

Western Sydney University IYSSE Annual General Meeting elaborates socialist perspective against war and 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 23. The meeting ensures the ongoing existence of the only genuine socialist, anti-war club on the working-class campus in the western suburbs of Australia's largest city.

Students participated in person at WSU's Parramatta South campus, and online via Zoom. More than 20 people attended overall, including students and WSU staff members. The quorum requirement of 10 current IYSSE club members was reached, a new executive was elected, and the IYSSE club's aims to advance a socialist and anti-war perspective on campus were ratified.

The AGM followed a powerful October 8 Special General Meeting initiated by the IYSSE at WSU. That event, attended by more than 40 students, overwhelmingly voted in favour of the IYSSE's motion which condemned Israel's war crimes and the support given to the Zionist state by the imperialist powers internationally, including the Australian Labor government of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese.

That motion called on students to campaign in the working class for a socialist alternative to the capitalist system which is leading to imperialist militarism and dictatorship.

The urgency of this perspective was highlighted the following day with the violent arrests of two WSU students for taking part in a peaceful protest on campus. A third student was arrested later that week. These arrests, the IYSSE has warned, are in line with the attempts of the Labor governments—state and federal—to outlaw all opposition to the genocide and war.

Under conditions of the ramping up of police-state measures against anti-war protesters, the attendance at the IYSSE's AGM was significant.

Students joined the IYSSE AGM because the club presents a way forward to fight against war. They have taken an important political stand, supporting the IYSSE's right to remain affiliated, and also in defence of the right of students to take political action on campus.

In the lead-up to the meeting, IYSSE members and supporters carried out campaigns on the Parramatta South campus and the Liverpool, Bankstown and Parramatta City campuses. Students responded strongly to the club's opposition to the genocide in Gaza and the danger of nuclear war on a global scale.

Many agreed with the IYSSE's analysis that protests based on moral appeals to governments to stop the genocide had failed, and a new way forward based on socialism and a turn to the working class is needed.

IYSSE members also spoke to students about the violent repression of anti-genocide protesters on campus and the broader attack on anti-war protesters worldwide. These stepped up attacks coincide with a deepening of the US-Israeli assault in the Middle East, including attacks on Lebanon and now Iran—a provocation which heightens the threat of a region-wide conflagration.

After the formalities of the AGM, returning club President Zach Diotte delivered a report, outlining the escalating conflict in the Middle East, over a year since the genocide had been launched against the Palestinian people.

He stressed that the Gaza genocide is not an isolated episode. The criminal methods of Israel and its

imperialist paymasters—already spread to neighbouring areas—could only be understood when placed in the context of the eruption of militarism around the world.

Diotte explained that the barbarism now unfolding in the region is part of a decades-long effort by US imperialism to subjugate the whole of the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa.

“Above all, the US and its imperialist allies have in their sights Russia and China,” Diotte said. “The NATO powers are already engaged in a war with Russia which threatens the use of nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, the US and its allies in the Asia-Pacific—chief among them, Australia—are preparing for a military confrontation with the biggest rival to US world domination: China.”

Diotte warned that we are witnessing the opening shots of a third world war that, if not prevented by the intervention of the working class, would lead to nuclear Armageddon.

The report analysed the protest movement which emerged after October 7, 2023 and has continued throughout this year. The pseudo-left leaders of the protests have offered only a bankrupt perspective which will lead students to a dead end, suppressing the critical issues and covering over the complicity of the Labor government and the unions. Instead, the protest leaders have presented the genocide as a single issue that can be ended by making moral appeals to those in power.

In fact, not only has the Labor government not responded to these appeals, but it is slandering protesters as antisemitic and using police-state measures to repress opposition.

Diotte raised the necessity for a new perspective, explaining that the struggle against the Gaza genocide and imperialism can only be developed as a struggle against the capitalist system that is the cause of war.

“Imperialism is powerful, but it is not invincible. There is a force in society which is stronger,” Diotte said. “That force is the world working class which produces all the wealth in society. The ruling capitalist class exploits the working class in order to gain profits and private wealth.”

IYSSE members at the AGM explained that the same conditions under capitalism which lead to war and authoritarianism, also lead to a movement of workers against militarism and austerity. It is to this movement that students must turn and imbue with a socialist

perspective.

Following the meeting, IYSSE members spoke to some of the students who attended.

Asi, an information and communication technology student, agreed with the perspective of the working class taking independent action. He said, “We can stop distribution and that will just stop their supply and they won’t have anything to fight with. They won’t have any weapons or equipment. That’s a really good point that I had not thought about at all.”

Asi continued, “I assumed that before finding this club, those in power would take care of things. But now it’s different—I feel like there are better solutions and better ways to handle the situation. I read somewhere that the moment people stop talking, that’s when problems happen. Having discussions, getting new insights, perspectives, and opinions brings new light to the situation.”

Daniel, a law student, raised, “It was important to discuss what’s going on in Gaza and the need for students and young people to take action. There’s potential for further wars to escalate across the world. The government is supporting war and the Israeli government’s actions—both Labor and the Liberals. It’s bipartisan... I think we need to turn to the working class to try and put pressure on the government to respond.”



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