International Youth and Students for Social Equality (US) establishes new club at Appalachian State University

James Langley
2 March 2021

If you are a student or youth at Appalachian State University or the surrounding area we encourage you to join the International Youth and Students for Social Equality. For more information please contact the club today.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), the youth and student wing of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) is pleased to announce the establishment of a new chapter at Appalachian State University (ASU) in Boone, North Carolina.

The IYSSE is a Marxist and Trotskyist youth and student organization that insists that all the great problems confronting humanity in the 21st century—the devastation wrought by COVID-19, war and social inequality; and the drive toward fascism and dictatorship by governments internationally—are the outcome of capitalism.

The only solution to these problems is the global mobilization and unification of the working class on the basis of a revolutionary socialist program, politically independent of and irrevocably opposed to all capitalist parties and their pseudo-left appendages.

The IYSSE at ASU will actively work to bring this perspective to the students and youth at ASU and in the surrounding area and to turn them to the working class in the region.

What we fight for

• **For safe and healthy campuses and workplaces!** In opposition to the herd immunity policy of the ruling class and its devastating impact upon the lives and health of workers and students, we fight for the implementation of a rational and scientifically guided public health strategy to force the shutdown of all nonessential production and the full closure of in-person classes to contain the pandemic.

• **For the fight against war!** We oppose all imperialist military actions by the United States and other capitalist powers—actions which threaten to bring about a new conflagration of great power conflict in the form of a third world war. The drive toward war is an inevitable outcome of the internal contradictions of the capitalist system, which can only be solved by establishing a socialist society run by the working class.

• **For the defense of democratic rights!** We defend the right to free speech and all whistleblowers and journalists who have been persecuted for exposing the crimes of the capitalist oligarchy. This includes both Julian Assange and Chelsea Manning, who were both taken into custody under the criminal Obama administration, as well as Rebekah Jones, the COVID-19 whistleblower who has come under attack by the state of Florida.

• **For the political independence of the working class!** One of the major lessons of the past century and particularly the past decade is that the Democratic Party serves as the graveyard of all progressive social movements. Workers and youth who wish to fight for socialism must make an irrevocable break with the parties of the ruling elite—including its nominally “left” defenders, such as the Democratic Socialists of America, who repeatedly shepherd their members into supporting the Democratic Party.

• **For the unity of the working class!** The ruling class seeks to divide the working class and youth along lines of

© World Socialist Web Site

individual identities, especially race and gender. We insist that the main division in society is between two antagonistic classes: wealthy billionaires who control all the major resources and the means of production necessary for human survival and working people who must exchange their labor power for wages and must be exploited under capitalism for profit.

• **For internationalism!** Workers and young people face the might of the same billionaires and corporations across the globe. As production and distribution have become highly globalized in the 21st century, so too must the working class and its youth movement coordinate their struggles across international lines. The IYSSE at Appalachian State stands with the youth and students in other countries such as Germany and Australia who are building our movement across international lines.

The fight for socialism in North Carolina

The IYSSE at Appalachian State fights for the defense of historical truth. The critical lessons of the 20th century are ever more covered up by the ruling elites to justify their rule and disorient the working class as to the identity of its true enemy.

This is most apparent in the *New York Times'* 1619 project, where history was blatantly distorted in an attempt to characterize the main problems of today as the outcome of racial conflict and suppression. The *Times* intentionally misrepresented past events and attacked leading scholars in the field of history who opposed their false characterization of the past. These actions have strengthened and played into the hands of the far right, who have sought to counter these lies with nationalism and demagogy.

Workers and young people at Appalachian State must take up a historical examination of the past two centuries of working-class struggle in the region and bring the lessons of that history to the workers who today fight to build their own independent organizations for political struggle.

North Carolina, like every state, has a rich history of working-class struggle. In 1929, workers at the Loray Mill in Gastonia went on strike over working conditions. On September 14, 1929, a cartload of armed men attacked the workers as they marched to a rally, killing Ella May Wiggins, one of the main organizers of the strike.

At the time, textile mill workers in the region were expected to work 55 to 60 hours, six days a week, and earned less than $10 a week in difficult and dangerous conditions. Whole families, including children, worked in the mills where many suffered breathing problems and lung damage from inhaling the small pieces of fabric that filled the air.

Workers at the mills in Marion, Elizabethton, and Gastonia—all near Boone, North Carolina—were also key actors in the famous 1934 cotton mill general strike. On September 3, 1934, over 10,000 workers in Gastonia participated in the town's first Labor Day parade. Over the next week, thousands of organizers traveled throughout the South in cars and trucks to help workers close down the mills.

By the efforts of these "flying squadrons," between 300,000 and 500,000 workers across the eastern United States participated in the general strike. The majority of these workers came from the cotton mills of North and South Carolina, including Gaston County, where all 104 mills had closed by September 7.

Ultimately, the strike was sold out by the United Textile Workers (UTW) in collaboration with the Roosevelt administration and the mill owners, who feared that the struggle would turn into an open threat to the entire capitalist system. The UTW leaders called the strike a success and ordered workers back to the mills with little gains. Many of these Southern workers felt betrayed by the hollow promises of the UTW and the federal government.

The critical lesson to be gained from such events is the necessity of a principled and historically conscious leadership to intervene and guide such struggles into a political fight against the capitalist state. The goal of the IYSSE at Appalachian State is to develop such a leadership.

We therefore stand with all workers in North Carolina, the Appalachian Region, the United States and the world, and will fight to bring socialist consciousness into their coming struggles. This includes all meatpacking workers, textile mill workers, furniture and aviation workers in the region, as well as Appalachian State graduate students, staff and faculty.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site