

Australian IYSSE holds meeting protesting political censorship at Macquarie University

Our reporters
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On September 7, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) hosted a meeting on campus opposing the ongoing political censorship of its club by Sydney's Macquarie University management.

The meeting was called by the IYSSE in Australia in opposition to the university's stonewalling despite the club's exposure of the false claims used to reject its affiliation months ago. The IYSSE, the only anti-war and genuine socialist club on campus, has fulfilled all requirements for official club status at Macquarie University including holding a successful Annual General Meeting on May 3. The university has refused to affiliate the IYSSE, however, on the fraudulent grounds that it shares the same aims as the pseudo-left Macquarie Socialists.

Several dozen workers, students and youth attended the September 7 event, titled "End political censorship at Sydney's Macquarie University! Affiliate the IYSSE!", either in person or watching it via livestream. Participants in the meeting included students from Macquarie University, as well as those from La Trobe University and the University of Melbourne in the state of Victoria, and the University of Newcastle in regional New South Wales.

Others who watched the livestream were from the United States and New Zealand, highlighting the event's international significance.

Chairing the meeting, Socialist Equality Party (SEP) assistant national secretary Max Boddy began by emphasising the COVID-19 safety precautions undertaken by the IYSSE to keep in-person participants safe amid the ongoing global pandemic.

"Despite the claims by capitalist governments the world over, the pandemic is not over. The 'let it rip' policies have meant COVID-19 continues to spread and infect millions internationally, now mutating into newer, more deadly and vaccine resistant variants," he noted.

Boddy stressed: "The IYSSE joins the SEP and the *World Socialist Web Site* in fighting for an internationally coordinated strategy to eliminate COVID-19. We are the only club on campus fighting for this program."

Elle Chapman, coordinator of the IYSSE in Sydney, was the first speaker at the event. In her contribution, Chapman noted that the ongoing refusal by Macquarie University management to affiliate the IYSSE is an attack on the club's democratic

rights.

"However, what we are stressing is that very fundamental and broad issues are at stake," she continued. "This is not just an attack on the IYSSE, as significant as that would be. It's an attack on the fundamental democratic right of students to politically organise on campus, and even to hold the widest political discussion free from the interference of management."

Above all, Chapman raised that the reason the IYSSE was being blocked from affiliating is that it represents the only genuine anti-war club on campus, amid a pro-corporate and militarist transformation of universities across the country.

The September 7 meeting was the first on-campus event held by the club since it hosted a significant anti-war meeting on April 4—less than two months before its affiliation was rejected by Macquarie University management. That meeting was part of an international series held by the IYSSE in eight countries.

"[T]his is a pre-emptive attack on widespread anti-war sentiment. Amid the deepest crisis of capitalism in generations, the ruling elites are pursuing policies that are threatening a global military catastrophe. Already, war is underway in Ukraine," Chapman said.

She pointed to the fact that the IYSSE internationally has come under attack for its anti-war and socialist perspective, including in Germany, Canada, the US and New Zealand, as well as in Australia.

The main speaker, IYSSE national convenor Evrim Yazgin, spoke via video link from Melbourne.

Yazgin's report began by stressing: "The attacks on the IYSSE here at Macquarie University and internationally take place amid a crisis of global capitalism which threatens another world war. Youth and students are in a fight for their very futures which are being threatened by the imperialist slide toward nuclear Armageddon."

He noted the IYSSE's principled stand in opposition to the US-NATO proxy war in Ukraine against Russia. The IYSSE's opposition is based on the scientific analysis of the WWS, the publication of the world Trotskyist movement, which has shown that the war has nothing to do with "defending Ukraine" and has everything to do with the geostrategic interests of US and European imperialism.

"We oppose the invasion of Ukraine by Russia from the

socialist left, not the imperialist right,” he said.

Yazgin emphasised that the US-led war against Russia was one prong of a broader war that Washington is preparing against China, which it views as the chief threat to American capitalism. He went through the role that successive Australian governments have played in placing the country, behind the backs of the population, on the front lines of a potentially catastrophic US-led conflict with China. In particular, Yazgin detailed the role being played by the Labor government of Anthony Albanese, which is further entrenching Australia’s integration into US war aims in the Indo-Pacific including through the AUKUS military pact with the US and UK.

Yazgin explained that the same capitalist crisis driving the ruling elites internationally toward war is propelling a resurgence of working-class struggle which has revolutionary implications. He pointed to the experience of the 1917 Russian Revolution which precipitated the end of the First World War.

“The emerging movement of the world working class and radicalisation of youth has not yet developed into a conscious anti-war movement. But the basis for that is there. The critical issue is that of political clarification and perspective, which is precisely what Macquarie University management is trying to stifle by blocking the IYSSE,” Yazgin said.

The meeting concluded with a lively question and answer period. One student asked the speakers why the IYSSE was being targeted and to elaborate on its perspective to end imperialist war.

During the discussion, a university worker and member of the recently established Macquarie University Rank-and-File Committee spoke about the fight of staff against the National Tertiary Education Union’s ramming through of a retrograde enterprise agreement with management that will see staff’s wages and conditions further degraded. The staff member linked this with the IYSSE’s fight on campus and the need for a unified struggle of university workers and students.

Another attendee asked about the IYSSE’s position on the Labor government’s referendum on an indigenous Voice to parliament, which is falsely put forward as a mechanism to alleviate the oppression and impoverishment of Aboriginal people in Australia.

Max Boddy pointed to the SEP statement, “For an active boycott of Australian Labor’s Voice referendum!” which had been published on the WSWs that day.

“We oppose [the Voice] because it in no way is going to ameliorate the conditions of Aboriginal people,” Boddy said. The fact that the Voice is being promoted amid the drive to war in the region, he continued, is “to revamp Australian nationalism, and to cover over the fact that there is a division in society that is not race, but class.”

Boddy and Yazgin both spoke on the IYSSE and SEP’s call for an active boycott in opposition to both the official campaigns for a ‘Yes’ and a ‘No’ vote in the upcoming referendum. This opposition, they stressed, is bound up with

the understanding that the only way to improve conditions for the working class as a whole, including Indigenous workers—as the most oppressed section of the working class in Australia—is the fight against the capitalist profit system.

After the meeting, IYSSE members spoke further with the young people who attended.

One international student at Macquarie University said “I’m against the United States’ involvement everywhere. In the Middle East especially, because I’m from South Asia.

“The US is behind the war and they are putting Ukraine at the forefront. The European Union is behind the US too. Everywhere, the US is illegally invading countries. They are spending a lot of money on war. There was a military tent on campus during my university orientation. I approached them and asked, ‘Why are you here?’ They said, ‘We want students to be a part of the military.’”

The student opposed the university’s attempts to block the IYSSE’s ability to fight for its anti-war perspective among students.

“Maybe the university is influenced by the government and that’s why it’s not affiliating the IYSSE or allowing students to be a part of this organisation. But I really want to encourage everyone to be a part of it. I want Macquarie to end the censorship.”

Over 650 have signed a petition to demand that the IYSSE be affiliated. Add your voice to the petition and send statements to management, copied to the IYSSE.

Get in touch with the IYSSE to find out how you can be involved:

Email: iysseaus@gmail.com

Facebook: facebook.com/IYSSEaustralia

Twitter: @IysseA

Instagram: @iysse.aus

Note: Under conditions of compulsory voting, which makes it a crime to urge a boycott of the Voice referendum itself, the SEP calls on workers and youth to register their opposition by casting informal ballots and join our active boycott campaign in the lead-up to October 14.

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To contact the WSWs and the
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wsws.org/contact