

# Open letter to Socialist Alternative from Sydney Uni EAG

April 2009

To Socialist Alternative

Dear Comrades and Friends,

We write to express our concern regarding your disgraceful behaviour at Sydney University's rally and march organised by the Education Action Group in support of the recent NUS National day of Action over the Rudd labor government's inaction on education. Around 200 students marched from the university demanding fair income support, the scrapping of Voluntary Student Unionism, and no deregulation of universities.

We understand that small left groups may not be able to be involved in every progressive activity on campus, but your actions, such as tearing down posters and repeated hostile verbal exchanges with EAG members made it clear that the abstention of Socialist Alternative members from organising for the rally was not simply a matter of immediate priorities.

However your actions on the day of actively disrupting the rally were beyond the pale. The abuse of Labor left and EAG speakers on the platform, your attempt to force your way onto the platform then announce that you would not participate in what you characterized as a pro-government rally set a new low mark in left behaviour even by Socialist Alternative's standards.

It was the kind of intervention that we might have expected from Liberal Club members, not for members of a socialist organization. Your behaviour was particularly alarming as we believe that Socialist Alternative has boycotted NDA activities on other campuses across the country.

Many people in the Education Action Group are socialists and despite whatever doctrinal differences there may be, they have found a way of participating in collectives and contributing constructively to discussion and organizing action of various sorts.

By your comments on the day, we understand that you may be particularly distressed to learn that there are comrades in the Labor Party who consider themselves to be socialist and who are committed to over-turning aspects of the Rudd's anti-student government policies and even to fight for free education.

We would have hoped that the fight against VSU and the further deregulation of universities would have been supported by all socialist organisations. We will face more struggles against the Rudd government in the context of growing economic crisis - cuts to university funding, the continued roll out of the racist NT intervention, the prospect of more troops in Afghanistan and the implementation of the disastrous Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme -to mention just a few things. The co-operation of left forces can only help building a wider left alternative and strengthen the student and social movements.

Unfortunately we feel that your behaviour at the NDA was a setback for building a united campaign and is the kind of thing that can give the left a bad name. We hope this was a temporary aberration and that you will reconsider your actions and attitude to the EAG and that you can constructively contribute to actions in the future. We would be happy to have the opportunity to discuss this in more detail with your Sydney University students.

Signed:

Education Action Group, University of Sydney