



For the millions, not the millionaires

Socialist Campaigner



National newsletter of the Socialist Alliance, Number 4, September/October 2003 DONATION \$1

Stop Bush! Stop Howard! Troops out of Iraq!

George W. Bush is coming to Australia in October to promote his never-ending war and free trade agenda - and Socialist Alliance will be helping to organise and build the biggest possible protests against the world's leading warmonger.

The Bush-Blair-Howard war on Iraq was illegal and immoral. The present military occupation of Iraq by the Coalition of the Killing is no less so. Bush's visit demands a response - one that says clearly and loudly: End the occupation of Iraq! Self-determination for the Iraqi people!

Bush will be visiting Canberra and Sydney immediately after the APEC summit on October 21 in Bangkok. His visit coincides with a round of trade negotiations planned for October 27 in Canberra. Howard hopes to secure a Free Trade Agreement with the United States, his trophy for supporting the US-led war on Iraq.

So our message is equally for Howard. To him and his criminal government we say: Money for health and education, not war! Bring the troops home now! No Free Trade Agreement!

The Bush-Howard cosy-up in Australia presents an invaluable opportunity to re-mobilise the anti-war movement here. It was just seven months ago that a million people took to the streets to say "No war on Iraq". They were backed by the majority of Australians, who saw through the cloak of lies about supposed weapons of mass destruction and the so-called war on terror.



Socialist Alliance joins its voice with all the local peace groups and anti-war coalitions calling on everyone who marched against Howard and Bush in February to do so again. We urge every organisation and individual who opposes the US government's drive to war and global economic domination to get involved in organising and come along to the protests in October.

Buses are being organised to bring people to Canberra and Sydney for the protests on the days - still to be confirmed - that Bush is in town. Your local Socialist Alliance branch can give you the details and keep you in touch with developments.

In other cities, anti-war activists are organising protest actions on or around October 25, both as part the nationwide week of action against Bush's visit and in solidarity with a US anti-war movement march on the Pentagon in Washington DC. The US march, organised by the two biggest anti-war coalitions in the US, ANSWER and United for Peace and

Justice, is also demanding the immediate withdrawal of the occupying forces.

For details of the protest in your city/town, and to help with organising and publicity, contact your nearest Socialist Alliance branch or visit www.socialist-alliance.org

Our world is not for sale or destruction: Troops out of Iraq! No FTA!

Welcome Louise!

The Socialist Alliance national executive decided on August 22 to co-opt Melbourne SA member Louise Walker onto the NE and elect her as a national convener until the next national conference. Louise has been a member of the Alliance for 18 months, active in left politics since 1986, and is currently a national councillor with the University of Melbourne branch of the NTEU. She replaces Riki Lane as a national convener (Riki will continue as an NE member).

We all thank Riki for his thoughtful and consistent hard work as a national convener since the founding of the Alliance, and warmly welcome Louise to her new role.

Next issue of *Socialist Campaigner*

The next issue of the national newsletter will be published in mid-October. The deadline for contributions is Sunday, October 5.

Contributions from branches and individual members are very welcome and should be emailed to newsletter@socialist-alliance.org or posted to PO Box A2323, Sydney South NSW 1235. We look forward to hearing from you.

www.socialist-alliance.org

Preparing for elections

The September meeting of the Socialist Alliance national executive will be discussing preparations for the Alliance's campaign in next federal election. Even if an election is not called early (which it may well be), we need to move quickly to ensure that we do justice in our electoral work to the big strides forward the Alliance has taken over the last year in public profile, the formation of new branches across the country, and through our leading role in the anti-war and trade union movements.

In NSW and Queensland, we also want to be able to use local government elections scheduled for early next year to lay the groundwork for a stronger federal campaign.

There are no indications that left alternatives will not get a serious hearing during the next election campaign. The Coalition is performing well in the polls, but not because the million who marched in February against Australian support for the Iraq war, or the hundreds of thousands who will be hit by the government's budget attacks on Medicare, education and the trade unions have forgotten and forgiven Howard. Rather, it is because Labor can't measure up as a genuine opposition.

So, Socialist Alliance members need to start thinking seriously about what sort of

election campaign we should run, who our audience is, how best to link our anti-imperialist and our anti-privatisation politics, where socialist candidates could have the maximum impact, and what sort of resources we need to conduct the best possible campaign.

From this general framework flow local branches' decisions about which electorates to contest and with which candidates, and what sort of upper house tickets we want – decisions we need to start making as soon as possible.

There will be a fuller report in the next issue of *Socialist Campaigner* but, in the meantime, please raise your ideas in your local branch (if you live in an outlying area, contact the national conveners) and/or write up your thoughts for publication in the discussion bulletin, *Alliance Voices*.

Branches may find it useful to start the local discussion by making a detailed assessment of the last election campaign run by your branch – did we involve members and supporters effectively, which polling booths got the best results, how did our election materials measure up, what could we do better, and so on.

The next election may be the best chance yet to not only knock off the Howard government, but also for us to take another significant step forward in strengthening the Socialist Alliance, and broader left alliances with all those who want to transform parliament house into the people's house.



Polling day, Sydney 2001.

As a contribution to the discussion, **ALAN WOODCRAFT** from Fremantle Branch and a WA co-convenor, makes the case for why Socialist Alliance branches should start pre-selecting candidates now:

- It takes at least 28 days (ie: the notice that we are required to give all members for the pre-selection meeting) and, in the current political climate, the Liberals could call an early federal election.
- We can begin to profile the candidate early through, for example, media releases, writing letters and articles in the candidate's name to local papers, and producing a leaflet introducing the candidate and highlighting key policy points. We might even decide to do doorknocking with the candidate - and that can take months to do properly.
- It focuses branches on the need to raise money. A basic campaign costs about \$2000 for the nomination fee, leaflets (including for letterboxing) and how-to-votes. The more money we can raise, the more impact we'll have.
- It focuses branches on what they want to say to potential supporters, and how we want to say it.
- It encourages branches to get back in touch with less active members who may want to get more involved around an election campaign - come to fundraisers, do some early letterboxing, etc.

Getting moving on our magazine

As this issue of *Socialist Campaigner* goes to press, the first meeting of the editorial board for the Alliance's quarterly magazine is taking place (on September 14). The next newsletter will report in more detail on the outcomes of that meeting, however, we can report that some of the initial ideas being discussed by the board include:

- the name of the magazine
- the format - at this stage the proposal is for a quarterly, 40-page magazine
- the theme of the first issue
- possible contributors
- regular content, including: three or four major analytical articles; a couple of shorter background articles on issues raised by current events; a page on each of Australian labour movement history, developments in the movements, and Indigenous Australia; a culture

section for essays, reviews (books, film, theatre, DVDs), poetry, etc; a letters section; and a "guest column"

These are initial ideas only and we expect that the magazine will evolve over time. But we are keen to get the first issue underway and rolling off the presses for big launches around the country to kick off the new year.

We have also received useful input from some of the more "artistically" inclined SA members about how to make the magazine attractive and accessible, but further ideas on any aspect of the magazine are very welcome.

We hope and expect that the magazine will make a unique and inspiring contribution to socialist thinking, debate and activity in Australia, and the world. We'll keep you posted on its progress.

Relating socialist theory to people's lives

BY BARRY HEALY
HILLS BRANCH

On August 31, five of us gathered around a dinning room table in Greenmount, a suburb on the eastern fringes of Perth. Our kids played outside in the sun for a while before they drifted inside and watched a video of *Monsters Inc.*, with the volume up too loud.

This was the inaugural meeting of the Hills branch of Socialist Alliance in WA (the adults, that is, not the kids). It has taken about six months to build up to this point.

Our origins were in the anti-war feeling that erupted around the US invasion of Iraq earlier this year. A parent at our kids' school organised a protest petition and the vast majority of parents signed it. Knowing we had a groundswell of interest, we formed the Darlington No War alliance and held a public meeting in the local hall.

The Darlington No War alliance has cemented a circle of activists around it through organising contingents to rallies in Perth, regular public meetings and other activities. Its activists mostly come from the Anglican church and school parents. From within this circle has arisen the Socialist Alliance branch.

We began tentatively moving towards establishing the SA branch by holding discussions on the subject "The Causes of War" (an explanation of the workings of imperialism). We invited anti-war activists who were more left-wing and we rang local people who had put down their names on SA contact lists at the big rallies. We slowly built up to our constitutionally required 7 financial members (two members gave apologies for the inaugural meeting).

The typical tone of our work has been sitting around the kitchen table with friends chatting about current events and talking about the issues confronting people, like: conflict with separated spouses, children's health, addiction and alcohol problems within families, low pay and demeaning conditions for women workers.

We don't talk high-falutin' socialist theory; we are relating socialist theory to people's lives and they are ready to hear it. The US war drive was the opening for these discussions but people's dissatisfactions go far deeper. Our experience has been that there is a "culture



shock" associated with discovering that socialism has the answers, but simple, compassionate, sincere conversation eases people past that. The authority that we have built through the anti-war work means that people are prepared to listen to us as well.

Our members include single mothers, two high school students, a university student, a teacher, a community worker, a housewife and a nurse. The majority of members have children. The reality of our lives colours the discussions and pace of activity.

At our inaugural branch meeting most time was taken up with a talk on the origins of

women's oppression. Age and gender differences dissolved as we all spoke passionately about our feelings about sexism. The information about the historical beginnings of sexism came as a liberation to those who hadn't heard of it before.

We agreed to go on talking about it at our next meeting where, having given the 28 days' formal notice, we will elect our official position holders. We know from chats we've had with interested people that the topic of women's oppression is a hot-button issue for local women. Out here in the suburbs there is an undercurrent of unarticulated anger about the way people's lives are being twisted.

The Darlington No War Alliance remains the only campaigning vehicle that we are involved in. The feeling is that we will probably go on concentrating on discussions for a while before we take on other campaigns.

At our next meeting, on September 28, we will be deciding arrangements for a public launch of the branch, with local activists invited and guest speakers. We can make a splash and recruit more members.

NSW Central Coast is turning red

BY ALICE MENNIE AND JIM DOOLEY
GOSFORD BRANCH (SOON TO BE?)

More than 100 people attended the first public event organised by Socialist Alliance members in Gosford on NSW's Central Coast on September 1.



The film screening of Michael Moore's *The Big One* was held at Iguana Joe's and was supported by members of Socialist Alliance, the socialist youth group Resistance and the local peace group.

The film, plus brief talks by Alliance member Alice Mennie and Resistance member Matt Benton, received a warm response, and many attendees put their name down to be involved with future Socialist Alliance activities.

We publicised the event from weekend stalls in Gosford in the fortnight before and by talking to other local activists. The great success of our first event has spurred us on to organise another one, and to look towards establishing a local branch of SA as soon as possible.

We will be screening Moore's film *Roger & Me* on Monday, September 29 at 7:30pm. The film will be preceded by an organising meeting at 6pm for those interested in local Socialist Alliance activity. Both events will be held at Iguana Joe's, Dana Drive, Gosford.

For more information, phone Alice on (02) 4342 5081.



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Brisbane organises

BY DAVE RILEY

BRISBANE DISTRICT COMMITTEE

After a slow start following our July district conference, the Alliance in Brisbane is in the process of rebooting itself.

We went into the conference with a new local west branch and now another has been formed covering the central and northern region of the city and suburbs. With a similar process unfolding to the south and south west of the CBD, we can expect another two branches formed within a short space of time.

To accompany the branch inauguration process we are trying to upgrade our administration to respond to the new locality format. We also hope to be able to service our Queensland out-of-area and "at large" members much better through this process of regionalising our work.

We can now harness the facilities of the Brisbane Activist Centre to strengthen our momentum. With a large meeting area (holding up to 80 people with an in-house sound system), office space and bookshop, the centrally located facility is for SA use on a contribution basis by arrangement with the Democratic Socialists, an SA affiliate. Alliance working groups, members, branches, caucuses, committees and affiliates are being encouraged to make use of the Activist Centre for SA organising. We hope to run special Socialist Alliance working bees at the centre to cover various campaign and administrative tasks. People wishing to volunteer for these should ring Dave Riley on (07) 32664281. The Brisbane Activist Centre is located at 74b Wickham Street, Fortitude Valley – opposite Centenary Place.

With local, state and federal elections pending over the next 12 months, Brisbane district faces the challenge of getting its house in order, especially if we decide to push hard on registering the Socialist Alliance under the very undemocratic Queensland electoral laws.

In the meantime, we hope to explore the prospect of encouraging further branches on the Sunshine and Gold Coasts.

Warming Muslim students to socialism

BY LINDA WALDRON
MEBOURNE WEST BRANCH

On August 22, fellow SA branch member Ray Fulcher and myself visited Werribee Islamic College to discuss socialism with year 9 and 10 students. Their teacher, Hakan, had got the Alliance's phone number from Telstra in a search for "actual socialists" who could discuss socialism with students doing a course on utopian societies.

The course curriculum included some Marxist ideas but also George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, and Hakan warned us that the students had developed some anti-socialist prejudices after learning about Stalin and reading Orwell.

By making the visit, we hoped to provide the students with the beginnings of a socialist analysis of the world which built on their anti-imperialist, pro-Palestinian sentiments, and also make stronger links with progressives in the Muslim community.

Our presentation was visual and interactive. I had made colour overheads from photos of Muslim socialists I had met in Pakistan and from historical books. We also showed some snippets from film footage of young people in the Sydney Arabic community discussing the Iraq War during the high school walkouts, the attempted coup against Chavez in Venezuela and European socialists talking about a socialist Europe during the anti-globalisation protest in Florence last year.

We asked the students to explain the slogan "No Blood For Oil", which was on a poster I had placed on the wall. They understood its humanitarian message saying it referred to "not bombing innocent civilians". We worked through this idea to explain that the message also applied to US GIs, and introduced the idea of the Vietnam Syndrome and the need for working people in the First World to act in soli-



arity with the peoples of the Third World to stop imperialism's attacks.

The students asked some insightful questions, including: Do you think David Hicks should be locked up? Do you think Third World countries will ever catch up to First World countries? Do you agree with Osama Bin Laden? Would what happened in the Soviet Union have been different if Trotsky instead of Stalin had been in power?

At the end, a student presented us with a copy of the Qu'uran, the school prospectus and the latest school magazine. In return, we gave the class socialist literature and several posters about current campaigns. Their teacher was particularly interested in the poster about the anti-WTO/Cancun protest.

Hakan plans to work with the students on a dramatic presentation around some of the issues we discussed and wants us to come back and watch the show.

The response to our presence from some of the staff was initially nervous and the school Sheikh and senior teachers also came along to the talk. However, they seemed impressed by our knowledge and our descriptions of what a socialist society could be like. Over coffee afterwards with staff, the Sheikh and the principal, the principal showed us photographs from an Arabic newspaper about recent atrocities in Gaza. The Sheikh, who promised to send us some anti-globalisation CDs, turned out to be the son Sheikh Issa Moussa, a leader of the Horn of Africa community in Melbourne who has spoken at various anti-war rallies.

Industrial relations policy drafters needed

We have recently received requests from trade unionists interested in Socialist Alliance for copies of our industrial relations policy. At the moment our platform contains just a few short points on industrial relations, and while we adopted a longer trade union resolution at our May conference, we don't have a succinct industrial relations policy which covers all of the key points.

If anyone is interested in helping draft an industrial relations policy,

contact Sue Bolton on (03) 9639 8622, 0413-377-978, sue_bolton@hotmail.com; or Riki Lane on (03) 9387 7819, 0400-877-819, riki@rabbit.com.au

Gearing up for state conferences

In October and November, Socialist Alliance members in WA, Victoria and NSW will be participating in state conferences to discuss political developments in Australia and the world, develop policy and campaign ideas and plans, discuss the next federal election campaign, and decide the next steps to build the Alliance in their state.

These conferences come at a crucial time. The immense popularity of Mike Moore's films and radical authors such as John Pilger and Noam Chomsky show that people are trying to understand the world and recent events. Socialist Alliance made a huge effort to organise and mobilise activists in the campaign against the imperialist war in Iraq. Conferences like these are important to take activists the one step further – towards the conclusion that to defeat the imperialist war drive you have to win socialism.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DATE: Sunday, October 12

TIME: 1pm-7pm

PLACE: Inglewood Community Centre, corner 10th Ave and Beaufort St, Inglewood

The WA education and decision-making conference, titled "Another World is Possible: building a socialist alternative", is open to everyone who's interested in progressive politics, whether or not they are a member of Socialist Alliance.

Nikki Ulasowski reports that the agenda includes two plenary sessions, "Globalisation - Imperialism's new name for speeding-up production" at 1pm and "Another world is possible - building a socialist alternative" at 3.30pm.

In between there will be a choice of workshops on: the revolutionary process unfolding in Latin America; the Free Trade Agreement; workers in Howard's "Lucky Country"; the Australian arm of imperialism; and "After the road map - where to for Palestine?"

Another series of workshops starting at 5.15pm includes: "Refugees - from detention to forced deportation"; the anti-war movement in Australia and globally; outreach with socialist politics; socialists in trade unions; and building a socialist youth movement.

Registration is a recommended donation of \$10 (waged) or \$4 (concession) to help cover venue costs. For more info', phone Nikki on (08) 9218 9608 or email: perth@socialist-alliance.org

VICTORIA

DATE: Saturday, November 15

TIME: From 10am

PLACE: Victorian Trades Hall, corner Lygon and Victoria Sts, Carlton

Arun Pradhan reports that Victoria's "Socialist Ideas Conference", titled



"Resisting the Empire" aims to engage with the broad anti-imperialist sentiment and help provide socialist solutions and strategies for action.

The conference will feature Humphrey McQueen, renowned Marxist author and intellectual, in a day of panels and workshops that will look behind the war drive and refugee crisis, and lay bare the underlying violence and inhumanity of capitalism. It will also canvass the role of the Australian government - the

US's deputy sheriff in the Asia-Pacific region. Australia's military intervention in the Solomons is just the beginning of a larger strategy to re-colonise the South Pacific's "failed states" and make them once more safe for imperialist exploitation.

Arun says the conference is also an opportunity for the six Alliances branches in Victorian to focus resources on a state level. "We are planning to 'paint Melbourne red' with conference promotional material and have already produced our first round of leaflets", he said.

The exact agenda is still being formulated and members' input is welcome. For more info', or if you have ideas and/or can help with organising or publicising the event, contact the Victorian SA conveners at: victoria@socialist-alliance.org, or Arun at: arun@red-duck.org

NEW SOUTH WALES

DATE: Saturday, November 8

TIME: 9.30am-6pm

PLACE: University of Technology, Sydney

Paul Benedek reports that the agenda for the NSW conference is still being finalised, but ideas being discussed include plenary sessions on "The struggle for a world without war" and "A socialist vision for an alternative to Carr's Thatcherism", plus workshops on militant unionism; socialist education and ideas; Latin America in revolt; and campaigning for a different world: anti-war, refugee rights, anti-corporate globalisation, and the next elections.

Guest speakers will include Dick Nichols, recently returned from a visit to Latin America, and Marxist writer Humphrey McQueen.

For more info', phone Paul on (02) 9690 1977 or email: nsw@socialist-alliance.org

New SA campaigning materials

Stickers

Darwin SA branch is producing a very beautiful two-colour (red and black on white background) sticker which says:

MEDICARE NOT WARFARE

www.socialist-alliance.org

They are selling to other Alliance branches cheap - 70 cents – which means branches can make \$1.30 profit on each sticker – a great fundraiser.

To order, or for more info', call Bri or Ray on (08) 8981 4714 or 0439 694 505.

SA flags/tablecloths

The Sydney district committee has made and had professionally printed a 750mm X 500mm Socialist Alliance flag for use at rallies and meetings. It has the SA logo and web site printed on it and can double as a tablecloth for stalls.

The flags/tablecloths are \$2 each, and there is a limited supply. If your branch is interested in purchasing some, please contact Kieran c/- sydcenral@socialist-alliance.org

Anti-Bush posters

The national office will be producing a new, A2 colour "Troops out of Iraq" (exact wording to be decided) placard/poster for use at the demo's being organised against George W Bush's visit to Australia in October, and all subsequent anti-occupation events.

They will be great SA profile posters for general use around town, and made up into placards will enable us to have a big presence at the upcoming rallies.

Union seminar a big success

BY MELANIE SJOBERG
SYDNEY DISTRICT COMMITTEE

Inspirational speakers and interactive workshops combined to create a very successful Socialist Alliance trade union seminar attended by more than 90 activists on August 30 in Parramatta, Sydney. It also launched the Alliance's new trade union pamphlet, *Dare to Struggle, Dare to Win*.

John Buchanan from the Australian Centre for Industrial Relations Research and Training, and Susan Price, a vice-president of the UNSW branch of the NTEU, opened a panel discussion on the impact of globalisation on work and working life. Participants then joined workshops focused

on key campaigns including the attacks on the NSW public sector, the Nelson review of higher education, and building solidarity and networks across industry. Another very useful workshop introduced newer workers to their rights and becoming union active in the workplace.

Victorian secretary of the CFMEU, Martin Kingham, gave a rousing keynote address around the theme of defending militant unions, evoking cheers from the participants. He said the Howard government is waging an ideological battle with the aim of crushing fighting unions, citing the attacks on the MUA, the meat workers, and the manufacturing and construction unions as evidence. The Victorian branch of the CFMEU is under special attack, he said, because it not only fights for wages and conditions but builds broader solidarity and alliances.

Martin described his involvement, more than 18 months ago, in a group that proposed that the CFMEU introduce direct election of national officials by the membership. National officials' response was to resort to accusations against fellow unionists of "excess militancy, rorting and corruption in the some states". Martin believes that this was used by Tony Abbott to launch

the Cole Royal Commission with a view to damaging the union.

He pointed out that various branches of the CFMEU have responded to Cole in different ways. "The NSW branch spent time and union money preparing submissions in an attempt to get Cole to consider employer abuse", he said, "and that failed". By contrast, the Victorian branch's attitude has been "non-cooperation".

Martin Kingham proclaimed that he will proudly defy the Workplace Relations Act when necessary to advance industrial rights. He outlined the contempt charges laid against him for refusing to comply with the Cole commission's demands for the names of CFMEU delegates and activists. This would have subjected those members to hardship and unnecessary state surveillance, he said. The eventual verdict of not guilty was a victory for principle and solidarity, he said.

Martin singled out the left newspapers for special thanks for their support and urged activists to continue to fight against Abbott's latest proposal to amend the WRA. The seminar endorsed a motion affirming Socialist Alliance's commitment to defend the CFMEU and build solidarity across unions and the community.

Urban issues policy group established

As decided at our national conference in May, the Socialist Alliance is to develop policy working groups in a broad range of areas. An "urban issues" policy working group has now been established. It began with a housing focus and has been strengthened by incorporating allied issues such as transport, the urban environment, local government.

Any member of Socialist Alliance can contribute to its discussions and deliberations. We plan to establish working policy for the Alliance by researching background information and writing up platform statements to be voted on by the broader SA membership. So we are looking for contributions and experiences that can enrich our understanding and develop policy.

The web address for the list - and where the message archive can be accessed - is: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SA_urbanissues/

To post a message: SA_urbanissues@yahoo.com

To subscribe: SA_urbanissues-subscribe@yahoo.com

To unsubscribe: SA_urbanissues-unsubscribe@yahoo.com

List owner: sa_urbanissues-owner@yahoo.com

Any further information can be obtained from the list moderator and policy group facilitator, Dave Riley at: dhell12@optusnet.com.au

Stolen wages campaign hits Melbourne

BY ALISON THORNE
WILLS BRANCH

Socialist Alliance activists in Melbourne took the opportunity in early September to hear activists from the Stolen Wages campaign speak and get behind the national postcard campaign. Socialist Alliance is backing the campaign by Indigenous workers to win compensation in full for many decades of unpaid wages.

Campaign coordinator Christine Howes and Indigenous community activist Lennie Lee Jackson drove from Queensland to Melbourne to deliver 7,000 campaign postcards hot off the press. The postcards are addressed to Premier Peter Beattie and secretary of the Queensland Council of Unions Grace Grace. They reject Beattie's "lousy little offer" of less than 10% of money owed and urge the peak union body to continue its active support for the campaign.

Lennie-Lee, who was asked by her 74 year-old father to take up the stolen wages fight for him, spoke at an Australia Asia Worker Links meeting and addressed a meeting of the Victorian Trades Hall Council. She also addressed a Defend and



Lennie Lee Jackson, daughter of stolen wages claimant Henry Jackson. Photo by Christine Howes.

Extend Medicare rally. Lennie-Lee also recorded interviews for 3CR and met with representatives of organisations actively backing the campaign including the ACTU, Radical Women and the MUA. She also met with a delegation of visiting South Korean unionists who took hundreds of postcards so that the Queensland government gets the message from far and wide!

Postcards are now available in Sydney through ANTaR National, in Melbourne through AAWL, VTHC and the ACTU, and in Brisbane through QCU or through ANTaR. Or contact Christine Howes at: chowes@hotkey.net.au

Afghan refugees join SA protest

BY TAMARA PEARSON
AUBURN BRANCH

The newly formed Auburn branch in Sydney's western suburbs held its first local street protest on September 4. The action was organised in less than two weeks as an emergency response to the fact that many Afghan TPV holders have this month received letters from the Department of Immigration telling them that in 28 days they face possible deportation or detention. The overwhelming majority of Afghan refugees in Sydney live in the Auburn area

We decided to hold the protest in front of the shopping mall, where we would be highly visible. A leaflet written for us by Afghan refugees headed "Let us stay!" was distributed from our bi-weekly SA stalls in the area; posters were put up; media releases were issued; and speakers from the Afghan community, refugee rights organisations and the Greens were arranged. We talked with our Afghan contacts about the protest, encouraging them to spread the word in the community. On the day, we came to the protest spot several hours early and set up a big display with placards, banners, petitions, leaflets and candles.

The action was a great success. Many of those refugees who had in the past been worried about the consequences of attending protests now felt they had no choice and about half of the 100 or so locals there were refugees. They felt empowered by the action, and a few got up to give spontaneous speeches.



Ahmad Reza Wakil addressing the rally.

I think the protest/rally had quite an effect on those who saw it. People walking along the street, doing their routine shopping, were confronted with a crowd chanting loudly "Refugees are welcome here, racism is not!" and many stopped to listen, talk to us and sign the petition.

A lot of people knew Socialist Alliance from our previous work in Auburn, but for many it was the first time they'd encountered us. Over the couple of hours we collected pages of signatures on the petition and the names of about 40 people very keen to stay in touch with us.

New issue of *Alliance Voices*

The Socialist Alliance produces a national internal discussion bulletin for members to present and debate their ideas on theoretical, policy, campaigning and organisational questions, and to communicate important resolutions passed by the national executive and other information relevant to all branches and members.

The bulletin, *Alliances Voices*, can be downloaded from SA's web site, or you can obtain hard copies from your local branch. The next issue, Volume 3 Number 10, will be published in the third week of September.

If you are thinking about making a contribution to the bulletin, please don't hold back. Other members would like to know what you think, and every individual's ideas contribute to a richer and more useful national discussion.

Members who would like to make a contribution should email it to the national conveners at ne@socialist-alliance.org or post it to PO Box A2323, Sydney South 1235.

Give us your change for socialist change

The national finances campaign is beginning to kick off with a few members in regional NSW responding this month to the appeal for regular donations from members and supporters to help fund the ambitious range of projects Socialist Alliance has undertaken this year. We have also received some generous once-off donations from members in response to the appeal.

The national conveners will be taking some further steps in September to push the campaign along. This includes producing a new leaflet – "Give us your change for socialist change" – explaining the enormous importance of individuals' financial contributions, no matter how small, to building left unity and a socialist alternative. The leaflet is for use on all SA stalls, at our events, in mail-outs and in discussions with supporters and members about the urgent need for a strong socialist organisation that can build movements capable of turn backing the current attacks on working people.

As well, we will be rearranging the Alliance web site to put the appeal for donations right up front, and making it easier for members and supporters to make payments direct from the web by subscribing to PayPal, an international system which ensures that individuals' credit card details are totally confidential and secure. This system will be up on the web by the beginning of October.

In the end, however, the success of the national finances campaign – upon which so much of our political work depends – will be determined at the grassroots level, by the efforts of the branches in ensuring that all members know about the campaign and are encouraged to participate.

We all want a world that does not revolve around money. The very nature of this goal means that we do not have big business backers and we don't get any of Costello's "tax breaks". We rely instead on the commitment and solidarity of ordinary working people. Our strength is in our collectivity – the pooling of many people's small resources into a common pot that makes us strong.

To make a donation, or for more information, contact your local branch or the national conveners at ne@socialist-alliance.org

Take a stand, get involved

Join the Socialist Alliance

If you've had a gutful of governments that rule for the rich, join Socialist Alliance.

If you're angry that corporations are allowed to kill for profits, join Socialist Alliance.

If you want to get together with others to make a better world, join Socialist Alliance.

Socialist Alliance is a broad, multi-tendency party. We stand for socialism — democratic ownership and management of the wealth of society. We believe that a society based on satisfying human needs can be created, but only by taking power from the elites who now rule.

We want a society run by and for working people, both here and internationally. We believe that socialism will be achieved by masses of people taking action on the streets and in the workplaces.

Socialist Alliance members come from many different walks of life and political traditions. They are involved in a range of progressive movements; in local community campaigns; in building militant, democratic trade unions; and on schools and campuses.

We also seek election to parliaments, not to "represent" the people's movements, but to help build them and help them win their demands.

There are 27 Socialist Alliance branches around Australia. They hold

Tell us what you think

Socialist Campaigner aims to help keep Alliance members around the country informed about major national campaigns and new resources available, how to get in touch with other members in their trade union or social movement area, and to enable an exchange of ideas about building the Socialist Alliance at the grassroots level.

To achieve those aims and be really useful for branches and members, we need your input. Your feedback would be very welcome: What is most useful about the newsletter (and what is not)? How can it be improved? What else would you like to see in it?

We also want your articles, notices, cartoons, graphics or anything else you think might help keep members informed, and in touch with and learning from each other.

Please send your feedback and contributions to: newsletter@socialist-alliance.org

regular branch meetings; public forums; film nights; caucus meetings for trade unionists, students and other members; and social-fundraising events. To find out more, contact the branch nearest you or visit www.socialist-alliance.org

I would like to join the Socialist Alliance

- \$60 high waged
 \$24 waged
 \$12 unwaged
 \$6 highschool
 Cheque/money order enclosed
 \$_____ donation
 Debit my B'card/M'card/Visa (please circle)

Signature

Expiry date

Name

Address Post code

Phone Email

Return to: Socialist Alliance, PO Box A2323, Sydney South, 1235. Cheques should be made out to Socialist Alliance. Email <ne@socialist-alliance.org>.

www.socialist-alliance.org

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