

Widespread interest in IYSSE's socialist perspective at university orientations across Australia and New Zealand

Our reporters
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Over the last month, members of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) have campaigned at 11 university campuses across Australia and New Zealand during the beginning-of-academic-year orientation events.

Among them were universities in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Newcastle, and Wellington and Dunedin in New Zealand.

Thousands of copies of the IYSSE's beginning of year statement, "Capitalism leads to genocide and war—youth and students must fight for world socialism!" were distributed.

The IYSSE was alone at the orientation events in advancing a way forward for youth who, under capitalism, are presented with war, climate catastrophe, mass poverty, illness and death from pandemics, and dictatorship.

It presented the case that, for humanity and the planet to have a future, youth and students must turn to the only social force which can end the capitalist system which is the cause of these great historic problems: the world working class.

Orientation events took place amid the continuation and deepening of Israel's imperialist-backed genocide against Gaza. The official death toll from Israel's onslaught is now 30,000—mostly women and children. Another 70,000 Palestinians are missing or injured. Most of the Gaza strip's infrastructure has been destroyed, and disease, hunger and malnutrition are rife.

Many students expressed hostility to the open support given to the fascistic Israeli Zionist regime by the imperialist powers including in the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand.

The IYSSE saw widespread enthusiasm for its fight to end the genocide in Gaza based on a revolutionary socialist, internationalist perspective. Nearly 500 students left their contact details and more than 200 signed up as members of the IYSSE clubs.

This included at the University of Otago in New Zealand where the IYSSE campaigned for the first time and held a successful meeting to establish a new club on campus.

At Western Sydney University, a campus in the working-class suburbs of Sydney's west, the IYSSE was hugely popular, attracting more than 120 contacts and nearly 50 members over just two days. The campus has a large cohort of students of Middle Eastern descent.

IYSSE members warned students that the pseudo-left organisations left on the campuses—including Socialist Alternative, Socialist Alliance and Solidarity—have nothing to do with socialism or the interests of youth and workers. For the last five months, the pseudo-left have sought to wear down the mass opposition to the genocide by promoting the illusion that endless protest and appeals to the genocide supporting capitalist parties could push governments to support a ceasefire.

University students were keen to learn more about the IYSSE's perspective and take up a historical study, highlighted by the IYSSE's selling of nearly \$150 of literature at its stalls during orientation events.

The IYSSE received comments from students at the orientation events about the genocide in Gaza, the broader threat of world war, and the IYSSE's socialist perspective. The first group of interviews was published on the WSWs last month. Below, we are publishing more comments.

At Macquarie University in Sydney, Rafia, a student of Law and Psychology, said: “There’re people dying in Palestine and there’s somehow still people who are being ignorant and turning a blind eye to everything that’s happening, and still calling it a war with Israel and Hamas.”

She denounced the role of the imperialist powers, including Australia, in aiding and abetting the genocide. “They’ve killed so many people in Palestine and the governments are just doing nothing about it, in fact they’re supporting Israel and they’re giving their money to Israel, the IDF and all. I think the majority of it is happening because of money and trade and all of that. The Security Council of the UN, the major five countries, they’re using this situation to their advantage to get whatever they want.”

“Basically America just wants to take over the Middle East, because they have oil and all that. They want to take advantage of all of this. There’re people dying and they’re putting prices on human lives, just to get their hands on some money. They don’t give a damn about the people, they just want your money. The rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer,” the student said.

Rafia was asked why she joined the IYSSE. “Because you guys are right. You see everything that’s happening in the world. How can you not think it’s because of money? What else are you gonna think? Racism? Yeah, there’s an element of that too, but they’re literally killing people, and why? All the major corporations are supporting Israel. They’re getting money from them.

“At the end of the day, it’s people who are controlling the country, the ones with the money, that can control us and our beliefs.”

Harris, a student at Western Sydney University, told IYSSE campaigners: “What’s happening in Gaza right now is a clear genocide. What’s happening is clearly a violation of human rights. You don’t need to be Muslim or from any faith to accept that. The people who are casualties of this genocide are civilians, and it shouldn’t be like that.”

“The protests are happening, and it’s definitely making an impact, but in the western media they’ve been ignored. They know it’s there—even Israel knows it’s there, but they just ignore them,” the student added.

At the University of Melbourne, the IYSSE spoke

with a Chinese international student who asked to remain anonymous. He agreed with the IYSSE’s assessment that the genocide in Gaza is bound up with the drive of US imperialism to maintain its global hegemony. “Yes, why Gaza has the war is because the USA needs to reinforce their power, their dominance in the whole world. And Gaza and the whole country is paying the cost of this.”

He also spoke against the US war drive against China. “I think the war is very unnecessary for the world. The governments of Biden and Xi fight for their power, and the cost is to the people of the countries. So, it is very unnecessary and they waste a lot of the Earth’s resources.

“I am very worried about [aggression against China] because I have a part-time job in a Chinese university and I can say that the block [on collaborative research] has already had a huge impact on Chinese universities and Chinese research. China has the highest population in the world, and we know that teamwork is better than individual work, so it is a huge loss for the whole world, for all humans,” he said.

“In China the government spends a lot of money for the preparation of war, and also in the USA they are preparing for war. They spend a lot of money to support Israel and Ukraine, so tax has really increased.”

On the IYSSE’s fight for a socialist, anti-war movement among youth and students, the student said, “I think this is very valuable work, and I think university students, especially those in social science, need to at least support, or say something to make the social hurt lessen.”



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