

May Day 2025

The IYSSE's fight for a Marxist political culture among youth

Darren Paxton
8 May 2025

This speech was given by Darren Paxton, leader of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (UK), at the International May Day 2025 Online Rally, held Saturday, May 3.

Students and young people around the world are fighting for a future free from war, fascism, social inequality, economic crisis and climate catastrophe.

Last summer, they took the lead in protest movements in Kenya and Bangladesh that shook those countries' governments to the core.

In Greece, they were in the front lines of the fight for justice after the deadly Tempi rail crash and the state cover-up which followed.

They initiated historic protests in Serbia against government corruption, triggered by the Novi Sad train station collapse.

And in all the main imperialist countries, they have taken up the struggle against the Gaza genocide and the complicity of their own governments.

Our last May Day rally was held amid the wave of student encampments rolling across the US, the UK and elsewhere. The Biden administration and other world governments responded with brutal police crackdowns on these encampments.

But now Donald Trump, Keir Starmer and their international counterparts are deepening this repression with academic suspensions, arrests and deportations.

These include the pro-Palestinian student activists Mahmoud Khalil, Momodou Taal and Rûmeysa Öztürk, who have either been arrested by ICE Gestapo agents or, in the case of Taal, forced to self-deport from the US. Despite being a British-Gambian citizen, Taal was abandoned by the Starmer government.

The International Youth and Students for Social

Equality have participated energetically in this global movement of young people, and we stand in solidarity with all students and workers facing political repression.

And we fight to bring forward the political lessons which must guide the struggle in defense of democratic rights and for an end to fascism and war. These are the lessons of Marxism, the lessons of Trotskyism.

There is no shortage of determination and self-sacrifice among young people today or of hostility to social inequality, military violence and police-state rule. What must be developed is an understanding of the capitalist system at the root of these problems, and of the revolutionary class struggle which can bring it to an end.

Immense pressure is being brought to bear on politically active young people to prevent such conclusions from being drawn. The professional ideologues of the bourgeoisie, aided by the pseudo-left, promote all manner of reformist, pacifist and nationalist diversions. And above all, a skepticism in the revolutionary potential of the working class.

This must be fought and overcome. Students and young people cannot meet the enormous political and social challenges they confront by themselves. They cannot pressure capitalist governments and politicians to act in their name.

The horrors and injustices multiplying across the world today are the responsibility of a capitalist class mired in crisis. It sees no way out except through war on the working class at home and abroad.

There is no fixing this social system. It must be overthrown. That task falls to the international working class.

The last years have seen waves of strikes throughout the world, as workers are driven to fight against intolerable social conditions. To this point, workers' struggles have been reined in by trade union bureaucracies acting arm in arm with capitalist governments and major corporations. But support for a rank-and-file rebellion is growing, led by the IWA-RFC.

Aiding this rebellion is a vital task for socialist-minded students and young workers. A return to the levels of class struggle seen in the revolutionary decades of the 20th century will transform the political situation, turning the tide on right-wing reaction.

The most decisive political role to be played by young people is to help infuse the emerging working class movement with a Marxist political culture. That begins by educating ourselves.

The IYSSE, the youth movement of the International Committee of the Fourth International, stands in the tradition of the Russian Revolution.

We stand in continuity with Leon Trotsky's fight for socialist internationalism against the nationalist counterrevolution represented by Stalinism.

We base ourselves on the decades-long struggle against every political tendency which tried to liquidate the Fourth International founded by Leon Trotsky.

These are the principled foundations for the mass revolutionary socialist movement against capitalism and war which must be built.

Join the IYSSE today to begin your own training as a fighter for Trotskyism in the working class. And take your place in the ranks of revolutionary fighters for a socialist future.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact