

Resolutions of the Socialist Equality Party (Australia) Fourth National Congress

Support the International Coalition of Socialist, Antiwar and Progressive Websites Against Internet Censorship

21 April 2018

The following text is the third of four resolutions passed unanimously at the Fourth National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (Australia) held in Sydney from March 30 to April 2, 2018 (see: Resolutions 1, 2, 4). Greetings to the congress were delivered by delegates from Socialist Equality Parties in the US, Europe and Sri Lanka and the Socialist Equality Group in New Zealand. The incoming national committee re-elected James Cogan SEP national secretary, Cheryl Crisp assistant national secretary and Peter Symonds World Socialist Web Site national editor.

1. The Socialist Equality Party extends its full and active support to the initiative undertaken by the *World Socialist Web Site* International Editorial Board, to establish an International Coalition of Socialist, Antiwar and Progressive Websites Against Internet Censorship.

2. The US government's collaboration with Google, Facebook, Twitter and other giant technology corporations is aimed at restricting Internet access to socialist, antiwar and progressive websites. Other capitalist governments around the world are engaging in similar repressive measures. Along with intensified surveillance operations by state military-intelligence agencies, this new regime of censorship constitutes a dangerous and unprecedented global threat to freedom of speech and other fundamental democratic rights.

3. The WSWS has demonstrated that, since April 2017, Google has been manipulating the algorithms behind its search results to substantially limit traffic to

the *World Socialist Web Site* and other oppositional sites. This has been followed by steps in Washington toward abolishing net neutrality and actions by Facebook, YouTube and Twitter to censor posts from alternative news sources, as well as to control and monitor what content their users access.

4. In its Open Letter to socialist, anti-war, left-wing and progressive websites, organisations and activists, dated January 23, 2018, the *World Socialist Web Site* characterised the "invocation of 'fake news' and 'Russian meddling'" as fraudulent pretexts for what amounts to "political blacklisting."

5. The letter declared: "The threat to democratic rights is far-reaching and immediate. The development of the Internet in the 1990s created possibilities for a vast expansion in information sharing and world communications. But in response to exploding social inequality, growing popular discontent and heightened international tensions, the capitalist states and billionaire oligarchs, who own and control information, artificial intelligence and communications technologies, are transforming the Internet into a tool for state surveillance, dictatorship, private profit and war."

6. Imperialist wars are always accompanied by political repression, the surveillance, harassment and suppression of dissidents, especially socialists and their publications, and the censorship of free speech. Such measures are now being imposed globally, including in Australia.

7. The WSWS has taken a critical stand by assuming

responsibility for organising and coordinating resistance to this mounting threat to basic democratic rights. The SEP fully endorses the principles outlined by the WSWS as the basis for establishing a broad coalition against Internet censorship and surveillance:

Safeguarding the Internet as a platform for political organisation and the free exchange of information, culture and diverse viewpoints, guided by the principle that access to the Internet is a right and must be free and equally available for all.

Uncompromising insistence on the complete independence of the Internet from control by governments and private corporations.

Unconditional defence of net neutrality and free, unfettered and equal access to the Internet.

The banning and illegalisation of government and corporate manipulation of search algorithms and procedures, including the use of human evaluators, that restrict and block public visibility of websites.

Irreconcilable opposition to the use of the Internet and artificial intelligence technologies to carry out surveillance of web users.

Demanding the end to the persecution of Julian Assange and Edward Snowden and the complete restoration of their personal freedom.

Advocating the transformation of the corporate Internet monopolies into public utilities, under internationally coordinated democratic control, to provide the highest quality service, not private profit.

The fight against Internet censorship and the defence of democratic rights cannot be conducted through appeals to capitalist governments and the parties and politicians who serve their interests, but only in uncompromising struggle against them. Moreover, this struggle is international in scope and totally opposed to every form and manifestation of national chauvinism, racism and imperialist militarism. Therefore, those who are truly committed to the defence of democratic rights must direct their efforts to the mobilisation of the working class of all countries.

8. Recognising that such a coalition will involve a wide range of opinions and conflicting views, the WSWS has insisted that involvement does not require the acceptance of a single political line, stating “participating websites and organisations will be free to continue their own independent work.”

9. The WSWS will continue to advance the principles

and perspective of the International Committee of the Fourth International and its Marxist and socialist program, policies and analysis. It will fight for the understanding that the defence of free speech and all democratic rights, against the Internet censorship being carried out by powerful capitalist states and transnational corporations, requires bringing to bear the great power of the international working class in the struggle against imperialist war, the ending of the capitalist system, and the establishment of a socialist society.

The SEP will participate in this international campaign to expose government and corporate censorship of the Internet by:

Organising meetings and discussion groups, on the fight against Internet censorship, in work places, communities, universities and schools, involving workers, students and youth, and including principled journalists, academics, artists, IT professionals and Open Source developers.

Seeking collaboration, on the basis of the principles outlined above, with other organisations and individuals committed to defending freedom of speech and core democratic rights.

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>