

Australia: Victoria University IYSSE holds successful AGM

Our correspondents
11 October 2020

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) club at Melbourne's Victoria University (VU) held a successful online Annual General Meeting (AGM) on October 2. Over 25 people attended the event called by the youth wing of the Socialist Equality Party, including workers, youth and students from VU, the University of Melbourne, RMIT and La Trobe, as well as several others from regional Victoria.

Despite the limitations on physical political activity resulting from Melbourne's stage four coronavirus lockdown, the IYSSE club was able to comfortably exceed the quorum requirement of 10 students. The club has now fulfilled its reaffiliation requirements after first being affiliated at Victoria University at the end of 2018.

"We had a strong response from students that the club should remain on campus, especially under the present conditions," returning president Jason Wardle said.

"Youth and workers are worried about their future," he added, "and the IYSSE is the only organisation that aims to politically intervene with a genuine socialist perspective, to provide them with education, leadership and direction."

After the new executive was elected, Wardle delivered a report on Russian socialist revolutionary Leon Trotsky, which was received warmly. Wardle referenced aspects of a six-part series by WSWS international editorial board chairman David North on "Trotsky's last year." He briefly reviewed Trotsky's role in the Russian Revolution and his analysis of the period leading up to World War II, including the rise of fascism and, most importantly, Stalinism—the counterrevolutionary movement that ultimately assassinated Trotsky 80 years ago.

In the discussion following the report, participants

made contributions and asked questions on the historical issues of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky's life and contemporary issues including the danger of war, the US elections and President Donald Trump's openly fascistic campaign.

Laila, a 20-year-old student studying psychology, who was elected club secretary, said she found the meeting "eye opening."

"The report on the 80th anniversary of Trotsky's assassination was interesting. How Trotsky had such a big following, I personally never knew of him before I joined the IYSSE," she said. "I was never taught about him, or Lenin, or the Russian Revolution at all. I'm not surprised. It's not on the program. They teach what they want to teach. It's left up to the individual to learn about this. If not, they're stuffed."

On the US election, Laila said, "I think Trump is the textbook definition of a dictator. He's not willing to give up power—that's the scary part. He'll do anything in his power to keep that position. He's told his followers to stand outside the polling booths to scare people. That's illegal."

Laila also said she was concerned about the possibility of world war, stating, "I think the question of war is not that far-fetched. A full-on war wouldn't surprise me. I think it would be very detrimental. Technology and weapons are very advanced and would destroy us completely. I don't think we'd be able to recover—it would be a dystopian world."

Musa, another IYSSE member, said he thought "the meeting was very good. There were more people there than last year and different faces."

"The good thing was that there were a few discussions on Lenin, Trotsky and what was going on," he said, adding "the warning that Lenin made about Stalin was important—there was a question about that."

Musa noted that the AGM “was political—not just a dry meeting, not just a dry report on activities, but comments and discussion on Stalin and Lenin and that was a valuable part of the meeting. I want to research this more.”

As an immigrant from Afghanistan, Musa raised concerns over the US elections and the danger of war. “The Democrats—they are not much different to Republicans, I think. I can’t see any difference. They are not different for me,” he said.

“Trump made a comment on Afghanistan: ‘we can wash Afghanistan off the map of the world in one week,’” Musa continued. “This is the way they look at people, in this case Afghanistan, but no matter where.” He added that Joe Biden “said that Afghans don’t like peace, they have no peace in their history, they always fight each other, so we should not care about peace in their country, because this is not what they want. Again, this is the way they look at people, so how can they be different from each other, they are not different.”

Aden is studying a Bachelor in Criminal Justice and is returning as the IYSSE’s vice president. He also spoke in support of the club, saying, “I think that if people are interested in an alternative to capitalism they have the right to have that on campus. The young people are heading this, and they should have this information and opportunity to speak honestly.”

On the rising war tensions between the US and China, Aden said, “Trump was calling and still is calling it the ‘China virus.’ The US want to build their presence here [in the Asia-Pacific], but then China builds up also. Here it seems Australia wants to keep the US happy, they are our military partners, while China is our biggest trading partner. If they are going head to head what is going to happen here?”

He also raised concerns over the US elections, saying, “Trump is dismantling the post service just so he can make it ridiculously hard to vote during the pandemic. It’s a shit show at the moment. The government and Trump just seem to be concerned with getting into office, while the whole country is in crisis. That debate between Trump and Biden was probably the worst ever.

“I saw Trump going after Biden’s kids, interrupting him over 100 times, it was like a primary school debate. I saw the speaker ask Trump to denounce the white supremacist group and he wouldn’t do that. It

was ridiculous how he appealed to the Proud Boys. We aren’t far from it here [in Australia].”

The IYSSE club at the University of Melbourne is campaigning to build its AGM, also on the life and assassination of Leon Trotsky, this week. The student union at that university has placed anti-democratic AGM requirements on clubs which will only serve to prevent smaller and alternative clubs from remaining on campus. We urge students to attend the AGM and help build the IYSSE club at the University of Melbourne to ensure that students continue to have access to a Trotskyist perspective on campus. The AGM will be held via GoToMeeting. The details are:

IYSSE University of Melbourne *Annual General Meeting*

2 p.m., Friday, 16 October, 2020

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/371803773>

You can also dial in using your phone.

Australia: +61 2 8355 1050

Access Code: 371-803-773



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact