

Workers and youth discuss political issues raised at SEP meetings

Our reporters
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Workers and youth who attended Socialist Equality Party 2013 election meetings in Perth, Geelong and Brisbane on Sunday, July 28, afterwards spoke with *World Socialist Web Site* reporters.

Tim, a first-year biology student, said that he came to the Perth meeting because he “met the SEP at university, and wanted to find out more. Politics affects all of us. My parents don’t support any political parties, but we do discuss social equality, and bigger issues at home. I’ve always considered myself left-wing, and I’ve just finished reading the Communist Manifesto.”

Asked about the content of the meeting, he replied “I’m a bit uninformed, so it was good that the meeting dealt with the specifics of a number of issues. It concretised the seriousness of the issues we are facing.

“I hadn’t heard about the preparations for war against China. When the SEP first mentioned it, I was dumbfounded and almost didn’t believe it. Now I can see that the tensions between the US and China are rapidly building up. If there was a conflict, young people would be sent to war. They would bring in conscription, and you would either go to jail or to war.”

When asked about the role of the Greens and other parties standing in the elections, Tim said, “I think the Greens are to the left of the major parties, but Australian politics is centre-right, so even though they might be slightly more left-wing, they’re still quite right wing. I don’t see them as much of an alternative.”

He expressed agreement with the SEP’s analysis of the role of the pseudo-left tendencies such as Socialist Alliance and Socialist Alternative: “One thing that I’ve noticed about the SEP which I agree with is that it bases itself on the roots of Marxism and emphasises class struggle above identity [politics]. A lot of organisations have combined leftism with feminism, and socialism has become blurred with issues of

gender, race, and sexuality. Of course these are important, but it becomes muddled, and you can’t build a united movement to overthrow the system based on individual identities.”

Mary, a university student, said: “I hadn’t heard much about the central role Australia would play in any future conflict between the US and China. It’s a scary prospect, and it makes me think about my young friends who would be thrown into the frontlines.

“I haven’t looked into the policies of the major parties in much detail, but I know that voting Labor or Liberal won’t solve anything. Before the meeting I thought that Kevin Rudd was removed in 2010 because of the opinion polls. The speakers explained that the US played a key role in his removal.”

She continued: “I completely support the SEP’s defence of Edward Snowden. What he has done is heroic, and I pity the difficult plight that he is facing. I always thought that the US was carrying out spying to some degree, but now we know the massive extent of it.”

In Brisbane, Sam, a warehouse worker, said: “I’ve been reading the *World Socialist Web Site* for three years now. I came to the meeting after reading the article on Mike Head being interviewed by 4BC in Brisbane. I understand capitalism more because of the WSWWS. The most important part of the meeting for me was its explanation of the developments in the United States, with the bankruptcy of Detroit and how the working class is being made to pay the crisis.”

Three international students from China—Louis, Brian and Aran—attended the meeting in Geelong. Asked about the issue of war between China and the United States, Louis commented: “America is trying to dominate the world. The Australian government just follows America.”

They were sceptical about the possibility of a war between the US and China, raising the economic interconnectedness of the two countries, and the catastrophic implications of any conflict. Brian, however, noted that tensions were escalating. “America is trying to stop their rivals, they want to dominate the world,” he said. “They have some policies against Chinese trading. They try to stop different countries developing.”

All of them supported the defence of Edward Snowden. Louis said: “Snowden is a brave man. He tried to show the world what the American government is doing. Unfortunately he has no nationality now, he has no passport. I think he is threatened by the American government. I don’t think any country will let him stay in their country.”

Aran said: “The Chinese government has many secrets and Chinese people know that. This time, it is a ‘democratic’ country—America—that is collecting data from the Internet. They pretend to be a democratic country, but Snowden has shown how America tries to control their population.”

On the SEP’s perspective of unifying Chinese, American and Australian workers on the basis of a socialist program, Brian answered: “Yes, a new force. Maybe we can build a new force to unite together to make a different society, and which will have enough power to make something happen. I come from Beijing. Most of the young people have different ideas from the government, but they don’t have a method or way to make something different. It’s hard. I think that people in the government want to cover up things to benefit themselves.”

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