

Youth and workers in Australia speak about the Greek crisis

Our reporters
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Workers, students and youth attending SEP meetings in Melbourne and Sydney on Sunday spoke with *World Socialist Web Site* reporters about developments in Greece, the role of Syriza and other issues.

Craig, a 23-year-old boilermaker from Granville in Sydney's west, said he came to the meeting, his first public SEP event, because he was "concerned for the people of Greece and their future, and the economic exploitation of the working class by the capitalist elites all over the world.

"The working class really has to understand that the pseudo lefts don't represent the working class at all. I think that's why the WSWS was so accurate in predicting what Syriza would do. Alexis Tsipras was never interested in reducing austerity to begin with. It wasn't a mistake that he put on a referendum and then did the exact opposite of what the people were telling him to do, because he is not there to listen to the people but to protect the interests of the banks."

Speaking of the experiences of his generation, Craig said: "We see the decay of manufacturing. There is less and less investment in manufacturing in Australia. Thousands and thousands of jobs are going everywhere ... and there is always an increase of the cost of living, but never in wages."

Craig opposed nationalism, "We have to fight for the right of the Chinese workers. You can't say we are going to defend the 'Aussie workers' and 'Aussie jobs' because we're all human and we're all in the same boat..."

"The only way we can achieve a better life for workers is by uniting workers all over the world against the capitalists. Once we have the masses of workers thinking and acting as one that would be a force that would be unstoppable... Workers have to see that it's not the Chinese and not the Americans, or the Germans.

Capitalism is global and the enemy is the capitalists."

Simon, a diesel mechanic from Melbourne, previously worked in the mining industry.

"I've been following what's been happening with Greece and I found the meeting informative. The comparisons with Germany, between what Hitler [in 1940] said and what's happening now, are so relevant. Except now, as the speaker said, Germany is doing it with banks, not tanks.

"I asked about nationalisation of the banks because I wasn't sure what that is. I've still got a lot to learn in regards to what Marxism is but it's really fascinating. I hadn't read much, but I've been reading the WSWS for about two months. When I found the website I thought it was amazing. The articles were really well written, and you were saying things that nobody else would say. They were things that I saw and thought to myself, 'That's what I think!'

Josh, 20, an education technology student from Parramatta, said: "The reports today showed me that in Greece, everything's going down the toilet. People are living in poverty and they shouldn't be. In Greece, people voted against austerity, they wanted something better, which is how I feel. What Syriza did—claiming that they would oppose austerity and then reneging on their promise—was a real kick in the teeth for the people who voted for them..."

"The report and the questions which followed were very helpful in getting to understand things. I asked how Apple, Microsoft etc., avoid paying taxes. It was a real eye opener to be told that all they have to do is shift their money here and there to avoid paying taxes."

Jo, a student teacher, originally from Newcastle said the discussion on the Trans Pacific Partnership was important. "This deal was signed in secret—nobody really knows what it is about—but it is going to have a

big impact on the economy and people's lives," she said.

"The decision of the Syriza government to ignore the referendum vote was wrong and the austerity measures are now even more extreme than before the referendum. This is going to make it impossible for Greek workers to live. How can they deal with this after all the other cuts during the last few years. I think that Greece should have voted to get out of the EU.

"The speakers made clear that it's a serious situation in Greece and that we're heading towards a revolutionary situation. This is definitely on the agenda," she said.

John, a retired draftsman, has been reading the WSWS for about three years. "Being a socialist-minded person I can understand that capitalism is defunct and doesn't work. Obviously the Greek people, for want of another word, are being screwed and forced to pay for the 2008 breakdown. The workers make everything but now they have also got to pay for it, again.

"I completely agree with the WSWS analysis of Syriza. It is a pseudo-left organisation that wants to exist within the capitalist system. They don't see the overthrow of capitalism as being an ultimate goal. It is same as the Labor Party here in Australia and lots of other similar organisations around the world."

Stephanie, a cleaner from south-west Sydney, said she was shocked by the social austerity measures in Greece. The Syriza government, she said, had "taken advantage" of the Greek workers and drew parallels with the social austerity attacks on Australian workers.

"I think this is going to happen here. Maybe not in exactly the same way as in Greece but wages are already dropping and they're cutting weekend money, penalty rates. We're supposed to be going forward not backward and I'm getting scared. What's going to happen to us? We have to pay rent and for all the things we need. It's not just that, but the new generation, the kids, how are they going to live? Where will they find jobs?

"We should get together and fight. Maybe that would open the eyes of the stupid government and the unions too, who are trying to get people to work for less. I used to work for \$21 and now I'm working for \$17. I don't understand how they could do that but they did. We're going back thirty, forty years when my grandmother used to work long hours. She used to fight

the government for better things and that's going to happen here. Either we're going to fight or we're going to destroy one another."

Robert, an engineer from Newcastle, said: "The meeting made clear to me that the developments in Greece are a class problem and that the people who are in charge in Greece are interested in profit. They don't understand or care what this is doing to the world or the people of Greece, because it doesn't affect them."

Commenting on Syriza, he said: "Your class orientation is determined by your actions and Syriza's actions make clear that its orientation is not for the working class. What it has done directly benefits the bourgeoisie.

"The working class of Greece has been hoodwinked. I'm not sure what the way out would be but something else needs to be done. Clearly you can't just vote and expect a change. There has to be a change in the way the system operates."



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