

Statements from France, Turkey and New Zealand oppose censorship of IYSSE by Sydney's Macquarie University

Our reporters
11 July 2023

Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia is continuing to receive statements from around the world opposing its arbitrary and anti-democratic censorship of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE).

University management is refusing to affiliate an IYSSE club, despite it having met all of the stipulated requirements. The letter below, from IYSSE members in New Zealand, exposes the false pretext used to justify this attack, and its purpose, the suppression of the only anti-war organisation on campus.

The New Zealand letter is followed by messages from the IYSSE in Turkey and France. The former country plays a major role in the geopolitics of Europe, and has been a site of increasing social opposition, especially after the devastating earthquake that claimed tens of thousands of lives earlier this year. The latter, France, is the scene of a mass upheaval of young people against police violence, following on from major struggles by the working class against the government's unilateral imposition of a hike to the pension age.

To the Macquarie University Student Groups team,

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, joins with students in Australia and internationally in opposing the blatantly anti-democratic decision by Macquarie University in Sydney to refuse to grant affiliation to the IYSSE, despite it meeting all the necessary requirements for affiliated clubs at the university.

At the end of May, Macquarie University refused to register the IYSSE—which has been active on the campus for 12 years—based on the completely bogus claim that it “does not meet the requirement of being unique.” Outrageously, the university suggested that IYSSE members should disband their organisation and join the Macquarie Socialists, which it said had “the same aim and purpose.”

In the first place: who are the university authorities to dictate which political organisations students can and cannot join? There is simply no justification for the university's action, which is an attack on freedom of speech and freedom of association. We also find it completely unacceptable that, for more than a month, Macquarie University has ignored the

appeals made by the IYSSE against its disaffiliation.

Secondly, Macquarie Socialists' aims are diametrically opposed to those of the IYSSE. This is clear to anyone with access to the Internet. The differences have been well-documented on the World Socialist Web Site, and the Macquarie Socialists themselves recently stated that they “reject the claim that we share the same aim and purpose as IYSSE.”

The IYSSE is the student and youth movement of the International Committee of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution. On campuses, we seek to introduce students to a Marxist understanding of history and the present social and economic crisis, in opposition to the prevailing climate of postmodernism and cynicism. We seek to mobilise opposition to war and social inequality, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, based on the perspective that none of these problems can be resolved outside of the fight by the international working class to put an end to capitalism.

Macquarie Socialists is part of Socialist Alternative, a pseudo-left group that exists to provide a “left” cover for capitalist parties such as Labor and the Greens and for the trade union bureaucracy, as these organisations impose sweeping attacks on workers' living standards in Australia. On the central issue facing young people, the danger of a third world war, Socialist Alternative has lined up firmly behind the US, NATO and their allies in the escalating war against Russia over Ukraine.

Macquarie University's refusal to affiliate the IYSSE is a clear case of politically-motivated censorship, and an attack on the rights of all students, which must be opposed. It is part of a global drive by universities in the imperialist countries to promote conformism and suppress opposition, in particular, to the increasingly nationalist and militarist climate that is being fostered on the campuses.

It cannot be a coincidence that the IYSSE has been banned from Macquarie University following its successful public meeting there in April, “The War in Ukraine and How to Stop It.” The IYSSE at Victoria University of Wellington held a meeting on the same day on the same topic. Both events were

targeted by supporters of NATO and the Ukrainian regime, who waged a social media campaign against the IYSSE and contacted both universities to try and stop the meetings from going ahead.

It should also be noted that the IYSSE at Berlin's Humboldt University is now facing a campaign of intimidation and attacks on its freedom of speech, because of its opposition to the Ukraine war, the remilitarisation of Germany and the relativisation of Nazi crimes by academics at Humboldt.

In its move to suppress the IYSSE, Macquarie University is aligning itself with the most reactionary, pro-war forces, which are determined to stamp out the only organisation on campus that stands against imperialism and capitalism.

The IYSSE in New Zealand calls on all students to oppose this act of political censorship and demand that Macquarie University reverse its anti-democratic decision, and allow the IYSSE to affiliate as a club.

Sincerely,
Cody W, Amara R, Lewis B and Tom P on behalf of the IYSSE at Victoria University of Wellington.

To whom it may concern,

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality in Turkey strongly condemns your denial of club status to the IYSSE at Macquarie University.

The justification that the IYSSE and the Macquarie Socialists have the "same aims" is a false argument designed to prevent our political activity at the campus. The IYSSE has well-documented political differences with the MQ Socialists club of Socialist Alternative, notably with regard to the NATO war against Russia in Ukraine.

It is no coincidence that the denial of IYSSE club status was made in the same period as the attempted sabotage of the IYSSE's anti-war meeting in Canada by the state-backed right-wing extremists and similar attacks on the work of IYSSE (Germany) in the elections for the student parliament at Humboldt University in Berlin. In fact, the IYSSE, as an international organization orienting to the working class, is the only youth movement which has been actively campaigning against the imperialist war threatening humanity with a nuclear Third World War.

Preventing the founding of a student club on campus under various pretexts clearly violates basic democratic rights. We express our solidarity with IYSSE in Australia and demand that you overturn this antidemocratic decision.

Harun Ak?n
IYSSE convener in Turkey

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express the opposition of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in France to your refusal to grant club status to our organisation at Macquarie university.

The IYSSE had been a club for over a decade at Macquarie

and had its status unjustly revoked last year. Your decision to deny the IYSSE club status despite it fulfilling all of the necessary requirements is a blatantly anti-democratic attack on the rights of students at your university to form clubs that represent their own political views.

Your claim that the IYSSE has the "same aim and purpose" as the Macquarie Socialists has no basis. The IYSSE and Macquarie Socialists have fundamental political differences on the critical questions facing young people at Macquarie, across Australia and internationally. To name just the most significant of these differences, this includes the war in Ukraine, the political role played by the trade union bureaucracies and the defence of democratic rights. The student body at Macquarie has a democratic right to hear and engage with the IYSSE's unique perspectives on the most pressing questions of our age.

These are not cosmetic differences, but result from the fundamental differences in political orientation between the Macquarie Socialists and the IYSSE, particularly the latter's orientation to the international working class. Due to our unique perspective, IYSSE clubs function independently at universities across the globe, including at the University of Melbourne.

This is only confirmed by the Macquarie Socialists group's slanderous attacks on the IYSSE through the falsification of our political positions. Such attacks show your assertion that the two organizations have the "same aim and purpose" is not only false but absurd, as well as being an illegitimate justification for the denial of club status to the Macquarie IYSSE.

For the reasons above the IYSSE in France expresses our full solidarity with the struggle of the Macquarie IYSSE to restore its club status and we demand you immediately reverse the decision to suppress the democratic rights of our group and the Macquarie student body.

Samuel Tissot,
Member of the IYSSE (France)



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact