

Workers and youth discuss the war in Syria and Iraq

Our reporters
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WSWS reporters interviewed workers, students and youth who attended the recent Socialist Equality Party public meetings opposing Australian participation in the new US-led war against Iraq and Syria. The meetings were held in Liverpool, Dulwich Hill and Auburn in Sydney, as well as in Melbourne and Newcastle.

At the Socialist Equality Party's Auburn meeting, **Clara**, 25, a University of Western Sydney student and casual worker, said: "The meeting clarified the reasons why the Australian government is supporting the US in the war. I don't agree with these decisions but I'm clearer now about why they are doing it.

"If war does erupt, it affects the working class worst of all. There will be more unemployment, more inequality... Instead of war they should think of something more productive."

Lara from Macquarie University explained: "I came today to learn about history and get a fundamental basis of what's going on. The topic of today's meeting is a very sensitive one, especially for me since I come from the Middle East, and helped me understand the conflict and underlying reasons for US militarism.

"Australia should not be involved in this war and I think the perspective of the establishment is wrong, including the Greens. They are doing it for their own profitable interests and it is aimed at ousting Assad and then they will attack Iran.

"I agree with the International Committee resolution that we have to educate the working class and prepare it for the coming struggles against war. They need to understand that pressuring the government isn't going to stop war."

At Liverpool, **Samih**, a building worker, said: "I'm a 100 percent opposed to Australian troops being sent to the Middle East. Australia shouldn't be involved in any

of the wars organised by the US. Qatar and Saudi Arabia are also deeply involved. We've had no say in this. The decision was just announced by Abbott and that was it.

"The real reason is to get rid of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad because he has some opposition to US aims in Middle East. America wants him out because he's allied with Iran, Russia and China. The US wants a puppet government in Syria.

"The US and Australia have no right to interfere in Syria, which is supposed to be a sovereign country. Syria has oil reserves but is not a member of OPEC so there are many financial reasons why the US wants to get rid of the Assad government.

"The SEP is right when it says that we're heading toward a world war and that this is being caused the economic crisis in the US."

Hasan, originally from Iran, commented: "Nick Beams explained a lot of important things, in particular, that we face a world system in the process of breaking down and that this is the cause of war in the Middle East and everywhere else.

"The United States is using ISIS to create a pretext to get support from other countries like Australia and once again invade the Middle East. This is all about oil and profits and the hegemony of the US. The US has done this in the past and is doing so again and again.

"The SEP is the only party able to tell me what is really happening in the world, how it is impacting on me and other workers, and what we must do. I also learnt today that the only way to stop war is through the building of an international party and this party must focus its attention on educating the working class."

Abdul, also from Iran, said the SEP meeting provided "a wider picture of what is really happening internationally. It made clear to me that I have to

explain these issues to other people because the media and capitalist governments are trying to hide the truth.

“I also agree with what Nick Beams said about religion and the national question. Marx said the workers of the world must unite and today’s meeting showed me that the SEP deeply believes in this policy.”

At Dulwich Hill, **Abbas**, a researcher and journalist, said: “What is happening in Iraq is an alliance between Wahhabism and US imperialism and its allies.

“I think your perspective of uniting the working class internationally against capitalism is a very good idea, a good intention and any person who knows how imperialism works will subscribe to the idea of uniting internationally.”

John, a shipping industry engineer, said: “Since the 2003 illegal invasion of Iraq it’s become increasingly obvious to me that there is a global nexus around the military and the big companies in major countries—particularly the US—that will benefit from the exploitation of resources in the Middle East and other parts of the world.

“After World Trade Centre had just come down and there was all this ‘shock and awe’ nonsense, the major governments lied to convince their populations they had to go to war. This had some traction but since then the effect has more or less worn off.

“They [the governments] lied so much that they’ve used up all their mileage and now they’re looking for new excuses to justify the latest invasion.”

In Melbourne, **Kane**, a Year 11 high-school student, commented: “I’m glad I came, because the party is clarifying issues such as in Syria, Ukraine, and even flight MH17. In Syria, US imperialism and its allies are trying to pretend they’re fighting against ISIS as some evil force, when they actually they brought it into being through their funding, training and supplying of arms.

“It’s a regime-change operation in Syria, just like it was in Libya and in the past in the Middle East. ISIS and related groups are just tools for that and it looks like now it’s gotten out of hand.

“Labor and the Greens seem like puppet parties. All the main parties represent the same thing—the interests of America, imperialism, and the ruling class here. Any country in alliance with the US has the same positions on these issues, because they have the same interests.”

In Newcastle, **Sam**, a University of Newcastle student, said the meeting revealed “the relationship

between the new US war in the Middle East and its operation in the Ukraine. It explained that this was part of the strategy to establish US domination over the Eurasian land mass and its resources.”

“The real target of the US in Iraq and Syria is not ISIS. The whipping up of hysteria about ISIS is to externalise tensions within the US itself and overcome the anti-war sentiment there. The aim is to somehow blame the Syrian regime for ISIS, to give the US a cause to carry out attacks to replace the Assad regime and extend its foothold in the Middle East.”



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