

# SEP speakouts in Sydney and Melbourne: “Mobilise workers to end the Gaza genocide!”

Our reporters

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On Saturday, the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) held speakouts opposing Israel’s genocidal onslaught against Gaza in two key working-class suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne.

The SEP events were held as mass protests against the war crimes are continuing every week across Australia. In defiance of the largest anti-war movement in decades, the federal Labor government continues to march in lockstep behind the genocide, defending Israel’s “right” to mass murder and displace Palestinian civilians.

The SEP speakers above all raised the need for the fight against the onslaught on Gaza and the broader eruption of militarism to be based on the mobilisation of the working class. This was the way forward, not appeals to the governments and official political parties implicated in the massacres.

In Sydney, the speakout was in the southwestern suburb of Bankstown. It is an extremely diverse area, with a large Middle Eastern population, along with substantial cohorts from Vietnam, African nations and people from virtually everywhere else. Indications of broader social distress are stark in the area. There are high rates of mortgage and rental stress, as well as growing poverty.

The SEP has campaigned in Bankstown for decades and has stood candidates there in many state and federal elections.

Max Boddy, the SEP’s assistant national secretary, declared: “This is not a war, this is genocide.” More than 11,000 people had been killed, 40 percent of them children. “We see the images on social media of the premature babies who can no longer be incubated because the electricity has been shut off to the hospitals. These are international war crimes that are

being carried out.”

Boddy called for strike action by the working class to block military supplies to Israel. This could stop the genocide, but such essential action was being prevented by the corporatised unions, which were complicit in Israel’s war crimes. “New organs of struggle need to be formed, that is rank-and-file committees of workers, against this genocide and to stop the barbarism being carried out in Palestine.”

Numbers of workers stopped to listen to the SEP speakers, with some giving comments.

**Danny**, of Lebanese descent, said that he and his wife were “constantly” discussing the crimes unfolding against the people of Gaza, and she could not stop crying. “Bombing hospitals and schools, that’s not a war, that’s a crime! What have the women and children done to Israel or its army?”

Danny agreed that the genocide was part of a broader eruption of militarism. “It’s all about money and business nowadays, that’s all governments care about,” he said. “If it escalates all over the world, we’ll all end up killing each other. What are we going to leave our children? War?”

A former worker at the steelworks in Newcastle, which was shut down in the late 1990s, Danny noted that while governments were spending billions on the militaries, ordinary people were facing an increasing social crisis. There were not enough jobs, and housing and everything else were becoming more and more expensive.

Fatima, a young student, said: “On the media, I’ve seen a lot of murder of Palestinian children by the Israeli military. Women, men, everyone is being murdered. Internet, electricity, water, resources cut off, there’s nothing there. The Israeli government is saying they are against Hamas but they are attacking the whole

Palestinian civilization.

“I heard that one million people came out to protest in London against the attacks on the Palestinian people. In Australian cities as well, there have been huge rallies. In Sydney last weekend there were 60,000 people who protested.

“The media is on the side of the government. The media shows celebrities supporting the Israeli government. But at my school, everyone is really with Palestine. The teachers, the children. I think there is a lot of censorship. People who are speaking out, the media are not covering it. A lot of platforms are with Israel. Like with TikTok. Tiktok has been censoring a lot of things while they allow pro-Israeli people to talk.

“It’s a question of oil. It’s like the government really cares more about money than it does about people.”

Oscar Grenfell, a writer for the WSWS, also spoke. He warned that what was occurring in Gaza was not a regional phenomenon. It was the sharpest expression of a new period of capitalist breakdown and imperialist militarism on a global scale. What was being perpetrated against Gaza was what the capitalist ruling elites had in store for all of humanity.

This, Grenfell said, demonstrated the necessity to build an international anti-war movement of the working class, directed against the source of conflict, the capitalist nation-state system itself.

Jane, a 16-year-old high-school student who was passing by, said: “I think it’s morally and ethically rotten to try and justify the killing of innocent people as ‘self defence.’ I don’t think governments in Australia and the US see helping Palestine as a way to benefit themselves. They support Israel because they see it as a future ally and a way to further their future goals and plans.”

She agreed this was a contradiction with mass protests around the world opposing Israel’s genocide: “Aren’t the governments supposed to be the voice of the people? I don’t think they’re listening right now. What’s the point of ‘democracy’ if our voices aren’t heard? The point of the media is to portray the truth, tell us what’s really going on in the world. But they’re just showing us what the government wants us to see, and that’s propaganda.”

In Melbourne, the SEP speakout was held in Dallas, a suburb in the city’s north. It has a large immigrant population, primarily from the Middle East, Turkey and

neighbouring countries.

Dallas is near Broadmeadows, which was once one of the main centres of the Australian auto industry, before it was shut down by the corporations, acting in concert with Labor and the trade union leaderships. The SEP was the only political party to fight the closure.

Evrin Yazgin, the national convener of the IYSSE, the SEP’s youth movement, appealed for all listening to join and support a high school student strike in Melbourne this Thursday. A similar event is occurring in Sydney the next day. Pupils are walking out to express solidarity with the Palestinians and to oppose the support for the genocide by the Labor government and the whole establishment.

The children have come under attack from politicians and media pundits, who have ludicrously depicted the high school walkouts as a danger to public safety. As Yazgin explained, the ruling elites and their mouthpieces are willing to support the mass murder of civilians but are up in arms about young people opposing the killings.

He called for workers to defend the student strikes, as part of the development of a socialist and revolutionary movement against war.



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