

Students and young workers in Australia register for international May Day event

Our reporters
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Workers, youth and students in every Australian state will be participating in the International Committee of the Fourth International's Online May Day Rally on May 3. Those attending will do so in opposition to a barrage of militarist propaganda surrounding the Anzac Day centenary "celebrating" the involvement of Australian soldiers in the failed Anglo-French invasion of Turkey in 1915 in which thousands lost their lives.

World Socialist Web Site reporters and Socialist Equality Party campaigners spoke this week with some of those who have registered for May Day. They spoke of their deep concerns about the mounting dangers of war as well as their understanding that only an international struggle of the working class could prevent it.

Jordan, a student and member of the IYSSE at Brisbane's Griffith University, said he registered for the May Day rally after watching the video advertising it on the *World Socialist Web Site*.

"That reinforced my concerns about the pressure that the United States is putting on the rest of the world. They are now working hand in hand with Japan and Germany. My biggest concern is Australia's position. We are allying with the US government and focusing on militarism and the celebration of World War I."

Summing up his reasons for registering for May Day, Jordan said: "The rally is more poignant than ever. The US government is shoring up its allies and calling in its old enemies to come on side. It's really been ramping up in the past few years. Who's in their cross-hairs? China would certainly be feeling uncomfortable."

"What would have stopped the atrocities of the past world wars? It would have been the working class standing up around the world. If you don't stand up, no one hears you. We went into Iraq in 2003, so we need to make our voices heard. War is such a bad thing. I have a seven-year-old son, and I don't want him sent off to war."

May Day was "very important for workers, not just now, but for all future generations, **Sam**, a refugee from Middle East and now living in western Sydney, told the WSW.

"The fight to unite workers all around the world to get rid of capitalism and the nation-state system and for democratic rights and equality is correct. It would be a big mistake if I didn't participate in May Day and the fight for these principles and I'd regret it in the future."

"Capitalism is the biggest problem in the world today. It's the reason for the civil war in Ukraine and the wars in the Middle East and other places. The powers behind these conflicts are driven by profit. They don't care about the people."

"One percent of people in the world control almost all the world's wealth. This is a vivid example of the problems of this system and shows that this small group controls everything. We cannot stand by and allow this to continue. The only class that can end this is the working class. This is the only group that can fight for real democratic rights and for a better life for everyone..."

"The capitalists rule because they divide the working class by using religion, language and ethnic differences. We have to educate the people against nationalism and these ideas and this is what May Day is for."

John, a student at the University of Newcastle and a member of the IYSSE, said: "It is important for all workers and youth looking for a way to fight militarism, war and austerity to participate in this international rally. There are advanced preparations by the ruling elite for war and that is shown by the Anzac Day celebrations here and similar glorification by governments around the world."

The developing crisis in Ukraine, John said, posed a direct confrontation between nuclear armed powers—US and Russia—and the real danger of a third imperialist war.

"The discussion at the rally will be vital in the education

of workers and youth and in the development of an international revolutionary perspective in the working class. I attended the ICFI rally last year and it was crucial in my education, alerting me to the dangers of war. It pointed to the potential flash points in this region and globally and demonstrated a socialist alternative.”

The international working class, John added, had to understand that “the real enemy is the capitalist class in their own countries and their allies are the workers around the world.”

Michael, an early childhood education student at the University of Newcastle, raised concerns about Washington’s “pivot to Asia.”

“America will soon have close to a hundred thousand military ‘peacetime’ forces in Asia—the use of that term sounds very odd in what is currently a peaceful area of the world. What are they preparing for?”

“The drive to war over resources is driven by the wealthy elite who only care about their profits,” he said. “It is the companies that fight these wars for access to resources.”

Denouncing the official campaign to celebrate Australian involvement in the World War I, he added: “They’re trying to cover over the fact of what they were fighting for. They’re trying to push that away and say ‘look at our glorious soldiers, see how well they fought’ but not why they were fighting. I think that’s a key issue that should be opened up. Everyone forgets what WWI was about—imperialist nations getting to the tipping point, war breaking out when competition comes to a head. And we’re seeing that again today.”

Michael said he was attracted to the internationalist aspect of the Online May Day rally: “It’s about a world May Day, that’s the interesting thing that got me... We need to stand together to stop these wars”

Matthew, a Bachelor of Teaching student at the University of Newcastle, said: “The International Online May Day Rally gives me, as part of the international working class, an opportunity to voice opposition to the imperialist capitalist drive to World War III.

“This drive to war is a result of the system itself. The capitalist nation states with neo-liberalist agendas, engage in aggressive economic activity. It’s a system that relies on the exploitation of cheap resources and labour and at a certain stage they seize land to continue to gain these resources...”

“A revolution of the working class on an international scale is essential to not only prevent war but to end social inequality and the potential danger of the complete

destruction of the planet as we know it.”

Caspian, a University of New South Wales student, said the Online May Day rally provided the opportunity to “be in congress with people from around the world, to get a better picture of what’s going on and the spirit of workers around the world.”

He condemned the increasing promotion of militarism. “I joined the cadets because I wanted to learn about leadership but I left it as soon as I saw this weird militaristic myth being promoted in relation to Anzac Day. People are encouraged to join the army to become part of that myth. We’re a secular society but we worship militarism and war. It’s against everything that humanity should be for.

“Politicians and the media claim that war is a ‘sacrifice for the nation.’ War is nationalism at its peak. It’s about ‘my country needs these resources, or my country needs land.’ It’s not in the interests of the working class...”

“May Day is the polar opposite of Anzac Day. It’s a celebration of unity among workers internationally. It celebrates the bond we should be having across national boundaries. Anzac Day is about the myth of the soldier who sacrificed himself to keep his country isolated.”

Evrin, a University of Melbourne student, said, “The drive to war is tied up in the inherent conflict within the capitalist system in which the global economy is divided into separate nations and states. This leads directly to imperialist wars in which countries battle for resources, geopolitical strategic positioning and power. It’s not a question of ‘if’ war erupts in this system, but ‘when.’

“The only answer to this prospect is the mobilisation of a united working class under revolutionary leadership on an equally global scale. This is why the importance of May Day cannot be over-emphasised. The Online May Day rally will be an invaluable resource to youth, workers and students alike to share in the perspective of international socialism. It will be a fantastic platform on which to express a deep resentment among the population at their continued exploitation at the hands of the ruling class and to oppose the drive to war internationally.



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