

Speech to the December 10 IYSSE anti-war rally

The US-led war plans against China and the building of an anti-war movement in the Asia-Pacific

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The following are the remarks by Evrin Yazgin to the December 10 rally, “For a Mass Movement of Students and Youth to Stop the War in Ukraine!” organized by the International Youth and Students for Social Equality.

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As militarism shrouds the globe, the Asia-Pacific region is becoming a cauldron of war planning.

In 1957, popular fiction writer Nevil Shute wrote *On The Beach*. The 1959 film adaptation of the book was set here in Melbourne.

The book tells of a catastrophic nuclear war in the northern hemisphere. Human civilisation has been wiped out everywhere except in Australia. However, in a matter of months, the nuclear fallout will mean radiation will kill the last remaining survivors here as well.

On The Beach had a huge impact. It made clear that no one would escape the consequences of a nuclear war. This is even more true today.

In the coming war, Australia is not some distant and uninvolved party. Australia and New Zealand have been placed, behind the backs of their populations, on the front lines of US-led war plans.

The US and its allies are already engaged in an imperialist war against Russia. The conflict in Ukraine, however, is a prelude to a far broader and deadlier confrontation with China, which American imperialism views as the main threat to its global hegemony.

US war plans against China were qualitatively deepened with the Obama administration’s “pivot to

Asia” and then further accelerated under Trump. Under Biden, tensions with China are reaching a fever pitch. Despite the threat to humanity, Washington is pressing ahead with its plans to reduce nuclear-armed Russia and China to semi-colonies. If this threatens nuclear war, then so be it.

Increasingly, militarism and war dominate the politics of this entire region. Imperialist pacts such as the Quad, AUKUS, and the Five Eyes have been set up to surround China in a web of US-dominated economic, intelligence and military force. Any governments or political leaders that are seen to stand in US imperialism’s way, or even enter discussions with China, are threatened, intimidated and removed from office.

Australia’s central role in the US-led war drive against China has been prepared under successive governments—Liberal-National Coalition and Labor alike. Australian imperialism is not blindly following the US war plans. It is functioning as the most aggressive attack dog in the confrontation with China. This is motivated in part by Australia’s own predatory interests in the South Pacific, which it has oppressed and exploited for more than a hundred years.

In 2011, Obama announced the “pivot to Asia” from the floor of the Australian parliament, underscoring the centrality of Australia to the US war plans. The Greens-backed Labor government of Julia Gillard signed a secret military agreement, providing for the ever-greater integration of Australia’s armed forces into the US war machine.

This has been deepened by every government over

the past decade, and is now accelerating under the Labor government of Anthony Albanese. His first act as prime minister was to jet off to Japan for May's Quad summit, and his government has revealed plans to station US nuclear-capable B-52 bombers in Australia.

Australia is set to acquire a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines, as well as hypersonic missiles and other offensive weaponry that would play a key role in a war in the Indo-Pacific.

As in other countries, the Australian and New Zealand governments will spend hundreds of billions on the military while claiming that there is no money for education, health care and other essential social services.

In fact, war abroad goes hand in hand with a war against the working class at home. This has been made abundantly clear by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Once hailed as success stories for mitigating the spread of the virus in 2020 and 2021, the governments of Australia and New Zealand fully embraced the murderous "let it rip" policies at the end of last year.

This profit-driven campaign has led to a monumental health crisis.

Nearly 90 percent of Australia's over 16,000 deaths from COVID have occurred since the beginning of this year. In New Zealand, nearly 98 percent of deaths from the virus have occurred in 2022.

Thousands more are suffering the severe disabling effects of Long COVID.

There is massive opposition among youth and workers to this program of war, austerity and misery.

The Australian ruling elite is attempting to suppress this opposition through an assault on democratic rights. This finds sharp expression in the efforts to silence the IYSSE on the university campuses.

At two separate universities, in two different states, student unions—working hand-in-glove with the pro-corporate university managements—have seized upon technical issues to disaffiliate IYSSE clubs.

This is no accident. The universities are being transformed into centres of militarism and war. Every major university in Australia has established ties with the military and arms manufacturers to help prepare war. And many of them host pro-war think tanks that exist solely to promote imperialist propaganda.

At the same time, Australia has been at the forefront of a McCarthyite campaign against supposed "Chinese

interference." No evidence of this has ever been provided. But governments and the media have launched filthy attacks on Chinese international students, Australians of Chinese descent and those who question the plans for war.

The IYSSE stands unequivocally against this reactionary campaign and the war aims that it serves to legitimise.

We say very clearly, Chinese workers and young people are not our enemies. They are among our most important allies in the fight to prevent a nuclear catastrophe.

The IYSSE appeals to students and youth in Australia, China and throughout the Asia-Pacific region to contact us and take up the fight for international socialism, against militarism and war.

Together, we must build an international anti-war movement, based in the working class and fighting for the abolition of capitalism. That is the only way to prevent the disaster that this system has in store and to guarantee a future for humanity.



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