

Students and workers discuss SEP's election campaign

Our correspondents
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WSWS correspondents spoke to audience members at meetings called by the Socialist Equality Party last week as part of its New South Wales state election campaign.

Michael, a university student studying early childhood teaching, attended the Wyong electorate meeting. It was important, he said, that both speakers explained that social austerity programs was being carried out internationally and that this “could only be opposed by workers all over the world uniting. It is not a national but an international question.”

“The explanation of the role of Syriza in Greece was really relevant and compelling. I didn't know that much about the situation in Greece until this meeting. James explained that here was a party that won government saying it would end the attacks on workers' conditions, and then it does a massive backflip.

“It shows you cannot get conditions, such as proper health care, education and decent jobs, under a capitalist system that is opposed to this. The SEP election campaign is important because it provides an opportunity to discuss serious issues facing people, such as the drive to war, the destruction for the environment and the assault on the right of refugees.”

Rebecca, a single mother living on the Central Coast, said she was impressed that the SEP candidates spoke about “the historical and international experiences of the working class.”

“The experience in Greece is important. Syriza fooled workers into voting for it on the basis it opposed austerity and then made an agreement to continue with it. I think there are lessons in that for workers in Australia.”

“James reported that members of the Greens and other organisations have already held a meeting here to

discuss the formation of a Syriza-type organisation. Under conditions of growing unemployment and the destruction of social conditions workers must be made fully aware of the experience in Greece so they are not vulnerable to supporting the establishment of such an organisation that will only betray them.”

The state election will not solve anything for the ordinary people, Rebecca said. “Workers do not really have faith in the main political parties but at this stage do not see an alternative. So I think the SEP election campaign is really important. It introduces workers to socialism and assists them to become politically aware to build a party that represents their interests.”

Jack, a musician who attended the Summer Hill meeting, said: “The Syriza government is a strategic experience for workers in Australia and other parts of the world because they tried to work within the system. This failed so why would we go down the same road?

“I think we have to be critical of what the pseudo-lefts claim they are going to do from the beginning and develop the consciousness of the working class because even if they say they are left or socialist they are still working within the capitalist system.”

Asked about the SEP, Jack said, “Given the way things are playing out I think it's silly not to consider some kind of alternative like the Socialist Equality Party, like Trotskyism, like the Fourth International socialism. It makes sense.”

Kristian, a part-time university lecturer attended the Bankstown meeting. He said that two things had “crystallised” for him at the event. “Something that became particularly clear to me—and I don't know why it took me so long to realise this—is that there is an international financial class ...

“Capital is international and the only thing that can stop it is the international force of workers who can

resist that power which furthers its interests at the expense of the vast majority of people.”

Kristian said the meeting also clarified for him that socialism meant democratic workers’ control of the global corporations. “It means extending democracy beyond the faux political arena to all areas of your life,” he said. “That concept had not crystallised for me either, so that is two things that have been made clear for me at this meeting. That’s not bad! That doesn’t happen every day of your life.”

Steven, a postal worker, attended the Penrith meeting. “The SEP has put in a lot more effort into finding out the background of Syriza. I wasn’t aware of their history. I read the headlines and a few paragraphs and apparently I have read what they want us to hear. From the SEP’s examination and analysis it is obvious that it’s a blind, a way to make Syriza look right socially.”

“The capitalists control 98 percent of the world and what they want to happen will happen, unless we do something about it. It’s that simple. I’m becoming politically active because I am sick and tired of people seeing bad things happen and turning away.”

“When I first came across the SEP and its Marxist analysis, I read bits and pieces. I hadn’t yet strung it together and had questions: What happened to communism? Why is communism a dirty word? Why is Stalinism equated with communism? This is totally wrong. Stalin buried socialism.”

Steven said that the SEP meeting had “firmed up” his commitment—“a commitment to more study and seeing it from a different perspective than when I walked in the door. I’m only just beginning to read the right material. The answers I got today made sense.”

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