



SOCIALISM DEAD? NO WAY!

In 1991 many people believe they have witnessed the death of socialism, following the collapse of stalinism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Yet the range and forms of cultural, social and economic inequality and the issues to which only socialist solutions seem possible has increased.

The proud traditions and principles of socialism that we are celebrating today - human liberation and freedom, equality of race and sex, a fair distribution of the world's wealth, and environmental responsibility - have nothing to do with the bureaucratic, inefficient, highly centrally controlled model that stalinism represents.

While we've seen dramatic changes in Europe and the Soviet Union, capitalism has expanded its scope and the forms of exploitation and alienation it produces. Now more than ever it is important that socialist and progressive movements meet the challenge. We need to develop a realistic vision of the sort of society we want, suggest ways of achieving it, and convince people it's worth trying.

International

Internationally capitalism has become more all-embracing and better co-ordinated. Net creditor nations such as Japan and Germany have expanded their influence within the global economy, growing ever richer while other less developed nations find it increasingly difficult to survive in the face of declining commodity prices and an increased requirement for expensive imported goods and services. Periodic mass famines in some parts of the world are serving to dramatise this growing gap between rich and poor.

Global problems require global solutions. Advanced economies which have prospered greatly through the marketing of technological

innovations in many cases have contributing to the reproduction of inequalities of power, both within organisations and within and between societies need to acknowledge the impact of their commercial expansionism. What is needed is an analysis which will highlight these important new sources of injustice and inequality.

Global inequality is related to the pattern of environmental destruction. Chernobyl, the Amazon, the Gulf War and the encroachment of the Sahara each represents a major threat to human survival.

In the face of these threats, the performance of the international community in addressing the problems has been quite inadequate. If world bodies could mobilise as rapidly in addressing environmental issues as they have recently in their hostility to Iraq, speedy solutions could be found. In particular Australia's actions have been too little too late.

Aspirations for national self-determination should be strongly supported. From the Kurds in Iraq to the Timorese in our own region and aboriginal people in Australia, the search for cultural, political and economic independence has become more urgent than ever before. The rich and the powerful need to be persuaded that the repression and exploitation they perpetrate on these groups is repugnant to large sections of the Australian community.

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In Australia

Meanwhile Australia sinks closer and closer to 'third world' status, with massive foreign debt and balance of payments deficit, high unemployment and a dying manufacturing base.

ALP governments, federal and state, face serious defeat in the coming years, because of their blind adherence to discredited rightwing economic policies. At the same time they have deserted their traditional support base, who are now having to pay, through high interest rates, lower wages and few jobs, for the excesses of the 1980's and the so-called 'level playing field' solution.

And what is the alternative? A Thatcher-style approach to privatisation, deregulation, environmental irresponsibility, and greater inequalities of wealth and power. Some choice!

Why a new party?

There continues to be a need for political parties, despite the fact that for the last few years single-issue movements have been increasingly popular and support for political parties has been in decline. Parties provide a comprehensive and on-going analysis of political, economic, social and cultural changes and conflicts. Parties 'fill in the gaps' during the periods when there is no crisis demanding attention. They sustain the political critique when there are no 'hot' issues running. Movements usually cannot do this because they focus on one or two issues only.

They often fail, or are subject to manipulation, because they fall short on analysis. Political parties by contrast need to offer solutions, while movements can survive, indeed prosper, without doing this or at least without doing it systematically. This is one reason why single-issue movements often succeed in attracting membership and can show results dramatically and quickly.

The NLP is a national organisation with a national identity and while its membership currently is small (which by the way facilitates participation and communication), it has the potential to grow.

The NLP has a firm industrial base. A high proportion of members are skilled and educated. There is a good resource base in the form of direct access to equipment, finances and person-power as well as indirectly through the resources to which members have informal access. There is also a breadth of political experience in the party, a number of members holding key positions within the state infrastructure from which influence can be exerted.

Also, unlike single-issue movements, the NLP has a comprehensive range of policies on a broad range of issues. It has the capacity to respond to members' concerns through the democratic processes it follows. It is not factionalised, and enables the expression of a range of views which are debated, but not in a way which prevents the development of solidarity.

If you would like to know more about the New Left Party, what we stand for and hope to do, either fill in the form below and send it to the New Left Party, 222 Brunswick St Fitzroy 3065, drop in to the office, or phone us on 416 3842.

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..... I WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEW LEFT PARTY

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Phone.....(w).....(h)

**PLEASE TEAR OFF AND SEND TO THE NLP, 222 BRUNSWICK ST FITZROY 3065,
Phone (03) 416 3842.**