

To stop fascism and war, young people must fight for socialism!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality (Australia)

10 February 2025

University and high school students are returning to classes this year in the aftermath of a political earthquake: the coming to power of US President Donald Trump. His return to office marks a turning point in the historic crisis of global capitalism, which is lurching towards fascism and nuclear world war.

Trump is not an American phenomenon but the sharpest expression of a massive shift to the right by capitalist governments around the world.

This represents a violent realignment of politics with the reality of staggering social inequality, economic crisis and war. Under these conditions, the ruling class in every country is seeking to do away with democracy. Trump is the true face of capitalism in a period of acute crisis.

His government, overwhelmingly backed by the wealthiest sections of the American ruling elite, is the open rule of the oligarchy. This is exemplified in the prominent role of far-right billionaire Elon Musk, who performed two Nazi salutes at a celebration of Trump's inauguration.

Trump's first weeks in office have seen the unfolding of an explicitly fascistic program. That includes a broad assault on the democratic rights of the entire population under the fraudulent pretext of an "invasion" of immigrants and rapid moves to overturn the Constitution and impose dictatorship.

While waging war on the working class at home, Trump is escalating US imperialism's wars abroad. He has threatened all-out global trade war, is committed to advancing Washington's war drive against China, and plans to acquire Canada, Greenland and Mexico.

This is not just Trump's program but the program of the ruling class. This is demonstrated by the Democratic Party's response, which desperately seeks to normalise the Trump administration. Having now dropped all references to the word "fascism," the Democrats lie prostrate before Trump and declare how willing they are to "work with" his government. This is because they represent the same oligarchic interests he serves.

The turn to far-right and fascistic forces by the capitalist class is a global phenomenon. In Germany, the neo-Nazi Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) is fast becoming the most powerful establishment party. The Italian government of Giorgia Meloni openly traces its history to the fascist Mussolini regime. In

Argentina, Javier Milei is providing a model for the wholesale destruction of social programs and the conditions of the working class.

The same processes that have resulted in Trump's fascistic administration and massive global political upheaval are at work in Australia.

The Anthony Albanese Labor government has responded enthusiastically to the criminal Trump's inauguration as president, which Foreign Minister Penny Wong attended. In advance of the upcoming federal election, Albanese and Liberal-National Opposition Leader Peter Dutton have begun by making a pitch as to who is more capable of collaborating with the would-be Führer Trump.

At the centre of this line-up is the drive to war. The signature policy of the Labor government has been to complete Australia's transformation into a frontline state for war with China. Now, Labor is signalling that it will collaborate with Trump as he deepens the confrontation with Beijing, which is viewed as the chief threat to American capitalist development. This is part of Labor and the entire ruling elite's support for a developing global war, aimed at a new imperialist redivision of the world.

The US-backed genocide in Gaza, now metastasising into a regional war in the Middle East and targeting Iran, is one component of this emerging world war. The other battlefronts include Ukraine, where NATO is engaged in a proxy war against Russia, and the South China Sea, where the US is aggressively provoking China.

The drive by US imperialism and its allies towards world war does not arise out of the character of individual politicians. It arises from the fundamental and inherent contradictions of the capitalist profit system itself, which cannot be resolved peacefully by the capitalist class and its political parties.

Those contradictions were analysed more than a century ago by revolutionary Marxists Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky, who co-led the 1917 Russian Revolution. They are: (1) between the world economy and its division into competing nation-states, and (2) between the private ownership of the means of production and their socialised character, operated by a billions-strong international working class.

They can only be resolved in one of two ways: either by the

ruling class—through world war and fascist dictatorship—or by the international working class—through a unified socialist movement and the seizure of political power.

The drive to war, together with the war against social conditions, will provoke massive struggles by the working class. Already in the US there is widespread opposition to the Trump administration. In Australia, as in every country, governments are sitting on a powder keg of opposition.

Taking forward this emerging global movement of the working class means drawing lessons from the past period and understanding the class character of every political tendency.

Labor is an unalloyed party of the banks and big business. Its alignment with the Trump administration is not only over the question of war with China, but extends across the board. While the Labor government is not fascist, it has responded to its deepening crisis by lurching ever further to the right. In addition to militarism, its policies have been enforcing the deepest attacks on working-class social conditions in decades.

Labor has launched a frontal assault on democratic rights, including through a campaign against immigrants that directly parallels Trump's measures and attempts to criminalise widespread opposition to the genocide in Gaza.

The Greens are no alternative. For the past 16 months, they have played a key role in politically neutering the opposition to the Israeli genocide, subordinating it to impotent appeals to the very Labor government that is complicit in the mass murder. Now, with an election looming, the Greens are appealing for a formal alliance with a Labor government that would collaborate with Trump, with the genocide and with war against China. That is because the Greens are a capitalist party of the upper middle-class, hostile to socialism.

A particularly pernicious role is played by fake-left groups, which claim to be socialist but seek to chain workers and youth to the political establishment. Organisations such as Socialist Alternative and Socialist Alliance have also peddled the sham that Labor can be pressured to end its support for the genocide.

These are pro-imperialist organisations. While seeking to prevent the anti-Gaza genocide movement from moving in a socialist direction, the pseudo-left explicitly supports other imperialist operations, including the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine and the CIA regime change operation in Syria.

Their rotten positions are not a mistake. The pseudo-left broke from the Trotskyist movement decades ago, rejecting the revolutionary role of the working class. Today, they speak for an affluent layer of the upper middle-class which seeks to improve its own position within capitalism through the use of identity politics based on race, gender and sexuality.

The IYSSE, as the youth movement of the Socialist Equality Party and the world Trotskyist movement, is the only political tendency that advances a genuine socialist perspective based on the lessons of history and the interests of the working class.

The experience of the Albanese Labor government, led by the

so-called “left” faction of the Labor Party, has demonstrated starkly that the growing crisis will not be resolved through parliament or elections. It can only be resolved through the unification of workers in a fight for world socialism.

Only a socialist society, based on the needs of society as a whole, not profits for the tiny oligarchic elite who have amassed unprecedented levels of wealth at the expense of the vast majority of the global population, can end the impasse and take humanity forward.

That is a revolutionary question. It means building a revolutionary leadership in the working class that can direct the mass struggles on the agenda. We call on youth and students to join the IYSSE and fight to advance a socialist perspective among workers. The task is to go to factories, docks, warehouses and other workplaces, and mobilise the working class in a unified struggle against world capitalism.

This is not the first time mankind has faced such a crisis. While today's conditions do not exactly mirror those of the 1930s, there are parallels. Almost 100 years ago, German capitalism turned to fascism, in the form of Hitler, to defeat the German working class and pave the way for war, in a desperate attempt to achieve European domination and resolve its economic crisis.

Hitler's rise to power was not inevitable or unstoppable but was enabled by the German Communist Party's betrayals of working-class leadership. Opposition to the Trump administration is building and will grow, but a political perspective—a socialist perspective—is required to ensure that the tragedy of the 1930s is not repeated.

Youth must prepare for the coming eruption of the class struggle by educating themselves on the historical experiences of the working class in the twentieth century and the history of Trotskyism—the Marxism of the twenty-first century.

We urge all young people: Take up the fight against war and fascism today! Build a mass socialist movement of the working class! Join the IYSSE!



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:
wsws.org/contact