

Manifesto of the Australian Socialist League 1887/8

Platform and Principles of the Australian Socialist League

The objects of the Socialist League are:

1. To foster public interest in the great social questions of the day, by promoting inquiry in every possible manner; to promote free public discussion of all social questions; and to circulate and publish literature throwing light upon the existing evils of society, and the methods necessary for their removal.
2. To uphold and maintain the principle of *Liberty, Equality and Fraternity*. By liberty we mean 'The equal liberty of each, limited alone by the equal liberty of all'. By Equality we mean 'The equality of opportunity for each individual'. And by Fraternity we mean that principle which denies National and class distinctions, asserts the Brotherhood of Man, and says 'the world is my country'.
3. To endeavour to alter from its foundation the prevailing system of production and distribution; to seek to overturn the reign of Capitalism and Land monopoly. The land, capital, machinery, factories, workshops, stores, means of transit, mines, all means of production and distribution of wealth, must be declared and treated as the common property of all. Every man will then receive the full value of his labor, without deduction for the profit of a master, and as all will have to work, and the waste now incurred by the pursuit of profit will be at an end, the amount of labor necessary for every individual to perform in order to carry on the essential work of the world will be reduced to something like two or three hours daily; so that each person will have abundant leisure for following intellectual or other pursuits congenial to his nature.
4. The regulation of all commercial transactions between individuals upon the just and equitable principle of making the cost to the seller the measure of price, or consideration, to the buyer or receiver; and not as at present, making price dependant upon the incidental value of the commodity or service. In other words to make all exchanges of wealth or service on the principle of equal labor for equal labor-time for time-cost for cost-burden for burden.
5. To foster Mutual Confidence and Fraternity amongst the working people of all ranks. To remove the elements of war; distrust and discord caused by competition for profits, and class exploitation of the workers. To abolish standing armies and all vestiges of militarism and coercive laws; the people themselves being the best defenders of their own rights, they therefore can decide on peace or war.
6. To advocate and achieve the abolition of all monopolies, imposed authority, and despotisms which destroy the freedom of the individual and which thereby check social progress and happiness.
7. To promote the formation of branches of the Socialist League whenever and wherever practicable.

James Normington Rawling Collection, ANU Archives of Business and Labour, Item N57/330, 'ASL Manifestos, rules and constitution' (Rawling's handwritten copy). Reprinted in David Lovell, *Marxism and Australian Socialism before the Bolshevik Revolution*, pp.251-252