

# PRECONFERENCE DISCUSSION BULLETIN

The founding conference of the  
Socialist Alliance in Australia

*Number 7*

*July 2001*

**IMPORTANT NOTE: ALL RESOLUTIONS MUST BE WITH THE  
NATIONAL CONVENORS BY MIDNIGHT, JULY 31 AT THE LATEST.**

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The logo for the Socialist Alliance features the word "Socialist" in a bold, black, sans-serif font. A red five-pointed star is positioned above the letter "i". Below "Socialist" is the word "Alliance" in a larger, bold, red, sans-serif font. The "A" in "Alliance" is significantly larger than the other letters and overlaps the bottom of the "S" in "Socialist".

**Socialist  
Alliance**

# THE SOCIALIST ALLIANCE AND THE ANTI-CORPORATE MOVEMENT

By Lisa Macdonald

*Parramatta Socialist Alliance and Democratic Socialist Party*

The unprecedented size (more than 200,000) of the protests in Genoa during the meeting of the G8, and the revolutionary left's unprecedented political leadership of that protest, are the clearest indications yet of the orientation that the Socialist Alliance should be, but I believe is not yet adequately, making to the growing movement against corporate globalisation.

The launching of the SA was, in large part, a direct response to the emergence of that movement in Australia at the S11 protest in Melbourne last year. That mobilisation - its size, the breadth of issues and activists it brought together, its internationalism, and most importantly its genuine radicalism, created the best opportunity for at least two decades for socialists in this country to go on the ideological offensive again, and take political and organisational leadership of a progressive movement.

The most important characteristic of this new movement in the imperialist countries, and why it presents such an important opportunity for socialists, is that it is largely free of the shackles of Laborism. This is a movement which, because it focuses its fire on the core institutions of imperialism - the multinational corporations (none are immune from criticism by this movement), their policy development and implementation bodies (IMF, World Bank, World Economic Forum) and their capitalist governments and state machines - cannot readily be coopted by or reconciled to reformist politics or methods.

This leads the movement to political independence from the major parties (and the old Stalinist left), to prioritise extra-parliamentary action, to a willingness to confront the state, and to an ever stronger anti-system, anti-capitalist consciousness.

Certainly, there is a liberal/conservative wing in this movement, and the labour bureaucracy is attempting to redirect the movement's radicalism onto a nationalistic and reformist path. But the

political motor force of the movement is its moral outrage at economic injustice which is seen to be everywhere and everywhere to becoming worse. Thus it is the movement to which all those who believe that the economic, political and social status quo stinks and should be torn down are looking, and increasingly getting active in.

While being "far left" in its outlook and activities, the new movement is far from narrow in its social composition (this is an image being generated by the bourgeois media, governments and union bureaucrats in an attempt to politically isolate the movement from the working class). While the overwhelming bulk of labour movement leaderships (in Australia and all imperialist countries) are attempting to de-radicalise and demobilise the new movement, the anti-corporate tyranny movement is proving to be a magnet and organising framework for, not only disillusioned, angry young people and social movement activists, but also the best of trade unionists. Because the movement is inherently internationalist in its perspective, those workers who look to and support it are those who have broken (or begun to break) from the nationalist/protectionist politics that permeate the labour movement.

The number of workers/trade unionists who defied the position of their union "leaders" to participate in the M1 protests, for example, was very significant.

Of course, far from all of those who identify with and are active in this movement are conscious socialists. But outside of the small number of revolutionary socialists in Australia, most of whom are now organised in the Socialist Alliance, the anti-corporate globalisation activists are, in sentiment and in action, the most consistent anti-capitalists in this country today.

That is why they are the principle potential audience for and membership of the Socialist Alliance.

The leadership and direction of this new movement is being forged now, in action. The work of the revolutionary left forces in Europe who united to lead the mass protests in Genoa was a model we should study and learn from. It

indicated that with unity, socialists can be decisive in determining whether this movement continues to grow to become a mass movement of the working class and oppressed, or railroaded into NGOism and racist nationalism.

It is a role which the Socialist Alliance, in so far as its formation was motivated by the need for left unity as a crucial step towards building progressive movements and campaigns and winning more people to socialism, is very well placed to play.

Indeed, I believe that given the current balance of forces in Australian politics, and in particular the political bankruptcy of the labour movement, the Socialist Alliance will not build itself or get anywhere near realising its potential unless it strives seriously to play such a role in the new movement.

Intervening with Socialist Alliance propaganda, and also directly by building the movement's organisations and actions, is our best chance of winning young people to socialism in general and the Socialist Alliance specifically (the relative absence of youth in the Alliance to date is a cause for concern). It is also our most effective wedge against the Greens, whose parliamentarism and ultimate conservatism can be exposed by their relative inactivity in actually building the movement.

The Socialist Alliance has already missed too many opportunities to show socialist leadership in

and recruit support from this movement. It has virtually no profile in the movement beyond that of the individual participating parties and certainly has not even begun to tap the potential Alliance membership that exists in the movement.

Even given current differences over what tactics should be used at the upcoming Commonwealth Business Forum and CHOGM protests in October, there are many interventions that the Socialist Alliance could and should be making given all of the above.

***My specific proposals are:***

(i) That the Socialist Alliance produce a special issue of our broadsheet specifically for mass distribution at the CBF and CHOGM (and all subsequent anti-corporate globalisation protests) explaining the socialist solutions to corporate tyranny and why anti-capitalist activists should join the Alliance, campaign with it and vote for it.

(ii) That the Socialist Alliance include a special anti-corporate tyranny (or whatever we call it) section on our web site which includes the broadsheet (as above) and all other media releases and statements we issue relating to this movement.

(iii) That the local Socialist Alliance branches discuss holding big public forums, on or off campuses (or both), featuring Alliance speakers on this movement after the CHOGM protests.

# MINUTES OF THE JULY 20 NATIONAL LIAISON TELEPHONE HOOK-UP

The hook-up began at 7pm.

## 1. Attendance and apologies

The participants in the hook-up were: (Melbourne) Carlene Wilson, David Glanz, Graham Matthews, Alison Thorne and Jenny Campbell; (Canberra) Janet Burstall; (Sydney) Phil Sandford, Ian Rintoul, Dick Nichols. Apologies were received from Mustafa of the Workers Communist Party of Iraq.

## 2. Draft Constitution (Ian Rintoul reported)

**Agreed unanimously:** To postpone a decision on the status of the national treasurer to propose to the Founding Conference to the next NLC telephone hook-up;

**Agreed by majority of 8-1:** That the NLC propose to the Founding Conference that the 2001-2002 officeholders for the Socialist Alliance consist of three national convenors, to be elected by conference out of the incoming National Executive.

(For: Graham Matthews, Alison Thorne, David Glanz, Ian Rintoul, Janet Burstall, Jenny Campbell, Phil Sandford, Dick Nichols. Against: Carlene Wilson)

**Agreed unanimously:** That the NLC propose to the Founding Conference that the incoming National Executive be elected by National Conference and that the draft formula for electing the National Executive which the NLC wishes to propose be decided at the next telephone hook-up.

**Agreed unanimously:** To adopt the amendments to the draft constitution contained in Attachment A (as moved by the national convenors), Attachment B (as moved by Dick Nichols) and the amendments from comrade Alison Thorne (Attachment C), with Alison Thorne's amendment to Section 6.2 (on what constitutes a quorum for a branch) to replace the amendment from the national convenors on this point (paragraph D of Attachment A).

## 3. Basis of membership of local groups

**Agreed unanimously:** To endorse as our national approach to the membership of local groups for the purpose of delegate elections that adopted by the Melbourne State Liaison Committee at its July 16 meeting (see Attachment D).

## 4. Approach to developing draft platform (Ian Rintoul reported)

**Agreed by a majority of 8-1:** That the NLC recommend to the founding conference:

- A. That conference draw up a list of priority pledges for the coming federal election to be the basis of the Socialist Alliance election manifesto;
- B. That it launch a process of policy development to be carried out through policy working groups which will report back to the incoming National

Executive with developed draft policy proposals. That detailed elaboration of the draft Socialist Alliance platform received during the preconference discussion and adopted by conference be the starting point for developing such draft policy proposals;

- C. That the Socialist Alliance hold a round of policy seminars with each area specialising in a theme that best exploits the political openings and expertise of local Alliance members and supporters. That the incoming National Executive coordinate the implementation of the proposal. (For: Graham Matthews, Alison Thorne, David Glanz, Ian Rintoul, Janet Burstall, Jenny Campbell, Phil Sandford, Dick Nichols. Against: Carlene Wilson)

Ian Rintoul gave his apologies for leaving the hook-up at this point.

## 5. Founding Conference organisation and procedures (Dick Nichols reported)

### Changed treatment of at-large membership

**Agreed unanimously:** To note that with the change in delegate ratio at-large members who attend the conference will each have one-ninth of a vote and will pay one-ninth of the conference registration fee (namely \$14.50).

### Reporters and reports

#### Agreed unanimously:

- i. That the reporters for the NLC (or NLC majority) be:
  - Adoption of draft platform: Ian Rintoul
  - Federal election campaign tasks: Dick Nichols
  - Adoption of draft constitution: Alison Thorne
- ii. That the reporters submit a report outline for discussion at the next NLC phone hook-up.

### Deadline for amendments to all other resolutions and amendments save those regarding the draft platform and constitution

**Agreed unanimously:** That the NLC establish a deadline of July 31 for resolutions on matters other than the draft platform and constitution.

### Treatment of amendments

**Agreed unanimously:** That movers of amendments are entitled to amalgamate and modify amendments at any time until the vote on the matter under debate is taken, with any such changes being submitted to the presiding committee for distribution in writing to the conference delegates.

### Changes to Conference agenda

**Agreed by a majority of 8-1:** That the existing conference agenda be amended to allow for:

- i. Four speakers (two on Saturday and two on Sunday) to give a ten-minute address and greetings on the following topics:
    - Attacks on union rights (to be followed by resolution launching our campaign against restrictive industrial legislation)
    - Indigenous rights and the need for a treaty (suggested speaker to be decided, to be followed by resolution. Alison Thorne to approach Ray Jackson re availability)
    - The GST and its impact on poverty (suggested speaker from pensioner association plus resolution on GST campaign)
    - The struggle for refugee rights (suggested speaker from refugee rights movement plus resolution).
  - ii. An opening address welcoming the conference to aboriginal land
  - iii. Solidarity greetings (including from Socialist Alliance in England and the Greens).
- (For:** Graham Matthews, Alison Thorne, David Glanz, Ian Rintoul, Janet Burstall, Jenny Campbell, Phil Sandford, Dick Nichols. **Against:** Carlene Wilson)

#### **Media**

**Agreed unanimously:** That a media conference be held on Sunday lunchtime and that the NLC designate interim spokespeople on particular areas. That the details be decided at the next NLC phone hook-up.

#### **Chairing**

**Agreed unanimously:** That the Melbourne conference organising committee be responsible for providing chairs for each conference session.

#### **Security**

**Agreed unanimously:** That a security team and roster be set up by the Melbourne organising committee

#### **Registration fee for observers**

**Agreed unanimously:** That the registration fee for observers be increased to \$20 (\$10 per day) full and \$10 (\$5 per day) concession.

#### **Finances of the Socialist Alliance**

**Agreed unanimously:** That an account of national Socialist Alliance finances be included in conference kits.

#### **Presiding Committee**

**Agreed unanimously:** That the composition of the conference presiding committee the NLC wishes to submit to the conference be decided at the next NLC hook-up.

#### **J. Conference rally**

**Agreed unanimously:** That there not be a conference rally

#### **6. Membership and registration (Dick Nichols reported)**

**Proposed action:** To adopt the following procedure to ensure the Socialist Alliance has accurate and up-to-date membership records at all levels:

- Local groups to enter their membership on an Access data base [see NSW as model for data required, but also including middle names of members] and to send copies of these to state (or territory) and national liaison committees;
- State (or territory) liaison committees to produce state/territory membership databases (in Access) on the basis of the membership data received from local groups and from any memberships entered directly via state/territory or national liaison committees;
- The National Liaison Committee to produce a national (federal) database (in Access) on the basis of data received from local groups and state/territory liaison committees, and this to be made available to both local groups and state/territory liaison committees for the purpose of checking the accuracy of records.

#### **7. Finances and Resources (Dick Nichols reported)**

State of action:

- i. T-shirts. Only one order received to date. To be put on sale at the conference
- ii. Badges. Awaiting final quote
- iii. Stickers and raffle. Awaiting reply from local groups.
- iv. Recruiting brochures. 200 now with each local group. Convenors awaiting full order.

#### **8. Proposal for day of protest against US blockade of Iraq**

**Agreed unanimously:** That the Socialist Alliance support and participate in actions on August 6 and issue a media release.

#### **9. GST Open Letter**

**Agreed unanimously:** To adopt final version at next telephone hook-up.

#### **10. Report-back on delegate elections held to date (Dick Nichols reported)**

**Agreed unanimously:** To adopt the following resolution from the national convenors. "That since at its July 18 meeting to elect delegates to Founding Conference the Chatswood local group did not use the method of proportional representation adopted by the NLC, the next meeting of the Chatswood local group reconduct this election in accordance with this method."

#### **11. Any other business**

**Agreed unanimously:** That the travel costs of the NLC delegates to Founding Conference be born by the affiliate organisations.

#### **12. Date of next NLC hook-up**

**Agreed unanimously:** To hold the next hook-up on Friday, July 27, at 7pm.

The meeting adjourned at 9.30 pm.

## ATTACHMENTS

### **Attachment A: Amendments to constitution from Ian Rintoul, national convenor, and Dick Nichols, acting national convenor**

A. Because of requirements of electoral act, it will be best if 2.1 is changed to reads:

2.1 The Alliance is a coalition of socialist parties and socialist individuals supporting a common action platform for the purpose of endorsing candidates to contest elections for local and state government representatives and for the federal House of Representatives and the Senate. The Alliance will also seek to build campaigns around the demands of the action platform, involving trades union and communities, to fight for the resources and services that workers, unemployed, women, pensioners, Aborigines, and migrants really need.

B. For the act, there also needs to be a clause to allow for the winding up of the organisation. Maybe as a final section, numbered as required:

#### Dissolution of the Socialist Alliance

The Socialist Alliance may be dissolved by a special conference called for this purpose by the national executive, or a by one third of the membership (as above). Any assets of the Socialist Alliance will be distributed to any organisation or organisations having aims consistent with those of the Socialist Alliance as determined by such a special meeting or conference.

C. To cover the issue of the basis of membership of local branches we would propose the following wording:

#### Local branches

6.1 The basic unit of the Socialist Alliance is the local branch. A branch shall have at least seven members and will be organised on the basis of federal electorates. All Alliance members will be assigned to a branch by the appropriate district organizing committee (see below) or in the case of remote regions, by the national convenors. Members will normally live in the area of covered by their branch, but in other cases may indicate to the district organising committee or the national convnors, the branch in which they will be active.

D. We would also suggest changing the quorum at meetings to be "...five, or 20 %, whichever is greater." This is because 25 per cent is already high

figure in the bigger branches, such as Wills. In practice it may prove very difficult to hold quorate meetings.

E. We would also propose the following small changes (i) to include "regularly" in point 5.5 so it will read "...should regularly report the substance of their work to the National Executive by email."

(ii) to change the number of days notification for nomination to 14 days in 9.1. We should also add to 9.3 the requirement for 14 days notice, by adding "called for this purpose with 14 days notice."

### **Attachment B: Amendment on responsibilities of Socialist Alliance parliamentarians and elected representatives (proposed by Dick Nichols)**

That a new section 3 be added to the Constitution named *Accountability of Socialist Alliance parliamentarians* and all subsequent sections renumbered accordingly. The new Section 3 to read as follows:

3.1 The Socialist Alliance does not allow its parliamentarians to exercise a conscience vote. As they have been elected on the basis of the Socialist Alliance platform they are required to vote in accordance with that platform and publicly advocate it.

3.2 Socialist Alliance parliamentarians shall be accountable to the national conference of the Socialist Alliance, and in between conferences, parliamentarians shall be accountable to the national executive.

3.3 If elected, Socialist Alliance candidates shall pledge any income above the average wage of a skilled worker to the Alliance to help fund its work.

### **Attachment C: Constitutional amendments proposed by Alison Thorne**

1. Addition to new 2.1 in Attachment A. To add the words "gays and lesbians" after women.

Rationale: Self explanatory.

2. Addition to 4.6 in original draft. To add the words "by petition presented to the National Executive."

Section would read: "If one third of the paid-up membership requests it by petition presented to the National Executive, there can be a Special Conference of the Alliance called in addition to the National Conference.

Rationale: We need to be explicit about how one third of members can clearly express a view on this question.

3. Deletion from 5.5 in original draft. Delete the words: "by e-mail".

Rationale: The current formulation is unnecessarily restrictive.

Organisationally, this may be a communication method to be encouraged but constitutionally it really does not matter how these formal reports are conveyed.

4. Dissolution of the Socialist Alliance.

Add the words. "The delegate ratio for such a special conference may be no less than the delegate ratio used for the last properly constituted national conference."

Rationale: We don't want to tie ourselves up in unnecessary "what if" scenarios. However, the proposal put forward by the convenors is much too loose given that the National Executive has the power to determine ("with consultation") delegate ratios.

Any meeting to dissolve the Alliance must, at minimum, use the same delegate ratios used at the most recent national gathering to ensure that, if the interest was there, a tiny meeting (although a properly constituted one under the constitution) could not dissolve the Alliance and make decisions about assets in a manner which could exclude other interested parties.

5. Rephrase 6.2 to read: "A properly convened branch meeting is held at a fixed time or by giving at least two weeks to all branch members. A properly convened branch meeting which achieves a quorum can make decisions for the branch. Decisions shall be made by show of hands or by simple majority. The quorum at a properly constituted branch meeting is 5 members or 10%, whichever is the greater. "

Rationale: The membership of the Alliance WILL grow. We want as many members as are willing to do

so to be active, but not all members will choose to be active. We do not want branches being prevented from making decisions. Nor do we want small gatherings of members which are not properly convened to make decisions in the guise of being a branch meeting.

The purpose of this amendment is to enable branches to function while at the same time defining what a properly convened branch meeting and a quorum is.

#### **Attachment D. Motion on basis of membership of local branches from Melbourne State Liaison Committee**

Monday, July 16, 2001

*Interim Process for establishing Socialist Alliance Branches and electing delegate to the inaugural National Conference.*

That for the purposes of electing delegates to the inaugural National Conference, that an interim agreement be reached by the State-wide committee and communicated to the NLC, that:

Socialist Alliance members and activists can participate in the existing SA Local Branch of their choice regardless of whether they are members of that specific electorate.

Where SA activists are participating in one SA Local Branch but are enrolled in another electorate where an existing SA Local Branch is functioning, the activist will be counted as a member in the one Local Branch which they nominate to be active within for the purposes of delegate elections.

That when this occurs, the SA activist will contact the convenor of the 'other' SA Local branch to ensure that they are not counted in the delegate ratio for the purposes of delegate elections at that branch..

That this interim policy exists only until the National Conference -August 4-5 2001.

# MINUTES OF THE JULY 27 NATIONAL LIAISON COMMITTEE TELEPHONE HOOK-UP

The hook-up began at 7pm.

## 1. Attendance and apologies

The participants in the hook-up were: (Melbourne) Carlene Wilson, David Glanz, Alison Thorne and Jenny Campbell; (Canberra) Janet Burstall; (Sydney) Phil Sandford, Ian Rintoul, Sue Bolton, Dick Nichols. Apologies were received from Lisa Macdonald and Graham Matthews.

## 2. Correction to minutes of July 20 hook-up

*Noted:* That Carlene Wilson was incorrectly noted as voting against the proposal to have three national convenors elected from the incoming National Executive (Item 2).

## 3. Formula on incoming National Executive and method of election of National Executive to propose to founding conference. (Ian Rintoul reported)

The proposal from the national convenors (Attachment B of draft agenda) was amended as follows:

**Agreed by majority of 6-3:** To delete the clause in brackets reading “namely from Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, Queensland and the Northern Territory”.

(For: Carlene Wilson, David Glanz, Jenny Campbell, Alison Thorne, Janet Burstall, Phil Sandford. Against: Ian Rintoul, Sue Bolton, Dick Nichols).

**Agreed by majority of 7-2: To delete the clause “unless any delegate requests a secret ballot” from point 5 of section “Method of election of National Executive”.**

(For: Carlene Wilson, David Glanz, Jenny Campbell, Alison Thorne, Janet Burstall, Phil Sandford, Ian Rintoul. Against: Sue Bolton, Dick Nichols).

**Agreed unanimously:** To insert a new point 5 in the section “Method of election of National Executive” to read “Nominees may decline nomination if they so wish.”

**Agreed by a majority of 8-1:** To recommend the formula for the National Executive as amended for adoption by the Founding Conference.

(For: David Glanz, Jenny Campbell, Alison Thorne, Janet Burstall, Phil Sandford, Ian Rintoul, Sue Bolton, Dick Nichols. Against: Carlene Wilson).

**Agreed unanimously:** To recommend the method of election of the National Executive as amended for adoption by the Founding Conference.

*The proposal as amended reads:*

A. That the National Liaison Committee propose to the founding conference of the Socialist Alliance:

That the National Executive for 2001-2002 be elected according to the formula:

- Two representatives from each of the larger affiliates;
- One representative from each of the smaller affiliates;
- One member from each state or territory not covered by the representatives from the existing affiliates.

That any affiliates joining the Socialist Alliance after the conference be accorded representation on the National Executive, at the invitation of the National Executive.

That between conferences, if necessary, proxies to the National Executive may be (i) appointed by the affiliated group in the case of a representative of an affiliated group, or (ii) in the case of a representative of a state elected by a state-wide meeting or the relevant state co-ordinating committee.

B. That the National Liaison Committee propose to the founding conference the following method of election of National Executive:

That the National Executive be elected by slates;

That any conference delegate is eligible to present a slate;

That nominations of slates be open from the beginning of the conference and close at the end of lunchtime on Sunday, August 4.

That all slates nominated be available for scrutiny by conference;

That nominees may decline nomination if they so wish;

That voting be by show of hands;

That if no slate receives a majority of votes in the first round of voting, that the slate with the least number of votes drops off and further rounds of voting are conducted until one slate gains a majority.

## 4. NLC proposal to founding conference on status of National Treasurer (Dick Nichols reported)

**Agreed by majority of 7-2:** That the National Treasurer be an *ex officio* position and be appointed by the incoming National Executive.

(For: David Glanz, Alison Thorne, Janet Burstall, Phil Sandford, Ian Rintoul, Sue Bolton, Dick Nichols. Against: Jenny Campbell, Carlene Wilson)

## 5. Proposed method of electing national convenors (Ian Rintoul reported)

**Agreed unanimously:** That the national convenors, to be elected out of the incoming National Executive, be elected by the same slate method as proposed for the election of the National Executive, on the understanding that, if conference accepts the NLC proposal on this issue (see minutes of July 20 hook-up) proposed slates for the national convenors can only be

nominated after the election of the incoming National Executive.

6. **Reporter on formula and method of election for incoming National Executive and national convenors**

**Agreed unanimously:** That comrade Janet Burstall be the reporter for the NLC on this issue.

7. **Internal discussion bulletin (Dick Nichols reported)**

**Agreed with one abstention:** That the internal discussion bulletin of the Socialist Alliance continue after the Founding Conference; that it shall be published at least quarterly except in the quarter preceding the next National Conference, when it shall be published as frequently as needed.

(For: David Glanz, Jenny Campbell, Alison Thorne, Janet Burstall, Phil Sandford, Ian Rintoul, Sue Bolton, Dick Nichols. Abstention: Carlene Wilson).

8. **Amendments to the draft constitution (Alison Thorne reported)**

**Agreed unanimously:** That the NLC present the draft constitution as amended according to unanimous NLC agreement to the Founding Conference. That the questions still in dispute be discussed and voted on point by point in the appropriate conference session. That the draft constitution as amended by unanimous vote of this NLC hook-up be circulated to conference delegates as soon as possible with an explanation as to its status.

9. **Amendments to the draft platform (Ian Rintoul reported)**

**Proposal (moved originally by David Glanz and amended during discussion):** That the platform as amended (1) by Ian Rintoul on the basis of the amendments received in the preconference discussion and (2) by unanimous agreement at this NLC hook-up be submitted to conference simply as the basis for conference discussion and vote. That it be clearly understood that this draft does not represent an NLC consensus or endorsement and that individual NLC members are free to move amendments to any part of the draft at conference. That submissions not incorporated in the draft will be submitted to discussion and vote at conference. That the amended draft will be circulated to conference delegates as soon as possible with an introductory note explaining its status.

**Agreed by majority of 5-3 with one abstention:** That the NLC proceed to a vote on this proposal.

(For: David Glanz, Alison Thorne, Janet Burstall, Ian Rintoul, Sue Bolton, Dick Nichols. Against: Carlene Wilson, Jenny Campbell, Phil Sandford. Abstention: Alison Thorne).

**Agreed by a majority of 6-3:** To adopt the proposal. (For: David Glanz, Alison Thorne, Janet Burstall, Ian Rintoul, Sue Bolton, Dick Nichols. Against: Carlene Wilson, Jenny Campbell, Phil Sandford).

10. **Priority pledges (Ian Rintoul reported)**

**Agreed unanimously:** To refer this issue to the Founding Conference

11. **Report to conference on Socialist Alliance election campaign tasks (Dick Nichols reported)**

**Agreed unanimously:** That resolutions on preference policy and trade union affiliation to the ALP be taken under this report.

12. **Founding conference organisation, procedures and draft agenda (Dick Nichols reported)**

A. Draft agenda

**Agreed unanimously:** That the draft agenda of the founding conference of the Socialist Alliance be as set out below, and that the national convenors be given the task of developing a draft finer subdivision of the time available for discussion and voting on the matters under debate.

*Saturday, August 4, 2001*

**0830-0900: Registration**

**0900-0915: Welcome to indigenous land**

**0915-0930: Adoption of standing orders**

**0930-1015: Proposal on formula and method of election for National Executive and national officeholders**

0930-0945: Report from NLC (*Reporter: Janet Burstall*)

0945-1015: Discussion and vote

**1015-1830: Adoption of draft platform, detailed policy and priority pledges of the Socialist Alliance**

1015-1030: Report from NLC (*Reporter: Ian Rintoul*)

1030-1145: Discussion

1145-1200: Address and resolution on the Skilled Six and Howard's anti-union offensive (*Speaker: Craig Johnston*)

1200-1300: Discussion

**1300-1430: Lunch**

1430-1530: Discussion

1530-1545: Address and resolution on the struggle for refugee rights (*Speaker*)

1545-1645: Discussion

**1645-1700: Afternoon break**

1700-1730: Discussion

1730-1745: Address and resolution on the struggle in West Papua and Indonesia (*Speaker: W*)

1745-1830: Discussion

**2000-2400: Fundraiser**

*Sunday, August 5*

**0830-1130: Election campaign tasks of the Socialist Alliance (including resolutions on preferencing and trade union policy)**

0830-0845: Report from the NLC (*Reporter: Dick Nichols*)

0845-1000: Discussion

1000-1010: Greetings for the Socialist Alliance in England (*Martin Thomas*)

1010-1130: Discussion

1130-1140: Address and resolution on the indigenous people's struggle and the treaty (Speaker: Ray Jackson)

**1140-1530: Adoption of the Constitution of the Socialist Alliance**

1140-1200: NLC report (*Reporter: Alison Thorne*)

1200-1300: Discussion

**1300-1430: Lunch**

1430-1500 Discussion

1500-1510: Address and resolution on anti-GST campaign (*Speaker: Z*)

1510-1550: Discussion

**1550-1610: Afternoon break**

**1610-1710: Resolutions not treated elsewhere in conference agenda**

**1710-1800: Election of the National Executive of the Socialist Alliance**

**1800-1830: Election of the National officeholders of the Socialist Alliance**

**1830: The Internationale**

**1840: Closing remarks**

**B. Media**

**Agreed unanimously:** That the media spokespeople initially be comrades Alison Thorne, Lisa Macdonald, David Glanz and the national convenors.

**C. Presiding Committee**

**Agreed unanimously:** That the NLC propose to the conference a presiding committee of five, to be composed of Ian Rintoul, Carlene Wilson, Janet Burstall, Alison Thorne and Dick Nichols

**D. Standing orders**

**Agreed unanimously:** That the following draft standing orders be submitted for conference approval:

1. *Presiding committee:* That there be a presiding committee of five, to be composed of Ian Rintoul, Carlene Wilson, Janet Burstall, Alison Thorne and Dick Nichols;
2. *Voting.* Voting on reports, resolutions and amendment to be by show of delegate cards. Voting on resolutions and amendments to take place as soon as debate on the resolutions and amendments in question has ended;
3. *Majority required.* Decisions to be by simple majority;
4. *Motions.* Motions to require both mover and seconder;
5. *Procedure for selecting speakers.* Delegates to have voice and vote. Non-delegate members to have voice. The speaking order to be formed of delegates and non-delegates, but session chairs shall ensure that all delegates who wish to speak get the opportunity to do so. The chair to take speakers in groups of five and aim to ensure

balanced representation by gender, delegation and affiliates;

6. *Conduct of debate.* After two speakers have spoken in favour of a resolution or amendment the next speaker to be a speaker against. If there is no such speaker, debate to lapse and the vote taken;
7. *Speaking limit.* The speaking limit to be five minutes and speakers to be advised when they have spoken for four minutes. Speakers may ask the conference for extensions;
8. *Procedural motions and dissent in ruling of the chair.* In the case of procedural motions and dissent in the chair's rulings only one speaker to be allowed for and against;
9. *Motion to gag debate.* The motion to gag debate to be put without debate;
10. *Presentation of resolutions and amendments.* All resolutions and amendments to be submitted to the conference presiding committee so as to be made available in printed form for delegates.

**E. Resolutions to be presented after addresses by invited speakers**

**Agreed unanimously:** That the convenors draft these resolutions for circulation and amendment by email, taking into account resolution already passed by local groups (see, for example, Marrickville resolution on refugees). That the Socialist Alliance Founding Conference commit itself to militant, nationwide support to the "Skilled Six" campaign, and that this be the main point of the resolution in defence of trade union rights.

**13. Anti-GST campaign (Ian Rintoul reported)**

**Agreed unanimously:** That the national convenors produce a final wording of the GST petition/open letter to be first circulated to the NLC and then presented as part of the special resolution to conference on this issue.

**14. Deadline for next broadsheet.**

**Agreed unanimously:** That we produce the next broadsheet in *Green Left Weekly* and *Socialist Worker* in late August or early September, with the exact date to be settled in consultation with *GLW* and *Socialist Worker* staff .

**15. Any other business**

- A. Jenny Campbell raised the issue of the Bracks' government's proposed changes to right of assembly laws. Agreed that Socialist Alliance would do a submission against this legislation.

**16. Date of next hook up**

**Agreed unanimously:** That if a further hook-up is needed it should take place on Wednesday, August 1, at 7pm.

**The hook-up adjourned at 10.10pm.**

# AMENDED DSP PROPOSAL ON SOCIALIST ALLIANCE PREFERENCING FOR THE FEDERAL ELECTIONS

*The Democratic Socialist Party is amending the resolution on preference policy that it wishes to submit to the founding conference of the Socialist Alliance (see Preconference Discussion Bulletin No. 2 for the original submission).*

The amended resolution changes the original resolution to read as follows:

“This founding conference of the Socialist Alliance resolves:

A. That for the *House of Representatives* we recommend to Socialist Alliance local groups that their candidates preference pro-working

class Green and/or progressive candidates (determined on a seat by seat basis) then Labor candidates;

That where no Alliance, pro-working class Green or progressive candidate is standing we call for supporters to vote Labor; and

That in all cases we put One Nation last.

B. That for the *Senate* we recommend to state and territory conferences that they adopt a preference policy that favours progressive left candidates first, then the Greens, then Labor, with One Nation placed last.”

# THE MELBOURNE CITY COUNCIL CAMPAIGN

By Linda Waldron

*Convenor, Seat of Melbourne Branch*

## ***Political Context***

During the month of June, Melbourne was inundated with corporate self-promotion in the interests of developers, investors, big business and profiteers. The Melbourne City Council elections — for seven councillors, the mayor and deputy mayor — have been as ruthless, petty and anti-poor as a spat between John Howard and Peter Costello.

With the notable exception of the sole Greens councillor David Risstrom, those elected ran on explicitly pro-business platforms. This is not surprising, given that business owners have two votes while residents have only one. A resident who is also a property owner gets two votes. Residential areas in Kensington and Flemington were removed from the electorate under the Kennett state government. Consequently, 40% of the vote was cast by residents and 60% by business owners and residential property-owners.

The successful mayoral candidate was millionaire Dragon Boat Restaurants' proprietor John So. So claimed he would “stimulate business development by reducing operating costs, lowering council rates and coordinating marketing” and “extend council by-laws to remove drug dealers off the streets”.

The Liberal-Party-dominated United ticket fielded 10 candidates in five different mayoral/vice-mayoral teams. They wanted “to clean up our CBD so families can return to shop” and promote “zero drug and alcohol tolerance”.

Successful candidate for councillor, ALP member Kimberly Kitching ran on the “Fresh Start Team”. Her campaign material consisted mostly of pictures of herself shopping at the Queen Victoria Markets, riding a bike and posing outside of heritage-listed buildings, and featured the slogan, “compassion for victims, tough on culprits”. She argued for all traders in the CBD to get a vote for council, not just business owners.

Mayoral candidate and Australian Democrats' founder Don Chipp fended off accusations that his running mate was a bankrupt (and thus ineligible to run). The Peter McMullin and Elaine Canty mayoral team were linked in the mainstream press to fugitive Mexican banker Carlos Cabal. Candidates from joint Liberal and ALP tickets engaged in public walkouts over preference deals and shady business practices. All these candidates were united in aiming to make the CBD profitable, to attract tourists and business investment.

Even though southern Carlton has the highest concentration of people living below the poverty line in Melbourne, only three among 25 of the councillor teams argued the case of the poor, the marginalised and the dispossessed: the Victorian Greens, Putting People First and Socialist Alliance.

Amidst the sackings, resignations and dissolutions which characterised the previous council, Greens Councillor Risstrom established a Social Housing Trust for improved public housing, and increased the resources allocated to health-based solutions to drug problems. The Greens argued that residents concerns should have more weight, but that the needs of business should also be met. They campaigned under the slogan, “a city that lives better for residents and works better for business”.

Stephen Jolly, national secretary of the Socialist Party, and John Maciulis ran on the Putting People First ticket, which received 455 first preference votes and came close to getting one councillor elected. “Putting People First” was critical of the pro-big business agenda of the Melbourne City Council and its undemocratic voting system. It put forward policies to benefit the community — especially youth and the oppressed.

Although the Socialist Party's support was noted in small type at the bottom of advertising material, “Putting People First” did not openly identify as socialist. The only openly socialist ticket in the elections was the Socialist Alliance, emphasizing the needs of the working class and international solidarity. None of the other candidates mentioned issues

outside of the immediate concern of businesses and residents in the area. By contrast we called for a sister-city relationship between Dili and Melbourne to draw out the continuing need for solidarity with the East Timorese people. Our public support for the Nike picket also emphasised the plight of factory workers in oppressed nations in the Asia-Pacific region such as Indonesia and Fiji.

### ***Why we ran***

The political opportunities of the MCC elections were unlimited. We could easily expose the ALP- "left" and the proposed consensus between business and residents offered by the Greens. As the only openly socialist formation we could stir up the reactionaries and grab the spotlight.

Suitable campaigns were on issues such as: against Kennett's reforms which ensure that businesses have 2 votes for the Council elections, while residents have only 1; profiling the Nike picket and other anti-corporate mobilisations, such as the CBF etc; taking up the education campaigns of inner-city institutions such as RMIT and the University of Melbourne; public housing, public transport and public health for local residents; issues around homelessness and drug addiction; and international issues.

Our lack of resources, nascent organisational structure and the overriding priority of the Aston campaign ensured that we could raise these issues but not campaign around them.

Even by running a paper campaign, however, we could effectively profile the Socialist Alliance. For a registration fee of only \$200.00 we could run two members as a councillor team under the name of "Socialist Alliance". The photos of our candidates, our group name and a 250 word statement was then duly posted out to 50,000 addresses, of which 30,000 were local residents. As part of the 250 words we could include our web address. This was basically the point of our campaign: to introduce the "Socialist Alliance" to these voters and generate some media interest.

### ***Our result***

On this minimal campaign alone, our number one candidate, Alejandro Rodriguez, received 255 primary votes. Other community-based groups received no more than 200 votes. Steven Jolly's "Putting People First" ticket

received a total of 1292 votes, although this included the preferences of teams like ours who were knocked out at earlier stages. Their number one candidate, Steven Jolly, received 455 primary votes. Steven Jolly's Team ran a very ambitious and thorough campaign which included site visits, doorknocking, leafleting etc. His superior vote is therefore an indication of the appeal we could generate in future local elections. It is also an indication of how highly we polled purely by being a publicly socialist formation.

### ***On the Campaign Trail***

Our candidates participated in two events. On the invitation of Steven Jolly's team we spoke at a "Meet the Progressive Candidates" public forum at Comrades Bar. Alejandro Rodriguez from our team, Gurm Sekhom from the Greens and Steven Jolly from "Putting People First" addressed the mostly inebriated throng. The event was useful in drawing in the other progressives currently outside the Alliance. Sekhom from the Greens proved very friendly, at one stage expressing the opinion that the Greens should join the Alliance. Steven Jolly was overtly very comradely, although the sectarian behaviour of his comrades indicates they hold false assumptions about us and are at present quite hostile towards us.

We also participated in the formal "Meet the Candidates" forum at the Town Hall. Amidst the suits and glossy corporate leaflets our stall stood out with its banners, T-shirts and unashamedly socialist propaganda.

During the campaign our candidates were interviewed on SBS radio, spoke at the Nike picket and the Launch of the Seat of Melbourne branch of Socialist Alliance.

### ***Relations with the Socialist Party***

By running in the MCC elections we have obliged the Socialist Party to respond to us as a political force. According to Jolly we have a 'gentleman's agreement' (fortunately I'm a woman so I guess this doesn't apply!) regarding the Federal election, but regardless what happens in the Federal Election, the Seat of Melbourne branch is a political reality in the CBD and surrounding suburbs: the Socialist Party can only lose by withholding from joining the Alliance.

When we discovered the opportunities offered by fielding candidates in the MCC elections

we originally intended to run for Mayor and Deputy Mayor, as an outrageous gesture to attract the media. An inaccurate report in "The Age", however, informed us that Steven Jolly intended to run for Mayor. We therefore decided to run for Council and endorse his campaign for Mayor. A week later, however, we discovered that he was running for Council. It was too late to change our candidate application so we had to content ourselves with the Council election. We arranged a meeting with Steven Jolly to express our desire to work together throughout the campaign. We suggested we run on a joint ticket and offered him the number one position. He rejected our offer but agreed to assist each other through the campaign.

As mentioned above we participated in a public forum at Comrades Bar on the invitation of Jolly, which indicates an overtly comradely relationship between two progressive forces. The comments of his comrades on that night indicate underlying hostility towards us. We have since discovered that Jolly thinks we are "spoilers" for participating in the MCC campaign. As our

250 votes were instrumental in his final result of over 1200 votes this appears an unfair accusation. Nor was our minimal campaign in any way a threat to his campaign which involved a full mobilisation of Socialist Party comrades and supporters.

### ***Gains from the Campaign***

We have clearly drawn the spotlight onto the Alliance. The local Leader newspaper has already rung us to enquire whether we are standing in other local elections. Our results in the MCC elections was the subject of a vitriolic attack by the Herald-Sun's bombastic commentator, Andrew Bolt (Herald-Sun, 26/07/01). Coupled with our other initiatives, such as the protest on the steps of Parliament House against the shooting of the security guard at an East Melbourne Fertility Clinic, the MCC elections have ensured we are appearing everywhere. Next time we will have the funds and resources to do media stunts profiling candidates, site visits, leafleting, paste-ups, speak-outs etc. which will ensure we evolve as a pole of attraction for those rejecting the corporate agenda.