10 years we could have a working model of an improved solar power generator. Solar power would be cheap and non-polluting. Our power would last as long as the sun. Meanwhile, however, we have these immediate needs.

Which of the following programs assigns the correct priorities in money and research?"

If people in a socialist society decide that everything doesn't have to be packaged in plastic with throw away containers, they won't have to fight a multimillion dollar plastics industry. They'll just have to take a vote.

People can make decisions like that. It's less complicated than trying to decode the campaign slogans of the Liberal and Labor parties. And it's a lot easier than trying to force politicians to live up to promises which you are sure they never meant to keep anyway.

### **Socialism means freedom**

The purpose of capitalist "democracy" is to maintain the rule of money and material need. The purpose of socialist democracy is to free people from that rule, so that people can pursue their creativity, loves and ideas.

Socialism will encourage people to explore whatever interests them. They'll be given the resources to investigate the little "impractical" things that catch their interest, or the big "visionary" things that give them purpose. Their energy and curiosity won't be sapped by 40 hours a week of mindless, repetitive work.

Under capitalism only a few have the time and wealth to enjoy great music, art, literature or theatre, or to learn more of the marvels of nature and science. This will be different when the advances of technology aren't used to increase profits and unemployment, but to cut working hours without any loss in pay.

More and more people will have the time to get involved in fields that privileged specialists previously monopolised. Issues debated by small groups of intellectuals can become popular issues. People can debate music, methods of education, scientific theories and theatre trends.

Socialism provides people with the means to control their own lives. Socialism doesn't guarantee what the future will be. But, unlike, capitalism it will let people decide that for themselves.

### **The problem of bureaucracy**

Socialism will indeed be a relief for humanity. The road to socialism will not be simple, however. Even after the capitalist political system has been swept aside, the old habits and ideas will remain for some time. This is especially so if the socialist state has come into being in conditions of international isolation and economic hardship.

### **Stalinism usurped socialism**

This was the fate of the former Soviet Union and many of the socialist revolutions that followed it. It is what laid the basis for the growth of a privileged bureaucracy in those

states.

When Russia made its revolution, it was an underdeveloped and terribly impoverished country. World War I, civil war, trade blockades and isolation were fertile soil for bureaucracy. Fourteen capitalist countries sent troops to aid the counter-revolutionaries in Russia. Even after they were defeated the counter-revolutionaries devastated everything in their retreat.

Moreover, the Russian revolutionaries had not counted on standing alone. They believed that their revolution would set off a wave of revolutions throughout Europe. They counted on technical and material aid from successful revolutions in the industrially advanced countries to overcome Russia's underdeveloped and devastated condition.

A revolutionary wave did indeed sweep Europe. In Bavaria and Hungary short-lived workers' republics were established. In Italy workers seized the factories, threatening to destroy the capitalist system of production. In Germany workers fought long street battles with the police and army. But the revolutions in the west failed, betrayed by corrupt leaders and violently smashed by the capitalist rulers. This left the Soviet Union isolated and exhausted.

Under these conditions it's not difficult to see how the dictatorship of a bureaucracy could arise. Suppose you were an administrator in charge of distributing the bread ration in a Soviet city. Since there wasn't enough bread to go around, no amount of revolutionary dedication could feed everybody adequately. Rationing was required. As an administrator you might be tempted to use your position to make sure you and your family got as much bread as you could. Pretty soon you might discover you had something in common with the administrator across the hall who controlled the supply of canned fish.

Out of scarcity grew inequality. Out of inequality grew privilege. A common bond developed among the administrators to secure their privileges.

Some of the administrators were dedicated revolutionaries able to resist this temptation. Under the extreme pressure of war and hunger, however, most gave in. Before long they found they were no longer simple administrators, but part of a privileged bureaucracy with a vested personal interest in controlling scarce resources.

Naturally they feared the people of the Soviet Union might not take kindly to such abuse. To control the people they had to destroy the revolutionary party, the workers' councils, all the democratic institutions that had made the revolution and that the revolution had made. Strangling the revolution took the bureaucracy many years. To accomplish it they had to execute thousands of their opponents and exile tens of thousands more to labour camps. The camps were filled not with supporters of capitalism but socialist revolutionaries. This was the process that took place under

Stalin.

The rule of the bureaucracy might have been prevented if the Russian people had taken over the administration themselves. Key leaders of the revolution, like Lenin, recognised this. They stressed the need to educate the Russian people to understand and participate in the administration of society's needs.

But this was just what the Russian people couldn't do. The most active and politically committed section of the working class had been killed in the civil war. The vast majority of the population was unskilled, unorganised, even illiterate. They were at the mercy of the new bureaucrats who they didn't know how to replace or even check up on. Even though there were many in the Communist Party who struggled against the bureaucracy, the population could not come to their aid. With Stalin at the helm the





bureaucracy strengthened its grip and rolled back the democratic gains of the revolution.

Even under bureaucratic dictatorship, however, the Soviet and eastern European economies provided employment, free education, health care, child-care and other services to the majority of people. Without capitalists, the opportunity existed to develop an economy for people. The bureaucracy progressively destroyed this opportunity.

Socialism in Australia will not face such a difficult start. Australia has an industrially advanced economy with the potential to wipe out major inequalities and scarcities almost immediately. We have a well educated, organised working class that is entirely capable of administering society and supervising administration. No privileged bureaucracy could usurp the power of such a working class.

### The future of socialism

What has died in Russia and eastern Europe was not socialism but Stalinism — a system that usurped socialism, that treated people like children who never grew up, dragging them by the ear.

In these countries capitalism is now killing everything the bureaucrats couldn't. Gone is full employment, free education and health care. The only freedom capitalism has added in eastern Europe is the freedom to exploit and spread poverty.

The old bureaucrats have joined in. To help capitalism along they sell state-owned industries to themselves. Where there was no freedom of the press now there is, but only for those who own it. Capitalism does not bring democracy to the Eastern European countries only the “Democratic Show”, and not very much of that.

Capitalism's main concern for these countries is with smashing any idea that freedom might start outside the “free market”. This is why the United States puts huge resources into trying to smash Cuba.

This tiny island country defied the rule of capitalism when its people made a revolution in 1959. They set out to reorganise their economic and political system and to inspire revolution across the globe. They got rid of the US companies that exploited Cuba's natural resources for their own profit. In their place they established factory committees and farming cooperatives. They got rid of the US installed dictator Batista. In his place they established people's committees, trade unions and women's and student organisations.

The capitalist media tar Cuba with the brush of Stalinism. As Cuban President Fidel Castro said: “If I am Stalin, my dead are enjoying good health”. But that is not the only difference. There is less illiteracy and less infant mortality in Cuba than in the United States! Education and health care are free and available to everyone, and racism as it exists in the US or Australia is unknown in Cuba.

In each Cuban workplace workers meet to put proposals toward the national economic plans. They vote to accept or reject any proposals affecting them. If rejected, new proposals are negotiated with the national planning authorities. Managers neither gain from capitalist profits nor official privilege. Sometimes it's difficult to find enough factory managers. Often managers have lower salaries than many workers since workers are eligible for bonuses that managers don't receive.

The government of Cuba are the People's Power committees. This is a network of local, regional and national assemblies. They combine decision-making with administrative functions. The task of carrying out decisions is not entrusted to some "independent" bureaucracy. On a local level the assembly elects an executive committee. They oversee the week-to-week administration of work and services. The assembly also elects commissions to work in particular areas, such as the administration of schools.

Voting for all assemblies is by direct, secret ballot. All citizens 16 years of age and over are eligible to vote and run for office. Campaign resources are made available so you don't have to own a TV station.

Elected delegates at all levels are recallable. Delegates do not receive a parliamentary salary. They're expected to carry out their functions in their free time. Where they do have to work full time, they get leave from their job and receive the same pay while they are away. Elected representatives are encouraged to keep the closest links with the people, not to become professional politicians.

The Cuban revolution has always been aware of how a revolution can be corrupted. So they don't rely simply on formal democratic mechanisms. Most of all the revolution is kept alive by the active involvement of people in organisations which represent their particular interests. No big decision can be made in Cuba without the support of the labour unions, the women's federation, the farmers' union and the students' federation. These are the organisations that draw the mass of ordinary people into building a new society.

Fidel Castro doesn't forget this point: "Without the masses, socialism would lose the battle and become bureaucratic. It would have to adopt capitalist methods and retreat in the field of ideology. No society can be more democratic than socialist society because, without the masses, socialism could not triumph."

The United States wants to destroy Cuba because it wants to destroy hope. Since 1962 the US have maintained a complete economic blockade on Cuba. They have forced Cuba to turn itself into a fortress. Still Cuba has fulfilled the World Health Organisation's Health for All program for the year 2000 since 1983, and it still sends thousands of doctors and teachers to help communities in Third World countries.

In 1986 two Cuban teachers were killed by the US-sponsored Contras in Nicaragua.

Ten thousand people volunteered to take their place. They did this from the dictates of their hearts, not submissively following the orders of a police state. Unlike our system, the system in Cuba inspires human solidarity.

## **Socialism & human nature**

Capitalism creates the values it needs to survive. It's a dog eat dog world. Whites are susceptible to racism against people of colour, men to sexism against women. That's wrong no matter what the situation. This isn't "human nature". People have to be taught to hate by the system.

Compare a person in today's society with a houseplant trying to survive in a flat in a large city. The plant has no sun, polluted air, it's choked with dust. You look at this dying, withering thing and wonder if you can really still call it a plant. But if the same plant grew in some rich, cultivated soil, with plenty of sunshine and fresh air and clean water, it would be a plant.

If people had the chance to grow in the soil of a different society, isn't it obvious they would change too?

We already know the answer from history. Early tribal societies didn't teach their children concepts like "winning" and "losing". The Hopi Indian language contains no word for "I". When asked questions by a researcher, Hopi children refused to answer alone. It was their "human nature" that you don't shame or humiliate some people in the group by allowing others to prove themselves superior to the group.

There is no instinct of aggression or greed or competition. These social values are learned. Capitalism spends a lot of money making sure you "learn" and that you don't forget. It tries to convince you that the only incentive for human effort and progress is material possession and profit.

But think of all the scientists, the artists, the writers who worked without consideration for their personal fortune but in order to discover and create. Capitalism has distorted and corrupted art and science, but it hasn't been able to completely destroy basic human creativity.

Socialism will unleash this creativity to everyone's benefit. There will be a great competition of ideas, arguments and debates, but based on human solidarity not on humiliating others.

Imagine for just a moment such a society. Imagine a society free of violence, of poverty, of sexist, homophobic and racist oppression, where the individual can freely develop. That will be an exciting and vibrant society, where it will be worth being alive. Having freed humanity from material want and greed, we will be able to discover and learn more about ourselves and the world. ■

## 4. How Socialism Can Be Won

### The power of the oppressed

To win socialism, we first have to take down the barriers. We have to get rid of the capitalist system that stands in our way.

But who is going to do this? The capitalists aren't going to suddenly get a social conscience and give up all their privileges. Some might, but not the capitalist class as a whole.

It's those exploited and oppressed by the system that have an interest in changing it. Capitalism can't permanently satisfy the needs of the working class, working farmers, women, ethnic and racial minorities, lesbians and gay men, the young, the old, the disabled. Moreover, we form the vast majority of society, 90% or more. So these are also the people with the power to change society. The working class, the main producing class, has the power to stop production and distribution. As the collective producer the working class also has the capacity to establish a new, non-exploitative system of production, an economy that works for people not profits.

Working people in Australia could abolish capitalism and run the country for themselves. Every morning millions of workers go out and occupy the banks, factories, hospitals, schools and shops of Australia. There's hardly a capitalist around and certainly not enough police to keep things in line. Yet every evening when the bell rings the workers voluntarily get up and go home and leave behind the things they just produced for the capitalist to keep. Then on Saturdays they go to the store and pay outrageous prices for the goods they made.

That's a good deal for capitalists, especially since there's no way in the world they could force workers to do that if the workers united against them. So the capitalists try and convince workers they have a stake in the system.

The Australian ruling class has developed a huge propaganda machine devoted to selling this illusion. What's good for business is good for everyone. Companies talk about team spirit at their annual picnic. The government says we have to cut our wages to make "our" Australian companies more competitive.

It works to some extent. Many people do identify with the system. Like the bank

teller who says: “We opened a new branch in Hobart last week”. But people don’t always believe the lie that the system benefits us all. They can’t. Capitalism itself exposes the lie. Have you ever heard anyone say: “We had to cut my wages”, or “We had to sack me”?

Because people don’t always accept this lie, there are always struggles going on. Strikes in factories and offices, campaigns to save forests, marches for women’s rights. Capitalism tells people they have to “work within the system”: talk to the boss if you think you should get a wage rise or vote to save a forest or lobby to legalise abortion.

But to actually win anything people have always had to step out of the trappings of the system. When Australia pulled out of the Vietnam War, it was because hundreds of thousands of people marched on the streets. Behind them was the potential power of millions of working people. The Australian ruling class wasn’t taking any chances. It was better for them to lose one battle to than the longer-term war.

### **Why we need a revolution**

Capitalism fears the power of the oppressed. When it’s necessary and when they can get away with it, the system will smash any struggle that threatens its profits and power. Trade unions are made illegal or protesters arrested. But often the capitalists have no choice except to make some concessions. For example, when thousands protested, they couldn’t dam the Franklin river in Tasmania.

Through mass struggle working people in Australia have defended many rights and won many others.

But under capitalism no rights are guaranteed. Students won free education in the early seventies. In the 1980s they lost it. We pulled the troops out of Vietnam, but they could still send them back to Iraq. We won the 38-hour week, but now many work 45. We won government-subsidised, community-based child-care, but now it’s being privatised. What capitalism gives it takes back at the first chance.

In Australia, Labor and Liberal take turns at eroding people’s rights. In times of economic crisis the ruling class often prefers Labor. The ALP has the advantage of controlling the trade union bureaucracy. With the union leadership’s compliance they can cut wages and living standards with minimum social protest and maximum efficiency. Labor has also perfected giving with one hand while taking much more with the other.

To survive every recession capitalists have to lower their costs. So every recession, every economic crisis, working people stand to lose what they had to start with.

Because every reform can be reversed the struggle for reform as an end in itself is insufficient. Socialists fight for reforms in order to make a revolution. Every time

working people win reforms, they get a glimpse of their power to change society. Every time they occupy an office or factory, they know they don't need a boss to run it.

## What a revolution looks like

How can a revolution come about in Australia? What will convince working people and all those oppressed by the system that they can run society?

Capitalism creates crises. Crises of the economy and crises of politics, when the ruling ability of capitalists is weakened. Such crises force people to look for alternatives. At certain points such crises can cause a complete loss of legitimacy of the existing order. This is a potentially revolutionary situation. At such points, if a socialist alternative is put to people on a mass scale, a revolution can be made.

### The French example

In France May-June 1968 there was a potentially revolutionary situation.

There were 10 million workers on strike. Another 2 million farmers supported them, plus 600,000 students. Since the total population was 50 million, the overwhelming majority of families had at least one if not two people involved in the strike. The majority of people in France were out on strike.

When students had demanded better conditions, the de Gaulle government used riot police to stop their protests. When workers supported the students, the capitalists sacked them. Then students started to occupy campuses. Workers started to occupy factories and offices. Everyone took part — seamen, undertakers, doctors, hotel staff, bank clerks. Journalists took over television stations. Students and workers directed traffic.

The capitalist government in France was losing its grip. When de Gaulle wanted to hold a referendum during the strike, he couldn't get any workers in France to print the ballots. He went to Belgium and the workers there also refused. The army minister informed de Gaulle that troops could not be relied upon to fire on civilians. Soldiers' committees had sprung up in barracks in support of workers and students.

Nightly street marches chanted: "Run forward comrade, the old world is behind you". The French people got a glimpse of a new world, where they could take control. A street pamphlet read: "This is the time to plan our rule of tomorrow — direct supplies of food, organisation of public services, transport, information, housing... For the abolition of bosses! All power to the workers!"

After two months the whole movement was betrayed by the leaders of the conservative, Stalinist French Communist Party. They used their strength — their domination of the union movement and other movements — to prevent the rise of

any organisation that could have led a revolution.

What could such an organisation do in that situation? Firstly, it could fight for the formation of a strike council of the whole country. The strike council could simply say: “Well, it’s clear we have a majority. We’re going to have free elections to decide all the questions at issue here. And these elections are going to be run by the strike council because the government has shown itself to be undemocratic.”

Elections for this council could be held in factories, offices, campuses, schools, the ranks of the police and army, local suburbs. Delegates representing working people and the community would all come together in a central council.

Then we could propose a motion on the floor of this council: That all key industries and services be handed over to workers’ and community control. A discussion would then begin about what priorities were necessary in production, education, health, recreation facilities, environmental repair, affirmative action programs for women and so on. This is democracy. This is a revolution.

## Organising for revolution

Working people make revolutions possible. Socialists organise for their success.

All the spontaneous actions and uprisings against capitalism can never lead to a successful revolution, unless it’s organised, unless there is a concept of how to struggle. The ruling class controls all the state apparatus of capitalism — the judges, the politicians, the police and courts. They can crush struggles by their law. Their media can confuse and divert struggles. And their money can buy off leaders of struggles.

Working people need a strategy for their struggle. And they need to work together to carry that out.

The mass of people have no love for the system. Women don’t like being treated like second class citizens nor workers like factory fodder. But alone they rarely come to understand the general problems. They may struggle for reforms but not understand their only guarantee is revolution.

Oppression itself does not automatically generate a socialist understanding. The ideas of socialism and the strategy of revolution have a long history with many experiences and lessons. No individual can embody all this experience, let alone use it.

Only a consciously constructed socialist organisation or party can hope to bring such lessons to bear on making history.

The role of a socialist organisation is to build a mass revolutionary movement, to convince the mass of people that the only lasting solution to the problems capitalism poses is a revolutionary one. No revolution can be made without majority support. It can’t be made by appeals to the rulers. Nor can it be made by minority violence against

the rulers.

Socialists get involved in every struggle against the injustices of capitalism. In every struggle we aim to win. So we aim to draw the largest number of people into every fight. In their numbers, in marches, strikes and occupations, working people find their power. They can bring the system to a halt. Every successful struggle raises the confidence of the oppressed in their own power and wins more and more people to socialist activity.

To make a revolution in Australia we will need to build a mass socialist party. A party that can get involved in an increasing number of struggles against the system's attacks. A party that fights against attacks on workers, women, students and all those oppressed by capitalism. A party that can organise and unite these struggles against the central problem, the system itself. ■



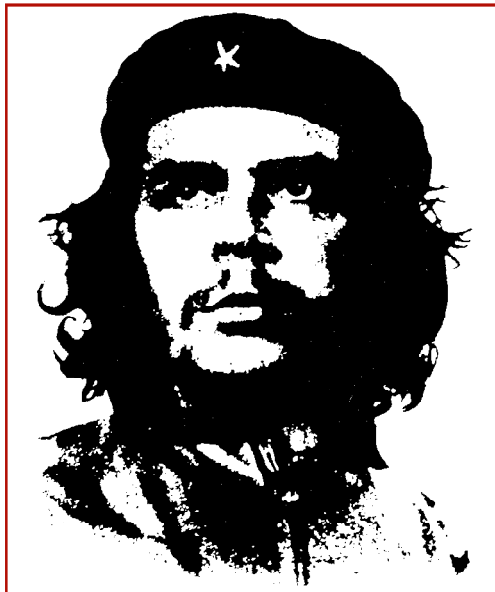
## 5. Resistance & the DSP

### What does an individual do now?

If you're fed up with relying on politicians you can't trust, if you've had enough of sexism, racism and injustice, then you should become part of a movement that's fighting to change the system, fighting to pull down the rotten structure of capitalism and build a new and humane society.

They say such change is hopeless. But it's hopeless to think anything less could solve the crisis the world is in. The only way to end the environmental devastation and social injustice is to take power away from those who traffic in human misery and profit from pollution, and give that power to working people.

There's no better way of finding hope than to get involved in positive, constructive and organised rebellion. That's the point of being a socialist. To do this you should join



Resistance and the Democratic Socialist Party.

## What is Resistance?

Resistance is an Australia-wide organisation of young people. We aim to build a mass socialist youth organisation. We organise young people in struggles against sexism, racism, environmental destruction, attacks on workers' rights, attacks on students' rights and every aspect of capitalist oppression. Through this process we help build a mass socialist party that can unite all these struggles.

Resistance is made up of young workers, unemployed, students, women and young people involved in a huge range of campaigns and activities.

We're involved in anti-racist campaigns, the environmental movement, the women's movement, the lesbian and gay movement, solidarity campaigns with struggles overseas, on campus, at schools and in workplace and trade union campaigns. We organise our own campaigns on issues from sexuality to youth unemployment. And we distribute information on all the issues.

Any young person (under 26) can join us. It's easy. Every week we organise meetings to plan our activities and organise our campaigns. We act with the enthusiasm of knowing that we're not submitting to the system, but we are learning and working together with other young people to change it. If you want to act and speak out against the system, join Resistance (see contact details at the back of this pamphlet).

## What is the Democratic Socialist Party?

The Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) is working to build a mass socialist party in Australia. We aim to lead in every struggle against capitalist oppression and destruction and to unite these struggles against the system.

The program of the DSP is for a socialist Australia. How we achieve it will be determined by struggle and by planning. You can contribute.

Both Liberal and Labor rule for the rich. We have to seize the initiative from the old worn-out conservative parties and build an alternative.

The Democratic Socialists seek to build a society that puts the interests of the majority of people first. But this requires a struggle to end the domination of the big corporations and the billionaires in our society to build a real democracy based on people's power.

In every campaign and movement the DSP points to the need for a political alternative that can mount a challenge to Labor and Liberal, that can draw masses of people into battles against the capitalist attacks on every front — on the job, at universities and schools, on the streets and in local communities.

While the Democratic Socialists also stand in elections at both a state and federal level, we do not believe, as do the Greens, that a real opposition can only be built in those halls of privilege and empty rhetoric called parliament. The great majority of this society — workers (with or without jobs), pensioners, small farmers and students — can only defend their interests through grass-roots action and organisation: strikes for decent wages and working conditions, rallies against cutbacks in social services or for free education, marches to save the environment and to send the nuclear threat.

The aim of the Democratic Socialists in parliament will be not merely to represent but to help build and empower the people's movements. When elected we will be activists first and parliamentarians second. Movement building has been our main work since the 1960s and if elected to parliament we will use those positions to build independent and democratic popular movements.

If you recognise the need for a radical alternative and you want to build it, you should take the step to join the Democratic Socialist Party.

Try the DSP out. You join as a provisional member and get a close-up picture of what it's like to be an active member of a socialist party. After a three-month period of provisional membership you can decide if you want to apply for full, regular membership.

You could cling on to the assumption that a few rich families are more fit to govern our lives than we are. You could draw graphs to prove that the more food is produced, the more people must starve. You could hope that companies wake up to environmental destruction and will start spending their profits on preventing it. Or you can join the Democratic Socialist Party and start fighting for a world that makes some sense. ■

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**This pamphlet is a presentation of the case for socialism.**

**It explains how socialism can solve the social and ecological disasters caused by capitalism and how a green, democratic and socialist world can be created.**

***What Socialists Stand For* provides an introduction to Resistance, the socialist youth organisation, and the Democratic Socialist Party.**

***Resistance books***