

# Fight cuts to education and the drive to war!

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (Australia)  
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The planned attacks on tertiary education in the Abbott government's budget are one component of a full-scale assault on the social rights of the working class, including cuts to healthcare, welfare, jobs, wages and conditions.

The reason for this agenda is no mystery. In every country, the governments representing the financial and corporate elite have responded to the deepening crisis of capitalism since 2008 by making the working class pay. In the United States, thousands of impoverished workers are having basic utilities such as water cut off because they cannot meet their bills. Fearful of rising social tensions, the National Guard has been called out in Ferguson, Missouri to suppress protests over the police killing of a teenager. Across Europe, youth unemployment is at Depression levels, reaching 60 percent in Greece as a result of six years of International Monetary Fund-dictated austerity measures.

In Australia, the opposition Labor Party and the Greens have already voted with the Coalition government in the Senate to pass appropriation bills that slash \$80 billion from health care and education funding to the states over the next decade, while boosting defence by \$9.6 billion over the next four years. The military build-up is a universal phenomenon around the world. The same crisis driving the onslaught on living standards has produced an ever-intensifying struggle by the United States and all the major powers for domination over resources and markets, just as prior to World War I and World War II.

At today's rally, as at other demonstrations against the Abbott government's budget, the National Union of Students (NUS) is promoting the lie that "pressure from below" will convince Labor, the Greens and other parties to block tertiary education cuts in the Senate. Single-issue protest politics has been used time and again to divert students away from a struggle to build

the type of movement that is necessary to defend the basic social rights and future of the working class.

What is the situation that students face? Firstly, any deal in the Senate that resulted in the Abbott government temporarily retreating from its plans to increase university fees would be predicated on spending cuts being inflicted elsewhere, on some other section of society. Moreover, to tell students that the Labor Party can be relied upon to defend education amounts to throwing dust in their eyes. Since the 1980s, Labor governments have been at the centre of destroying the right to free education by introducing and increasing fees, as well as slashing access to study allowances.

The truth is that if the Greens-backed Labor government were still in power, it would be trying to impose an austerity program little different from Abbott and the Liberals. They are all parties of big business. The deregulation of fees being proposed by Abbott and Education Minister Christopher Pyne is the logical extension of the previous Labor government's \$2.3 billion cut to university funding in 2013 and its introduction of a "competitive market" by removing block funding for student enrolments.

It is necessary to face facts: it is impossible to defend education and other social rights within the framework of capitalist politics and the parliamentary arena.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) calls on young people to turn toward the working class and the building of an independent and international socialist movement. The fight for education rights must be inseparably linked with the broader struggle against austerity, the attacks on democratic rights and the dangers of war.

Under conditions in which staggering amounts of wealth are controlled by a tiny proportion of society, and vast profits are being made by banks and financial speculators, the working class everywhere is being told

the lie that there is “no money” for social welfare, essential services and decent living conditions. Billions can be found, however, to acquire new military hardware and prepare for war.

The Australian ruling class is at the very forefront of international militarism and war provocations. Behind the backs of the population, the previous Gillard Labor government directed the complete integration of the Australian military and intelligence apparatus into the US war machine, as part of Washington’s aggressive “pivot” to Asia against China. In addition to the US marine base in Darwin established under Gillard, Abbott has signed off on new basing arrangements for US aircraft and ships.

Australian governments have sided with the US and its allies in every imperialist provocation and war, from Afghanistan and Iraq, to Libya and Syria, and Israel’s murderous assault on Gaza. The entire political establishment joined in the unsubstantiated accusations that Russia was behind the crash of the Malaysian airliner in Ukraine, and have remained silent as the evidence has grown that it was in fact shot down by the military of the fascist-backed Ukrainian government.

The preparations for war are being accompanied by the obscene promotion of nationalism and patriotism, with over \$300 million being spent over the next four years to glorify Australia’s involvement in World War I. At the same time, ever-deeper attacks are being carried out against fundamental democratic rights. Abbott and Attorney-General George Brandis’s push for greater data retention measures and the introduction of new “anti-terrorism” legislation is aimed at extending the police-state measures that will be used against opposition in the working class. The logic of these processes can be seen with the wholesale spying on the population exposed by Edward Snowden and the para-military police operations on the streets of Ferguson, Missouri.

The aspirations of young people—to a high quality education, a job and decent income, democratic rights and an end to war—depend upon the building of an independent movement of the working class internationally, based on a socialist perspective and the abolition of the corporate profit system. We urge students who want to fight for this program to join the IYSSE, the youth movement of the Socialist Equality Party and International Committee of the Fourth

International.



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