

Andre Damon: Young people must fight for the socialist future

Andre Damon
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We are publishing here the text of the speech given by Andre Damon, national secretary of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (US), to the International Online May Day Rally hosted by the International Committee of the Fourth International and the World Socialist Web Site on Sunday, May 4.

One of the most visible manifestations of the crisis of capitalism is the terrible social conditions facing youth all over the world, from the US and Europe to Latin America, Asia and Africa.

This is a generation without a future, facing record unemployment, mass poverty, perpetual indebtedness, and a ceaseless attack on democratic rights. According to one estimate, one in four young people throughout the world is neither studying nor working.

In developed countries, this generation of young people confronts an unprecedented situation: it is the first since the Great Depression whose prospects for living a decent and fulfilling life are worse than those of their parents. This is coupled with a ceaseless drive to war and unprecedented destruction of democratic rights.

The capitalist system holds no future for young people. But this generation does have a future. Its future lies in the fight to build a new type of society, in which the needs of the majority are valued above the shameless self-enrichment of the wealthy few. The future of the younger generation lies in socialism.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality, from its inception, was established as an international movement. The emphasis on internationalism stems from the conception that the only way forward for society is on the basis of the global political unity of working people. All attempts to solve social problems on a national basis are bankrupt. This concept is expressed in today's rally.

Many young people put their hopes in the election of Barack Obama, wishing that the candidate of "hope" and "change" would reverse the policies of the Bush Administration. But these hopes have quickly been dashed as Obama has overseen a vicious attack on working people, while going even further than his predecessor in tearing up the Bill of Rights. Young people must learn from this experience.

This generation has come of age under conditions of war, political upheavals and economic depression. These events have had a tremendous impact on its consciousness. The old and simple answers are no longer sufficient. Workers and young people are increasingly open to a new historical perspective.

While there is no shortage among young people of hostility to the present social order, what is missing is historical and political knowledge and understanding. This generation must seriously study history and politics to comprehend the lessons of the past, particularly the history of the 20th Century and the history of the revolutionary socialist movement.

We urge young people to study the program of the Socialist Equality Party and to join the International Youth and Students for Social Equality. Help set up an IYSSE group in your college, school or neighborhood, and take up the fight for socialism.



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