SEP (Australia) candidate for NSW election Max Boddy campaigns at Sydney university

Our reporters
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The Socialist Equality Party's candidate for Bankstown in the New South Wales (NSW) election, Max Boddy, campaigned at Macquarie University in Sydney during orientation week. Boddy spoke to students about the SEP's election campaign and the fight to build an international anti-war movement of students and workers.

Many students were concerned about the escalating threat of global conflict, and agreed young people need to take up a fight against war. They also raised the increasingly difficult conditions workers and youth confront, as the cost of living soars. This situation is being exacerbated as governments devote vast and ever-growing sums to the military, while slashing social spending and wages.

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Boddy spoke to **Will**, who had met the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) a few days earlier, joined the club and returned to the table for further discussion. He said, "my opinions on the war were more along the lines of what the media portrays, the unquestioning support of Ukraine. But since I've read some of your anti-war articles, I absolutely agree that imperialism expands a country's borders to keep up with the capitalist agenda."

Prior to meeting the IYSSE, Will did question the war: "I did some research on the Vietnam War and other proxy wars, especially Afghanistan in the 1980s. It was funded directly by the Americans. In Vietnam you had the capitalist south and the communist North. The useless bloodshed was the result of imperialism. I see parallels to today.

"They are putting all this money into defence spending, how can it go to public programs like housing, which is definitely in crisis? Housing prices are out of control. Electricity and gas prices are going up. This was also caused by the war because of all the gas shortages from Russia. There is a big correlation," he stated.

On the question of an anti-war movement uniting youth, students and workers Will said, "I believe workers are the backbone of any country. If workers don't like what is going on in the country we go on strike, we stop it. We have to unite on the common consensus: We don't want perpetual warfare, we don't want to waste our lives, we don't want the world to become a hellish wasteland, even if they don't use nuclear weapons.

"I think students should do whatever they can to fight against war. All the land and the resources should all be together for one beneficial cause, not separated into national states," he said.

Noah, who also signed up to join the IYSSE, said "the situation in the Ukraine is abhorrent, with real atrocities. It's not just a Russia-Ukraine situation. There is a whole international conflict surrounding it. There is a push for Russia by NATO and the US."

"The government is spending on the military and supporting the conflict in the Ukraine, but there are a lot of injustices nationally that are not being addressed. For example, education. My mother is a teacher in rural Australia, and I hear a lot about the struggles she faces. Not just her, but the entire school system has a lack of funding and a lack of support. Of course, there is also housing and the cost of living in general, rising food prices.

"I try to be optimistic about life, but for young people there is a level of pessimism looking at the future. While I come from a privileged upbringing, there is a real level of social misery globally."

Boddy raised that the party looks to the future with revolutionary optimism and drew out that the same

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conditions which give rise to war give rise to its opposite. He pointed to the mass strike action of workers internationally.

"That's really interesting, because I heard about the strikes here, especially when I was in high school and had a parent in the education sector and the health strikes due to COVID. But I'd heard nothing of the international strikes in France and the UK.

"It's a big problem. The media seeks to protect the interests of the capitalist ruling class. But their ideas and ideology have no real strength to it when people look at them critically. If they were as strong as they pretend to be, there would be no need to hide it.

"I do think young people should be adopting a socialist and anti-capitalist viewpoint and I think more people, especially youth, are. That is one of the things that give me an inkling of hope for the future," he said.

Ishaan, an international student from India, spoke to Boddy about the role played by the US in the war against Russia in Ukraine and prior conflicts. He said: "The US has spread out their military everywhere in the world, Afghanistan and everywhere. They say they are giving a hand to other countries, but there is always something in exchange. The US is playing offense."

Ishaan was concerned about the escalating threat of global conflict. He said: "There are many ways World War III could happen, and Ukraine and Russia, where there has been fighting for a year now, could be a major reason.

"Seven or eight countries have nuclear bombs. Nuclear war could be the end of the world—the radiation could be passed down for years."

Ishaan agreed with the IYSSE's call for young people and workers to build an anti-war movement. He said: "Students should fight against war. It's about freedom, fighting for our rights."

Contact the SEP today to join the campaign!

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