

Australian workers and youth discuss SEP election campaign

Our reporters
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Workers, youth and students attending the Socialist Equality Party's post-election meetings spoke to WSWWS reporters about the party's policies.

Peter, a disability pensioner, was enthusiastic about the discussion at the SEP public meeting in Brisbane: "It was a very good meeting because it addressed two very serious issues that affect absolutely everybody, issues that the mainstream media does not seem to cover. Free Julian Assange for one! Once the governments get him down, there's no more journalism. Journalism will be dead when they've got Assange.

"The second issue, as shown by Trump's '10 minutes to midnight' threat against Iran, is the build up to war. That's very real. People ought to know that. Their living standards are falling so that more money can be wasted on more weapons of destruction."

Commenting on the SEP's campaign to defend Julian Assange, he said: "I believe we can free Assange because of the sheer numbers that we have got in the working class. We should outclass anything that the government can hold against us. Government has become far too important to leave in the hands of governments alone!"

Peter agreed with the SEP's analysis of Labor: "I've seen the Labor Party and the unions working hand in glove at the expense of the workers throughout my entire working life. Whether it was union compliance with big business, or big business following union advice to keep us at minimum wage, minimum hours and then minimum livelihoods, while they got fatter and fatter. It shows that those two are in cahoots with one another, at the expense of the working class.

"We do need a global movement of the working class against capitalism. Capitalism is not necessary. Humanity existed for thousands of years before the first

coin was ever minted. Karl Marx once pointed out that those who own the tools don't use the tools and those who use the tools don't own the tools. So that has to come to an end now. We've seen a lot of misuse of tools by very rich people who didn't even know what the factory is doing."

Amgad, a truck driver who met the SEP during the election campaign in Broadmeadows, attended the Melbourne meeting. "I came here for Julian Assange," he said, "but it's good to know what is going on. I think many people don't know about the issues of Assange. The media said that he is a rapist, that is how he is portrayed. It is profitable for the media to do that."

William, a truck driver from Frankston, also spoke out in defence of Assange: "I have been aware of Julian's situation since the beginning—with the publication of the Iraq and Afghanistan war logs and the massive exposure of corruption by various politicians and big business people stealing ordinary people's money and putting it away. It's clear to see why the powers that be want to get him.

"I attended anti-Vietnam war rallies and that's where I started to build my political perspective. I realised they were lying to me back then as a kid, so the "Collateral Murder" video did not surprise me. What I find amazing is just how vehement the ruling elite has been against anti-war figures. I shouldn't be surprised. They want to scare journalists. This is all about intimidating journalists and making sure, if they become privy to any kind of information about how the deep state is operating, they will be too scared to actually publish it."

Asked about the Australian government's role in the persecution of Assange, William replied: "I am disgusted. I didn't realise its role back when I

supported Julia Gillard. I had thought she was a breath of fresh air in some ways. But the fact that she turned her back on an Australian in such a big way in 2010 is unforgivable. The Labor Party learned in 1975 that if they tried to take Australia in an independent direction, they could expect a coup d'état from the US and the CIA. Rudd and Gillard knew they couldn't stand up against the United States."

Lewis, an RMIT sociology and psychology student, said: "The meeting felt very inclusive. There was quite a lot of clarity. The push for people to educate themselves and not just be told what the problems are is very important. Primarily, the issue of Julian Assange is what drew me to the meeting. The most urgent issues are Manning, Assange and the fate of whistleblowers and journalists around the world, and that needs to be dealt with quickly.

"We also need to stop corporate interests dictating how society is run. I have had an interest in socialism for many years. There is always that underlying fear of what has happened in the past, which is why we need to learn from history."

In Sydney, **Haydn**, 24 and currently unemployed, said: "I was very impressed with your speakers at the meeting. I asked what the SEP was going to do about youth unemployment. The speaker answered me bluntly and put it how it is. She didn't sugar coat it but highlighted that young people of my generation are suffering and that there is no way out for us under the present system.

"The SEP has a strong link to the outside world, not just about what's happening in Australia. It explains things from a world perspective, not just a country perspective or an individual perspective, and with that you can start to change things in our own country to match the reality in which we live.

Danielle, 40, a psychology student at Swinburne University and a mother of three children, attended the Newcastle meeting.

"This meeting made it clearer to me why Assange is being persecuted, and how it relates to the state of politics in Australia and around the world.

"America is trying to manufacture consent to a war with Iran by executing false-flag events because people are now more distrustful of the mainstream media because of Assange. People's eyes have been opened to the corruption that's out there because of Assange

and there's no going back.

"I think the fight by the SEP to free Julian Assange, and the call for an international fight for his freedom is really important. We need to start seeing ourselves as a collective movement. I think if the working class was to join together across countries then this would be a powerful force against the corruption of the ruling class..."

"One of the things I took from this meeting is that Australia is not a collective "we"—there are two groups in society: the ruling class, which is actually a small minority; and the working class, which is workers all around the world."



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