

No to war and austerity! Join the International Youth and Students for Social Equality!

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (Australia)
16 February 2015

As students and young people begin the New Year in 2015, they face a growing propaganda campaign by the political and media establishment aimed at glorifying militarism and war, as well as an escalating assault on the right to an education and to a decent, well-paid job.

The approach of Anzac Day, which marks the hundredth anniversary of the allied invasion of Gallipoli in 1915, is being accompanied by a truly nauseating deluge of war propaganda, including television mini-series, books, plays and public events, to “celebrate” Australia’s role in World War I. More money will be spent in Australia to commemorate the war than in France, Germany and Britain combined.

At the same time, the spectre of terrorism has been placed at the centre of Australian political life. Last December, the Abbott government, with the full support of the media, the Labor opposition and the Greens, exploited a hostage incident at a Sydney café by elevating it to the status of a national terrorist emergency. This occurred within the context of a series of widely-publicised police “anti-terror” raids, in which dubious evidence has been used to stoke paranoia and anti-Muslim chauvinism. A fabricated “threat to the nation” has been invoked as the all-embracing justification for Australia’s participation in the US-led war in Iraq and Syria, and for new legislation that increases police powers and strips away democratic rights.

Students face being forced to pay tens of thousands of dollars for a university degree, under the Liberal government’s education “reforms,” which followed on the heels of those imposed by Gillard’s Labor government. Murdoch’s flagship national newspaper, the *Australian*, summed up the attitude in ruling circles in an editorial last month, which declared that universities were “over-educating” students, who would not be able to get decent jobs anyway. In the eyes of the financial elite, public education is an intolerable and unnecessary burden on profits. Thus the future being offered to hundreds of thousands of young people is either low-paid, dead-end casual and part-time work or permanent unemployment.

One can only understand the origin of these attacks on the basis of an analysis of global economic and geo-strategic

processes.

All of the great problems that confront the present generation of young people stem directly from the deep-going crisis of the capitalist system. One hundred years after the outbreak of World War I, and 75 years since the end of World War II, the same contradictions of world capitalism—between a globally integrated economy, on the one hand, and the continued existence of rival and competing nation states, on the other—threaten to plunge mankind into an even greater catastrophe.

The ruling class and its political representatives internationally have responded to the 2008 global financial crisis and subsequent economic breakdown with two interconnected policies. Domestically, governments around the world have sought to protect the wealth of the capitalist elite through a series of savage austerity measures aimed at the jobs, wages and social rights of the working class and youth—including the right to education and health care. This has already led to staggering and unprecedented levels of social inequality. According to the latest report by Oxfam, just 80 individuals now control the same amount of wealth as 3.5 billion people, or half the world’s population.

In foreign policy, all the major powers, above all the United States, are seeking to place the burden of the crisis on the backs of their rivals, leading to heightened international tensions and the danger of a Third World War.

The US and Russia, two nuclear-armed powers, stand on the brink of war as a result of the aggressive attempt by NATO to transform Ukraine into a military staging post against Russia. Last month, former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt declared: “Unfortunately, war with Russia is conceivable.”

As a result of the Obama administration’s “pivot to Asia”—which involves a diplomatic, military and economic encirclement of China—the Asia-Pacific region has been transformed into a tinderbox of military flashpoints. In the Middle East, two decades of US-led wars, regime-change operations, intrigues and economic sanctions have turned Iraq and Syria into a cauldron of sectarian tensions that threatens to engulf the entire region in war.

Australia is at the very centre of US war plans against China. Under agreements signed by the Gillard-Rudd Labor governments, US marines are now stationed in Darwin, while the country's naval and air bases have been opened to US military forces. Joint US-Australian spy bases form a critical component of global US military operations. The *Australian Financial Review* commented last month that Beijing and Washington "now spend considerable time thinking about the war with each other. From a Chinese perspective, Australia is not so much hosting US military bases, but is a virtual American base in its own right."

The vast majority of the population is deeply opposed to war. That is why immense resources are being devoted to promoting militarist propaganda and nationalism, particularly among young people. The aim of the ongoing WWI celebrations is to indoctrinate them with the notion that sacrificing one's life for the "defense of the nation" is the pinnacle of human endeavor. The real aims of the imperialist slaughter, which was fought on all sides for control of markets, resources and colonies, are being concealed.

Fear of political opposition also lies behind the accelerating assault on democratic rights and the build-up of the intelligence, military and police apparatus. The brutal response in the US to the protests against the police killing of a young man in Ferguson, Missouri, was part of advanced preparations for authoritarian forms of rule.

In Australia, a critical role in facilitating the militarist and austerity agenda of the financial and corporate elite is being played by petty bourgeois fake-left parties that falsely portray themselves as "socialist"—such as Socialist Alternative, Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Party. These groups have justified the US-led wars and regime-change operations in Syria, Libya and Ukraine, with the lie that they are "democratic revolutions" from "below." They demonise China as an expansionist imperialist power, while covering up for the real imperialist aggressors—the US and Australia.

The pseudo-lefts seek to prevent any struggle by workers and young people against capitalism by subordinating them to the Labor Party, the Greens and the trade unions and fostering the delusion that these organisations can be pressured to represent the interests of the working class. In Greece, Socialist Alternative's co-thinkers are part of the newly-elected Syriza government which came to power by exploiting mass hostility in the population to poverty and mass unemployment. In the three weeks since, Syriza has already junked its election promises and pledged to maintain the austerity agenda of its predecessors.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) is a world movement of students and young people, committed to building an international anti-war movement to fight the rising danger of war, austerity and dictatorship. We seek to orient young people to the working class, the only revolutionary social force in modern society, and the struggle to

build within that class a new revolutionary socialist leadership.

Critical to the development of such a movement is an understanding of the lessons of history—most importantly, of the strategic experiences of the international working class throughout the twentieth century.

The greatest of all these experiences was the 1917 Russian Revolution and the struggle for socialist internationalism, which was carried forward by Leon Trotsky and the movement he founded, the Fourth International, against the falsifications and betrayals of Stalin and the parasitic bureaucracy he headed.

The IYSSE will be holding forums and classes on campuses throughout the country to discuss the historical significance of the Russian Revolution, which was the conscious response of the Russian working class, led by the Bolshevik Party, to the contradictions wracking world capitalism and their expression in the slaughter of World War I. We will answer the lie, endlessly promoted in the media and throughout academia, that the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 represented the final triumph of capitalism and the failure of socialism. In reality, it represented the collapse of the nationalist program advanced by Stalin, and was the harbinger of the collapse of all nationalist programs and parties, now underway in every country.

The IYSSE will bring to students and youth the political analysis published each day by the *World Socialist Web Site* (www.wsws.org), the publication of our world party, the International Committee of the Fourth International. The WWS is unique in presenting a genuine Marxist assessment of developments in politics, economics, workers and students' struggles, culture and the arts, history, philosophy and science.

We urge you to join the IYSSE. Where there is not yet a club on your campus, contact us about establishing one. Become involved today in the building of a movement of students and youth devoted to the fight to unify the international working class, on the basis of a socialist and internationalist program, to end war, social inequality and repression.



To contact the WWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact