

Australia: Statement on progress towards merger with Socialist Alternative

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The Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) held its third congress on 29-30 September. The RSP was founded in 2008, after a long struggle inside the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP), in defence of seeking to build a political party that publicly defends and explains revolutionary socialism and Marxist ideas as the foundation of its political work, alongside intervening in and contributing to campaigns that are fighting the exploitative, oppressive or discriminatory policies and practices of capitalism.

Since 2008, the small group of activists that make up the RSP have been endeavouring to decide the best way to achieve the formation, consolidation and growth of a party that can prioritise the public defence and explanation of revolutionary Marxism and help prepare the fight to overturn the system and build a new one. RSP members had already rejected the proposition that there were any quick fixes to achieve accelerated growth or sudden wider reach-out or “broadness”. An extended period of retreats and some defeats of the working class had resulted in a depoliticisation of society generally. Struggles against the predatory attacks or inhuman policies of the capitalist class still break out in Australia, but they are small, irregular and rarely sustained. This is the case despite the fact that a small but significant percentage of the people possess sentiments that oppose, or at least radically question, the inhumanity and injustice of the current status quo. The grubby, mean and greedy politics of the likes of Gillard and Abbott, reflecting the moral bankruptcy of the contemporary capitalist class and its politicians and the desperation of that class generated by the contradictions of late capitalism, will ensure that that sentiment grows.

The RSP has been continually testing to find the right path forward in this situation. It has made some mistakes and suffered some setbacks, but its members have remained active in a number of campaign areas, in building international links and maintaining its newspaper and website. We remain committed to doing whatever is necessary and useful to move towards creating the kind of Marxist revolutionary party of popular explanation and intervention that we envisaged from the beginning.

At this Congress, the RSP decided unanimously that it would step up exploring a merger with Socialist Alternative as the logical next step towards building a fighting, interventionist party that can also effectively publicly defend the ideas of revolutionary Marxism. The RSP has some not unimportant political differences with S.A. on various questions, such as on the nature of past revolutions and their outcomes. These differences are in some cases not merely historical, as in the cases of Cuba, Venezuela and Vietnam. However, it has become absolutely clear that the members of S.A. are also committed to building the same kind of party that publicly defends the heritage of Marx and Engels, drawing too on many of the best of those who followed in their path, such as Trotsky, Luxemburg and, most of all, Lenin. We believe that the existing political differences need not and should not prevent the building of a united revolutionary organisation.

The initial talks with S.A. have been conducted in a comradely and very constructive manner. The RSP Congress has resolved to build on these talks over the next months with the determination to do everything we can to bring about a successful merger. Wherever we can already take steps to

intermesh activities, we will be willing to do so. Of course, we continue to hold those views that are different from those held by S.A. Members of the RSP in the future will naturally continue to explain their views as individual members of a new united organisation, including publicly. Discussions between the RSP and S.A. have confirmed the usefulness and democracy of this approach.

There is nothing more precious to be struggled for than a world without exploitation and oppression and in which human beings can live in dignity and freedom and can, as part of a common social process, fully develop every individual potential. Given the anti-human and dictatorial character of the capitalist classes that dominate most of the world today, we know that creating that world will require a prolonged and determined fight. Perhaps in Australia today, where levels of struggle are low and society is managed in a way to keep it depoliticised, the opportunities will be for small steps, small gains, small wins. So be it. We keep going. We will do whatever is necessary to gather and organise with people who are also determined to build the kind of organisation the working class will increasingly need.

Direct Action — October 2, 2012

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http://directaction.org.au/statement_by_the_revolutionary_socialist_party_on_progress_towards_merger_with_socialist_alternative