

The struggle to stem climate change is the political fight to end capitalism!

Join the International Youth and Students for Social Equality!

**The IYSSE (Australia)
14 March 2019**

Thousands of high school students across the country will strike tomorrow to demand immediate action to stem climate change and environmental destruction. They are part of a global movement involving young people from Europe, the United States, Asia and around the world.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), the youth wing of the Socialist Equality Party, welcomes the widest protest by students and young people.

The student strike demonstrates that the younger generation, having grown up amid constant wars, environmental degradation and an onslaught on the working class, is entering into social and political struggle against militarism, austerity, the threat of catastrophic climate change and the assault on democratic rights.

Everywhere, there is rising oppositional sentiment among young people. Capitalism is coming to be understood as the fundamental cause of all major problems and interest in socialism is rapidly growing. The political radicalisation of young people coincides with the reentry of the working class into major class struggles, including mass strikes and political demonstrations around the world.

The ruling elites are terrified by the emergence of this international social opposition. That is why senior figures in the Liberal-National Coalition government and the Murdoch press have condemned the climate strike and sought to intimidate students who intend to participate. It is also why teachers who have supported the movement have been publicly threatened.

The student strike is an important expression of young people's initiative and willing to fight for their future. But protests are not enough. Young people need an alternative political perspective to resolve the myriad social and political issues they confront.

The IYSSE states unambiguously that stemming climate change requires nothing less than the construction of a mass socialist movement of the working class, aimed at reorganising the world economy in the interests of social need, not private profit. We call for the widest discussion of this socialist, internationalist and revolutionary perspective.

While the Liberal-Nationals are openly hostile to the climate strike, other political forces, including Labor, the Greens and middle-class environmental groups, are seeking to channel the emerging movement of young people behind the re-election of Greens-backed Labor governments, at the state and federal level.

That is not the political change that it is required! Labor and the Greens are just as responsible for the failure to address climate change as the Liberal-National Coalition.

The Greens-backed federal Labor government of Julia Gillard did nothing to stem carbon emissions, when it was in office from 2010–2013. Under its signature carbon tax policy, Australia's carbon emissions actually increased. According to Labor's own 2012 modelling, if the tax had remained in place from 2012 to 2020, annual national carbon emissions would have grown from 582 to 621 million tonnes by 2020.

Emissions trading schemes, touted by the Greens, are no less worthless. Where they have been introduced in Europe and elsewhere, they have succeeded only in establishing lucrative opportunities for "green businesses" and creating new markets for financial swindlers and speculators to exploit.

The efforts to channel young people behind the Labor-Green wing of the political establishment go hand in hand with attempts to suppress political discussion and debate.

A "solidarity agreement" published by the people claiming to speak in the name of "School Strike 4 Climate

Melbourne” declared for example: “Distribution or promotion of merchandise/messaging/materials at the strike is strictly prohibited.” It warned that any group distributing “unauthorised” leaflets or any materials would be “excluded” from the event.

Such anti-democratic dictates should be rejected and opposed by all students. Nobody has the right to appoint themselves as political censors and thought police, deciding on high what young people can or cannot read and discuss.

Attempts at censorship are always aimed at bolstering an unstated political agenda: in this case, preventing students from learning about a genuine alternative to climate catastrophe, that is a socialist and internationalist perspective.

Moreover, the implicit claim in the “solidarity agreement,” that the climate strike should be “non-partisan” and avoid political issues, is absurd. Every young person knows that halting climate change requires political change. That is why the strike is being organised in the first place.

The threat posed by climate change necessarily raises the greatest political question of all: how is society to be organised and in whose interests? Which class—the working class or a tiny capitalist minority—is going to rule?

Innumerable studies by environmental scientists have made clear that the measures proposed by the world’s capitalist governments, including marginal caps on carbon emissions, will do nothing to stem climate change. At one international summit after another, governments, each representing their own corporate and financial elite, have refused to take any serious action because it would impact on the profits of big business.

To stop climate change, capitalism must be ended, and global economic and social life reorganised on the basis of scientific, socialist planning. This is demonstrated, not only by the failure of all “market-based solutions,” but also by studies which have found that just 100 major corporations are responsible for over 70 percent of global carbon emissions.

Under socialism, these 100 corporations would be expropriated and placed under public ownership and democratic control. Trillions of dollars would be allocated to ensuring the rapid reductions in carbon emissions required to halt climate change. The technologies for carrying this out, which already exist, would be developed on the basis of the collaboration of scientists from all over the world. The subordination of scientific work and

research to the profit demands of the corporate oligarchy would be ended.

This perspective is both realistic and necessary. The development of a revolutionary socialist movement of the working class is the only means of ending, not only climate change, but also the looming threat of a nuclear world war.

Amid the deepest breakdown of capitalism since the 1930s, governments everywhere, while they ignore the warnings about climate change, are pouring vast sums into preparing for war against their capitalist rivals. The US is carrying out military interventions and provocations around the world, including a regime-change operation targeting Venezuela and escalating confrontations with nuclear-armed powers, including China and Russia.

Australia is on the frontlines. Having supported every criminal US-led war over the past four decades, Labor and Liberal-National governments have integrated Australia into a vast US-military build-up throughout the Asia-Pacific region, in preparation for war with China.

The drive to war has gone hand in hand with a war on the social rights of the working class. Everywhere wages, jobs and conditions are being destroyed, to bolster the wealth of the corporate oligarchy and to force ordinary people to pay for the deepening economic crisis. Funding for healthcare, education, welfare and other social necessities is being slashed.

These measures cannot be imposed democratically. Governments around the world are turning to increasingly authoritarian forms of rule, while fascist forces are openly promoted by the ruling elite. The persecution of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and whistleblower Chelsea Manning, for exposing US-led war crimes, mass surveillance and illegal diplomatic intrigues, is only the sharpest expression of advanced preparations for dictatorship.

The IYSSE calls on students and young people to draw the necessary conclusions. Capitalism has failed. The only way forward is through a turn to the working class, the great revolutionary force in capitalist society, and the fight for a socialist and internationalist program. We urge all students to join the IYSSE, and to build IYSSE chapters at your schools and universities.



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