

Workers and students speak at SEP election meeting

Our reporters
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Several workers and students who attended the SEP's election meeting in Adelaide on July 13 gave interviews to the WSWs after the meeting.

Kevin, a computer programmer, explained that he had read the *World Socialist Web Site* for a number of years. Asked about the persecution of American whistleblower Edward Snowden, he replied: "Edward Snowden, Bradley Manning and Julian Assange are wonderful and brave people."

Kevin explained: "What they've done in showing what happens behind the scenes is an amazing thing ... these people have given concrete, material examples of what really goes on. They are not criminals. All they're doing is showing that we don't live in a democracy, like people say we do." He added: "The WikiLeaks cables showed that the US government bullies and manipulates other countries for its own interests."

Asked about the reinstallation of Prime Minister Rudd, Kevin replied: "I think today's meeting explained what was going on behind the scenes, and explained why the Labor leadership turmoil has been taking place." He continued: "The Labor party has supposedly been a party of the working class and for a large part of its history it actually slightly improved workers' conditions, but then after a certain point, it was not helping them and actually worked with the ruling elite against workers."

Kevin commented on the question-and-reply about why the SEP would not consider unity with pseudo-left or Stalinist political tendencies. He said: "Having read the WSWs, the understanding of who different groups are, what they stand for, and what they've done historically is really important. It gives you a good barometer of what they're going to do in the future. That was clearly described in today's discussion.

"The question is: unity with whom? Serious groups

that don't have a historical framework for what they're doing will be peeled off by the establishment and manipulated; opportunist groups will just do what benefits the ruling elite. These tendencies clearly turn people back toward the system."

Kevin continued: "In Egypt and Brazil, discontent builds up, it crystallises and then something happens ... At the critical point, these groups who are opportunistic take control of a social movement, drive it into dead ends, and the whole thing falters and collapses. If these movements go on long enough, the policies of these opportunist organisations will result in demoralisation."

Sam, a visual effects worker, said: "I think the most important thing that the meeting covered was that you are an international party. If you look at the problems in this country as well as elsewhere, they are international problems. I think that is the way to address things. Obviously, it is capitalism that's causing the problem and workers need to unite to go against that."

Sam continued: "In my industry a lot of the work is being off-shored overseas. If the workers could unite, in Australia, China, India and Taiwan, we could work together for a better quality of living for all of us."

Asked his opinion about the Labor Party, Sam said: "The Labor Party is there to attack and undermine the working class. Personally, I lost any faith in the Australian political system after Rudd was kicked out. There was no election, there wasn't anything. It was just, 'oh yeah, your leader is gone.' Then it was changed again. It's absurd, that's not democracy.

"It's not that the Liberals are any better. They're all part of the same system. At the end of the day, the banks and the corporations run the world. I guess they are at the top of the tier and it's their global organisations that are running things. It's about time the workers turned around and stood together against

that.”

On Edward Snowden, Sam said: “It was no surprise to anyone to hear that the government has been spying on everyone behind our backs for so many years. I remember when they were trying to put on a broadband filter [to block individual web sites]. The Internet seems to be the last bastion where people can have freedom of speech. Nations across the world are trying to crack down on that. It’s a method of control.”

Toby, a mechanical engineering student, said: “I thought the speakers were very knowledgeable in terms of the history of the class struggle. Generally I found the meeting very educational, and I’m keen to read more and learn more about what the party has to say.”

He continued: “I was struck by the interpretations of world events. The speakers explained that under capitalism, workers in different countries are forced to fight against each other for wages, rather than uniting against the ruling class. I don’t think the major parties can address the real issues facing ordinary people. I tend to agree with a socialist and Marxist perspective, that we’re heading to a state where the ruling class aren’t going to be keen to try to raise the living standards of the workers. There’s a continuous decline, and the workers are going to have to take matters into their own hands and say, ‘we actually need more than what you’re giving us’.”

Toby commented: “The perspective of the Socialist Equality Party seems pretty clear in terms of where you stand on the issues of the US manoeuvring in the Asia-Pacific region and a danger of a war between the US and China. I agree with the party’s perspective on austerity. It’s not fair for the workers to foot the bill for what the corporations have done. I see that the threat of dictatorship is a real problem, and that countries that are currently democratic could revert to some form of dictatorship.”

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