

IYSSE wins support at Australian university orientations from students opposed to war, “herd immunity” policies

Our reporters
22 February 2022

Over the past fortnight, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) has campaigned at a number of orientation events where it has student clubs, including Macquarie University in Sydney, Newcastle University in regional New South Wales and Victoria University in Melbourne.

The youth and student wing of the Socialist Equality Party won a strong response to the revolutionary, socialist and internationalist perspective it advanced. The IYSSE was the only club on the campuses raising opposition to the US-led war preparations against Russia and China, which are actively supported by the Australian political establishment, and the “let it rip” pandemic policies that subordinate health to private profit.

Students beginning university, aged only 17 or 18, were very receptive to the IYSSE’s perspective. There was widespread opposition to the prospect of a major war, concern over the ongoing Omicron surge and a social crisis that afflicts increasingly broad layers of young people.

The IYSSE explained that all of these issues were a product of capitalism, an outmoded system in global crisis. Students and young people had to turn to the working class, the revolutionary force in society, and take up a fight for socialism based on the lessons of history.

The IYSSE is holding a major meeting, entitled “As the pandemic rages on—The threat of World War looms: Take up the fight against imperialism and for international socialism!” We urge students and youth to register for the meeting and take part on Saturday March 12 at 4 p.m. (AEDT). Promote it among your friends and join the IYSSE!

Below are interviews with some of the students the IYSSE spoke to at recent orientation weeks.

Ronan, a 17-year-old journalism student at University

of Technology in Sydney, said: “I think that the COVID response isn’t actually dictated by the medical science. To a degree it is but for the most part it’s more determined by the economy. So, the governments are trying to reopen the country, reopen the borders. And I think that is generally just to stimulate the economy so they can continue their wealthy lifestyles.

“It’s not about the common good of the people. It’s about the people on top, I would say politicians, wealthy billionaires. They always seem to be ahead of everyone else, even though the rest of the world is so far behind. They really should be helping to bring their fellow humans up but instead they exploit them for profit, all the time.”

As a journalism student, our reporters asked for his opinion on the persecution and show-trial of WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange. “I think he should be free. He needs to be free because he isn’t in contempt of anything. He’s working for journalistic freedoms. So, if the government is keeping national secrets, then, if that is the national security, how secure is your nation if you are having to keep secrets from your own populace?

“The United States has been militaristic for many, many years now. It’s amazing to see how much they have continued that trend. We should try to unite people. We shouldn’t be trying to kill them. It just saddens me almost. It just feels wrong in so many ways.”

Asked what he thinks can be done to resolve social ills, Ronan answered: “I genuinely think that equality and equality for the people would be definitely the right move. So, socialism is a good system, and it works, and it’s been proven to work in many cases. But it doesn’t make people rich. It just brings up the entire populace. So, the 1 percent, or even smaller than the 1 percent don’t want it. And if they don’t want it, they have the power to throw

around and stop it. As a populace we need to unite. We need to unite, and we need to make things happen. We need action. You can talk about it all you want, but there needs to be some form of action done.”

Asked by a reporter what social force would do that, he said “I would think, just the working class. The people who are always downtrodden, everybody who is just going through a rough time. If you are at work and you are just paid minimum wage by an employer who expects you to be doing every possible thing that you can. They expect maximum effort for minimum pay. How is that fair? It isn’t.”

Asked about Trotsky and his role, Ronan said: “I did modern history in school, so I know at least a little bit about what he stood for. He stood for the working class. He stood for the same ideals that Lenin did, unlike his opposition, Stalin, who actually said he stood for Leninist ideals but instead was more a totalitarian dictatorship.

Youp spoke to the IYSSE at the University of Newcastle, in the regional industrial city north of Sydney.

Speaking of the “let it rip” policies, he said: “Initially I understood why there was the argument for making it endemic, given the nature of COVID being very widespread. But in reality what’s happening is a huge number of working people are getting sick, which is making things worse for the economy, and things are falling apart.

“We don’t need to infect everyone. Plus there’ll be a lot of deaths. I think that it could get to the point where it will become extremely challenging to come up with a vaccine against a constantly evolving virus that is allowed to spread. It’s unsustainable.”

Asked about his interest in socialism, Youp said, “Capitalism has some very obvious flaws, the 1 percent getting richer at the expense of everyone else. You end up looking for an alternative, and socialism is very enticing. Having an interest in science and technology I recognise that a lot of scientific achievements occurred in the Soviet Union. To list just a couple they put the first man into space Yuri Gagarin, and Pyotr Ufimtsev who came up with the mathematics behind stealth aircraft.

“I have ended up spending a lot of time researching the Soviet Union and the Russian Revolution online (you could call me a Wikipedia warrior of sorts!). We don’t get any education about it in school, which is strange because it’s a massive thing that dominated people’s lives for an entire century. It’s immensely important but I know next to nothing about it. I am interested in hearing other people’s perspectives so that’s why I signed up.”

Amelie, a psychological science student, also at the University of Newcastle, opposed the official pandemic policies: “As soon as [Prime Minister] Scott Morrison put us into lockdown and then as soon as the economy started slowing down, it was like, ‘I don’t really care if Australian citizens are dying, we need the economy to start back up again.’

“Dominic Perrottet came straight in, he was so against the Delta wave lockdown. Then when he came in as the New South Wales state premier, straight away, he got rid of the lockdowns and then we saw the infections went up from hundreds a day all the way up to 80,000 plus cases a day, and having over 400,000 active cases at a given time recently. You can tell they just don’t care about anyone, anything but money, capital, big business. It is so devastating to see that so many people had to suffer because the government does not care at all.”

When told about the death toll in the past two months surpassing the total death toll of the past two years, she said: “That is absolutely horrific, it’s like their whole attitude is like we can see that you are all dying, but we are making money so we don’t care.”

On the US-led drive to war with Russia over Ukraine, Amelie stated: “There is such a lack of effort by so many governments to be diplomatic, even in Australia, Scott Morrison is like, ‘we’ll pull all our people in the embassy out [of Ukraine], let’s hope nothing happens.’ This is on top of us putting so much money into defence. You have all your citizens struggling so much, they have got virtually no welfare support, we’re not getting free rapid antigen tests, tens of people are dying from COVID everyday here and you are putting that much wealth into the defence force?

Asked why she thinks governments are turning to war, Amelia responded: “Money. It’s all about what is in their best interests economically.”



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