

Youth and workers denounce Syrian war plans

Our correspondents
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WSWS correspondents spoke to some of the people who participated or joined in the Socialist Equality Party/ International Youth and Students for Social Equality rallies in Sydney and Melbourne on Saturday against the preparations by the US and its allies for war against Syria.

At Liverpool, in Sydney, **Alex**, a 58-year-old worker with a Syrian/Lebanese background, heard about the rally from SEP campaigners earlier in the morning, while shopping with his two sons. He listened intently to the speakers. “The rally is a good way of explaining to people who don’t know what’s going on around the world,” he commented.

Alex said people were unconvinced by Washington’s pretext for war: “It’s all built up on lies over the past years. You can lie once or twice, but how much can you lie? People aren’t stupid. People don’t accept wrong things... The Iraq war was all set up; it was a lot of propaganda to make people believe their reasons for going to war. But now the truth has come out, it’s all rubbish.”

Alex said “Obama did a favour for himself... pulling back from bombing Syria... It’s a good thing that he didn’t do it and I hope he will never do it again because you can talk to people and find a proper solution.” He added: “The Australian government is just a puppet, like sheep. Whenever Bush or Obama say a few words, the next day we hear the same music from the Australian government.”

Reflecting on the underlying causes of war, Alex said: “There is plenty of food around the world to feed people. It’s not fair to kill a hundred thousand people and then give those who survive a few crumbs. They should have got rid of capitalism a long time ago but the governments don’t listen to the people who voted for them. They don’t give a damn about them.”

Reed, a 17-year-old high school student, explained why he participated in the rally. “The American push for war in the Asian region has brought my attention to this. It makes me think that we are leading ourselves into a bigger situation where the possibility of World War III will occur. Now there is much talk about how World War III will be the end of humanity because of advanced weaponry, things such as nuclear weapons and chemical warfare.

“This really does strike doubt into the path that humanity is going to take in the future—whether we’ll become an extinct species and destroy the whole planet with us. The only way that I can see us coming out of this situation is by taking the power ourselves. The problem with capitalism is that the ruling elite is unconcerned about the masses, the people. They’re more interested in their own economic advantages. There’s no consideration of the working class or things such as education and cost of living.

“The rally today showed me there is more public interest in the war on Syria than I realised. Passers-by were stopping, becoming interested in what the speakers were saying and then reading the leaflets the SEP was handing out. It’s a start to becoming politically conscious about what’s happening around the world.”

Chris, 32, a forklift driver, stopped to hear the speakers at the rally. Commenting on the pretext of attacking Syria because of the Assad regime’s alleged use of chemical weapons, Chris said: “You can’t fix war with more war. They want a new war as part of the ‘economic machine.’ They can then continue controlling the people. Obama has said they are there to protect their interests—for energy. They need to prop up their dollar, so their economy can keep going.”

Chris added: “This war is also about diverting the

focus of people from other issues. Radiation is still coming out of Fukushima, and they don't want people knowing about that or thinking about it. If you get people to focus on Syria and chemical weapons, they don't think about other things."

Asked for his response to the rally, Chris said: "I like what your organisation is doing. You are trying to connect people. We have to stand up as one. We can't say the government is going to do something. We have to do it."

Solomon, originally from Ethiopia, said the number one issue in the world was "humanity" and "the need to stop the killing." He said the rally was "very nice" because its concern was for the poor people, not for those with the power.

Asked about the role of the American government, Solomon commented: "America is looking for the money only, and uses its power for killing. The people with the money support America, and they don't care about anyone. America wants to take over countries, even when they don't want it to."

Solomon was critical of Barack Obama. "Obama is looking for himself and for those he needs to pay his bills. How are you going to help the people in Africa, or Afghanistan, or anywhere, by killing people? How is that democratic? People are being killed every day in these places. How is that creating democracy? Obama is not looking after the world, he is trying to dominate it."

In Melbourne, **Ajit**, a service technician, saw the rally and decided to join it. He explained: "I've been following the situation in Syria for a while ... Syria is just a way for the US to get through to Iran, which is the real target, and a way to get full control around the region. It's not just about Syria, there's a whole other play that's going on as well... Iran is one of the few remaining countries in the Middle East that is not under Washington's control. So for the US to gain full control of the oil in the Middle East, Iran is a big key to that."

The US-Russia brokered chemical weapons agreement would not stop a war, Ajit said. "I think the Obama administration will be pushing every means possible. For them this is just a setback. They will find other ways, create another smokescreen to try and get in there. There's too much riding on this for them."

Ajit added: "Everyone should have the right to

education, health, clothing, food. So if governments are taking away those rights, straight away it's in direct relation to everyone's human rights... I think we're moving away from the capitalist era, and that's what needs to happen, that shift to the workers, the people. I think that's what we will see eventually. There are so many mass protests now, like you saw in Egypt, a mass overthrow of a whole government. So what you're doing is very good."

Alex, a university student, also stopped to listen to the speakers. Earlier this year he attended a meeting organised by the pseudo-left Socialist Alternative organisation, promoting the regime-change operation in Syria as a democratic revolution. "But from what I've seen on actual raw footage of what's happening in Syria, it doesn't look like it's for democracy," he explained. "I've seen lots of raw footage from *liveleak.com* that showed the FSA [Free Syria Army] murdering Syrian army soldiers. If they were for democracy they wouldn't do that—they would capture the soldiers and bring them to justice. They've also used Sarin gas."

Alex continued: "I think it's a war for oil, for money. The economy of the US is doing too badly; they're so desperate to get more of what's supplying their economy—and that's oil." He added: "I have been following Snowden, Assange and Manning ever since they each first leaked information. They're the three people I most support. In their revelations they've opened the eyes of the public to what kind of global police state we're living in."



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