

Australian IYSSE clubs hold anti-war Annual General Meetings in Melbourne and Newcastle

Our reporters
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International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) clubs recently held successful Annual General Meetings (AGM) at the University of Melbourne and the University of Newcastle. The AGMs ensure the ongoing presence of the IYSSE on the campuses as registered clubs, providing the only genuine socialist, anti-war and revolutionary perspective to students.

The IYSSE, the youth and student wing of the Socialist Equality Party, has had a presence at both campuses for well over a decade. The University of Melbourne is one of the country's most prestigious universities. The University of Newcastle is the largest tertiary institution in the working-class area north of Sydney.

Following the official business of the AGM, the newly elected club presidents delivered an opening political report and there was lively political discussion on the IYSSE's perspective of building a global anti-war movement in the working class against Israel's assault against the people of Palestine and Lebanon, and the broader eruption of imperialist war.

Almost \$100 worth of literature was sold by the IYSSE across the two campuses after the meetings.

Both meetings were held just days after the marking of a year since the ethnic cleansing campaign began. IYSSE members spoke on the horrors that have been inflicted over the past 12 months, which have seen the murder of possibly 200,000 Palestinians and thousands of innocent Lebanese people. The meetings explained that Israel's genocidal onslaught is being funded, supported and facilitated by the imperialist powers, led by the US and including the Australian Labor government of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

In Melbourne, 25 students attended the AGM both in

person and online on 11 October. The meeting was titled, "No to the US-Israeli war in the Middle East! Build the socialist anti-war club!" Attendees included students originally from countries throughout Asia-Pacific region.

In his opening report to the meeting, University of Melbourne IYSSE club president Morgan Peach said: "Let's be clear. We are witnessing the opening shots of World War Three. The last World War ended with the use of nuclear weapons. The Third, if not prevented, will see their use on a far broader scale. Civilisation, and life on the planet as a whole, would be destroyed. If we're to have a future, young people need to fight against war."

The Gaza genocide was not an isolated episode. It was expanding into a regionwide war, including the onslaught against Lebanon and preparations for a US-Israeli war on Iran. In Europe, the US and NATO have been in a proxy war with Russia for more than two years and have repeatedly crossed "red lines" that could lead to nuclear war. In the Indo-Pacific, the US and its allies, including Australia were preparing for a catastrophic conflict with China, aimed at ensuring American imperialist hegemony.

During the discussion at the Melbourne meeting, a student asked for further explanation on what could be done to halt the war drive.

IYSSE members stated it was necessary to understand the source of war, in the contradictions of the outmoded capitalist system. The turn to war was the imperialists' response to the contradiction between a unified global economy and the division of the world into antagonistic capitalist nation-states.

The response of the working class had to be to unite

internationally, on the basis of its common class interests. All of the issues confronting workers, from war, to poverty and massive social inequality, were global in scope, the IYSSE speakers stated. They all posed the necessity for a reorganisation of social and economic life by the working class, to meet social needs not the profits of the corporate oligarchy.

Peach said that workers and young people would be propelled into struggle. The genocide had already led to the development of a mass anti-war movement involving tens of millions globally. But, he explained, pseudo-left groups such as Socialist Alternative in Australia have sought to limit this movement of workers and youth to moral appeals to the Labor government to end its complicity in the genocide, and university administrations to sever ties with Israeli-linked weapons manufacturers.

That was a deliberate trap, advanced by the pseudo-left because they represent the interests of an affluent upper middle-class, whose interests are bound up with capitalism itself. Pseudo-left groups were tied by a thousand threads to Labor and the union bureaucracy, the chief enforcers of the program of the corporate elite and the war drive.

Contrary to the fraudulent claims that protest alone would halt the genocide, it was deepening, as was the war drive globally.

“Meanwhile protesters are slandered as antisemitic and police-state measures are used to suppress anti-war sentiment,” Peach said. “The Australian Labor state and federal governments have been at the forefront of this global assault on democratic rights of anti-war protesters.”

The events in Melbourne and Newcastle were held under conditions of a stepped-up attack against anti-genocide protesters. This included the brutal police arrests of three students at a peaceful anti-genocide protest at Western Sydney University (WSU) earlier this month.

Peach explained that the events at WSU highlight the futility of plaintive appeals to the same government and university managements complicit in genocide and attacking protesters.

The bankruptcy of appealing to the capitalist parties and governments was also central in the discussion at the University of Newcastle IYSSE’s AGM held on 16 October. One student asked if the Greens represented

an alternative to the Labor government and its support for genocide.

IYSSE members explained that while the Greens have postured against the genocide, they are a pro-war party. The Greens defend capitalism, the source of war. Notwithstanding their criticisms of Labor’s support for Israel, the entire perspective of the Greens is to form coalitions with the Labor Party. At the same time, the Greens openly back other fronts of the developing global war, including the US conflict with Russia.

A critical component of building a genuine anti-war movement is the fight for the complete independence of the working class from the capitalist political establishment, especially those parties that sow confusion such as the Greens and the pseudo-left.

In his report, club president Youp van Deurzen emphasised that, “The essential cause of war lies in the capitalist nation-state system, the global financial interests of the giant corporations and the relentless drive of the American ruling class for world hegemony.”

He added, “Imperialism is powerful, but it is not invincible. There is a force in society which is stronger. That force is the world working class.”

Van Deurzen ended his report with an appeal to students to turn away from pressuring bourgeois governments and towards the working class: “The IYSSE is fighting to take this program to workers. Join us in speaking with workers at the docks, factories, hospitals and other workplaces.

“I encourage you all to see your attendance at this meeting as a crucial step in joining the struggle for an international, socialist perspective against capitalism to stop the genocide and nuclear war!”



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