

Western Sydney University IYSSE holds successful AGM opposing Gaza genocide

Our reporters
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The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) club at Western Sydney University (WSU) held a successful Annual General Meeting (AGM) on October 26. It was held as part of the IYSSE's campaign to mobilise opposition to Israel's unfolding genocide in Gaza, and the broader eruption of imperialist militarism all over the world.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting was held in a hybrid format, with students able to take part in person at the university's Parramatta South campus, or online. More than 20 people attended overall, including workers, youth and students from WSU, University of New South Wales and University of Technology Sydney.

The quorum requirement of 10 current WSU students was exceeded, a new executive was elected, and the IYSSE club's aims to advance a socialist and anti-war perspective on campus were adopted unanimously. Re-affiliation of the club at the campus in working-class Western Sydney is an important step in the IYSSE's international fight for a global anti-war movement of youth and students.

In the weeks preceding the meeting, IYSSE members and supporters spoke with hundreds of students at the university. In particular, the club won enthusiastic support for its condemnation of Israel's genocidal assault on Palestinians and the complicity of Australian, US and world governments. Students also responded positively to the IYSSE's opposition to the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine and US-led preparations for war against China.

The IYSSE's principled opposition to all imperialist war, including the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, and US-led preparations for war against China, has led to censorship of the club by university administrations in multiple countries. This week, Humboldt University in Germany banned the IYSSE from holding an event entitled "Stop the Genocide in Gaza." At Macquarie University in Sydney, management has refused to re-affiliate the IYSSE club despite it having met all requirements.

Following the formalities of the AGM, returning club President Zach Diotte invited Max Boddy, assistant national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (Australia), to give a

report on Israel's onslaught on Gaza and the urgent tasks it poses for students, youth and workers internationally.

Boddy noted that "the Hamas-led popular uprising on October 7, which resulted in the death of 1,500 Israelis, did not come from nowhere." Citing remarks by David North, delivered a day earlier at the University of Michigan, Boddy explained that this explosive eruption was "rooted in objective historical events and political conditions that made such an event inevitable.... Those who suffer oppression cannot be expected, during a desperate rebellion, when their own lives hang precariously in the balance, to treat their tormentors with tender-hearted courtesy."

The uprising was seized upon by the Israeli regime as a pretext to carry out "collective punishment" against the people of Palestine, with the backing of the US and imperialist powers worldwide.

Boddy denounced the role of the Australian Labor government: "As bombs rain down on women and children, Albanese and his ministers proclaim that Israel has a 'right to defend itself.' This is of a piece with Labor's support for US-led wars around the world."

Boddy explained that the atrocities being carried out by Israel in Gaza are one component of a broader military escalation: "The US is now threatening war against Iran. Biden has just allocated \$105 billion for conflict with Russia, conflict with China and support for Israel's onslaught. That is a program of global war."

This goes hand-in-hand with deepening attacks on the living standards, wages and social rights of the working class worldwide, as ever-increasing sums are diverted to military budgets.

This ruling-class program of war and austerity is already meeting powerful opposition from workers around the world, who have rallied in their hundreds of thousands to oppose Israel's genocide and the broader drive to war.

"The worldwide demonstrations are a critical milestone in the development of a mass anti-war movement," Boddy said in concluding, "but they must be deepened, expanded, and, above all, oriented to the working class and based on a

socialist perspective.”

Following the report, there was a lively discussion, including on the connections between the imperialist aims of the US in Russia and China and its complete backing of Israel, and on the common interests of Jewish and Palestinian workers, as expressed in mass protests and strikes carried out in Israel earlier in the year.

The following resolution was passed unanimously:

This meeting of the IYSSE condemns the genocide being perpetrated against the Palestinian people by the Zionist State of Israel and its imperialist backers. The includes the Albanese Labor government, who has joined with the Liberal/National Coalition to give his full backing to Israeli regime.

Over the last three weeks, Israel has conducted endless war crimes including the mass bombing of civilians, killing between 300 and 400 people every single day, and the deliberate starvation and dehydration of the population. Over 5,000 Palestinians have been killed, 2,000 of them being children.

At the same time the US, via its proxy, Israel, is attempting to provoke a wider war with Iran. Israel has begun bombing Lebanon and Syria and the US is flooding the Middle East with troops and weapons, including in Syria and Iraq. US President Joe Biden has called for a \$105 billion increase to fund what is increasingly emerging as a third world war.

The IYSSE, with its fellow clubs internationally, resolves to direct the millions of anti-war protesters towards the only social force capable of bringing an end to war, the international working class. The IYSSE also resolves to arm workers and youth with a socialist leadership and perspective in opposition to the global breakdown of the capitalist system.

Following the meeting, reporters from the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to some of the students who attended.

Dominik, an undergraduate student at WSU, said, “I thought it was a very good perspective, particularly when you talked about the unity that is needed between the Israeli and Palestinian working class, as well as internationally.

“As is happening with Israel and Ukraine at the moment, nationalism is so often brought into the sphere to divide people.”

Dominik appreciated the “emphasis on the revolutionary need for the working class to come together, irrespective of race and religion, to confront this onslaught of war, austerity

and falling living standards.

“We cannot rely on, or seek to pacify, the ruling class that is in power. Throughout history, ordinary people have had to take things into their own hands for there to be a prospect of achieving a better future.”

He drew a connection between war abroad and war on the working class at home: “The ludicrous argument is being put forward, that I think is very hypocritical, saying we don’t have enough money for public health, public education, for public sector workers, it’s going to break the budget. But then we have \$368 billion for nuclear-powered submarines, AUKUS, and that’s not going to break the budget.”

Naniram, a Masters student at WSU, said it was important for students to build a movement to stop the drive to World War 3.

He made the point that “the United States used to be the first nation in the world economy,” but now faced major economic challenges from its international rivals, especially China. He said that “the US wants to get the position back from these countries,” which it is attempting to do through military force.

Naniram explained that there are developments in his home country of Nepal regarding US militarism, with the Millennium Challenge Corporation’s Nepal Compact. “There were protests against it, but the government has implemented this program and there’s a clause in the MCC where the United States is allowed to establish a military base in Nepal. It’s a very strategic action of the United States because Nepal lies just in between China to the north and India to the south.”

As a public health student, Naniram agreed with the IYSSE’s stance on the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and said it was important to fight for a perspective of eliminating the virus, because “most of the government policies are not in the basic interest of the people.”



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