

As capitalism hurtles to dictatorship and world war, young people must join the struggle for socialism!

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University and school students returning to class in 2026 are confronted with a world in convulsion, as the ruling elites implement a program of authoritarianism, genocide and war. To halt this descent into the abyss, young people must take up a fight against the source of the crisis, the outmoded capitalist system itself.

The past four weeks have seen a sharp turning point in world politics, underscoring the urgency of this fight. In the United States, the centre of world capitalism, the fascistic Trump administration is waging war on the population at home and abroad. The destruction of all democratic norms and the development of naked rule by the oligarchy is not an American issue, but expresses the trajectory of capitalism everywhere.

The city of Minneapolis is under virtual paramilitary occupation by Trump's ICE Gestapo agents, aimed at terrorising the population. The cold-blooded execution of Renée Good and Alex Pretti are part of a fascist conspiracy, led by the White House, to overthrow the Constitution and erect dictatorship.

The Trump administration has supported the killings, claiming ICE thugs have "absolute immunity," and is asserting its legal right to murder its own citizens. This has provoked an explosion of opposition in the working class in Minnesota and nationally, with the question of a nationwide general strike becoming popular among workers and youth.

The Democratic Party, which voted for Trump's massive military buildup, is offering no resistance to the wannabe dictator's fascist agenda because it defends the same financial aristocracy and its class interests.

The intensification of class struggle in the US has global significance. It reveals that the defence of basic democratic rights will not come from the corporate media or any of the official parties, whether the Democrats or its counterparts globally. Such a defence will only come from below: the international working class. That is the force to which young people must turn to stop dictatorship.

The struggle against authoritarian rule must be linked to the fight against imperialist war. In the first days of the new year, the US launched a flagrantly criminal military operation against Venezuela, invading the country, abducting its president, and placing the nation's vast oil reserves and mineral resources under the effective control of Washington.

This illegal act marks a return to naked colonialism, as US imperialism embarks on a plan to establish control over the entire Western Hemisphere, without a shred of democratic pretence. Trump has also threatened to annex Greenland, a move which is breaking apart the decades-long alliance with European imperialism and could mean the end of NATO. Trump has already bombed Iran, and is threatening that country with imminent war as part of a bid to dominate the Middle East.

This signals that all the postwar rules and restraints on the predations of the imperialist powers are being torn up, and that society is rushing back to the late 19th century days of colonial conquest and plunder. The main goal of Washington's war plans is to secure its dominance of the world economy, primarily aimed at countering China, its main economic rival.

All of this is leading towards authoritarian rule and a catastrophic nuclear world war. But those dangers do not stem from Trump as an individual. He is only the most grotesque manifestation of a rotting capitalist order, based on the bloated privileges of a billionaire oligarchy whose rapidly expanding wealth is incompatible with democracy.

Governments worldwide are aligning with the rush towards war and authoritarianism. In Australia, the Albanese Labor government has dramatically accelerated the adoption of police-state rule in the wake of the Bondi terror attack.

That reactionary attack was exploited by Labor and the entire political and media establishment to pass anti-protest laws, heighten emergency powers, and seek to ban the mass protests against the Gaza genocide. Under the false banner of combating "antisemitism," a label used to slander all criticism of the Israeli regime, the federal government wants to suppress freedom of speech in all spheres of society.

Schools and universities are on the frontlines. Immediately after the Bondi attack, Labor established an Antisemitism Education Taskforce. Its open aim is to force Zionist propaganda on students by rewriting curricula, intimidate educators into silence and threaten institutions that do not suppress opposition to Israeli war crimes with defunding or even closure.

The government's assault on freedom of protest and political expression are not just aimed at anti-genocide sentiment, but against the working class as a whole and its democratic rights. Labor is waging this attack under conditions where the Australian

ruling class recognises that social eruptions like what is unfolding in the US will occur here. They are preemptively preparing to suppress mass struggle by workers and youth.

That is also the aim of the ban on under-16s accessing social media. Its purpose is not to protect children, but to prevent them from accessing independent information, engaging in political discussion and organising against war, austerity and inequality.

Albanese has also ensured the country's transformation into a frontline state for a US-led war against China. This includes joint military basing operations with the Pentagon, the AUKUS wartime pact, and ramping up military spending. This has gone hand in hand with Labor's support for the Gaza genocide, the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine and militarism all over the world.

Labor has presided over this right-wing agenda because it is a key party of capitalist rule, fully committed to advancing the Australian ruling elite's geopolitical interests and defending its wealth.

The massive concentration of wealth in the hands of a tiny super-rich minority, in every country, is the root cause of war and dictatorship. Fascist billionaire Elon Musk is scheduled to become the world's first trillionaire. Australia's 48 billionaires have more wealth than the poorest 11 million people.

Such profound levels of inequality cannot be maintained democratically but require dictatorial measures. Therefore, young people who want to fight against dictatorship and war must take up a fight against capitalism.

There is no shortage of opposition among workers and youth worldwide to these developments, as the eruption of mass struggle in the US against Trump's agenda makes clear. The key question, however, is how that struggle will be directed and on what political program. Answering that question means young people need to draw sharp lessons from recent struggles, which have failed to stop the crisis of world capitalism.

The past two years have witnessed continuous global mass protests against the Gaza genocide, the worst imperialist crime of the modern era. But those protests have so far been aimed at putting pressure on capitalist governments, involved in the genocide, to "do the right thing" and change their policy.

That line has been continuously advocated by the Greens and the Australian fake-left organisations such as Socialist Alternative, Solidarity, and Socialist Alliance. All of them have peddled illusions that war can be ended through appeals to the pro-war Labor Party, while the state responds with criminalisation and repression.

The Greens hailed the federal government's Royal Commission into the Bondi shooting, which has nothing to do with establishing the truth of how the perpetrators were able to carry out Australia's deadliest terrorist attack, but is aimed at blaming mass opposition to the genocide for the atrocity. This is because, behind their progressive posturing, they are a capitalist party that defends the Australian ruling class and its political interests.

Senior union leaders, who have prevented any industrial action against the genocide, have also joined the chorus demanding that protests be suppressed.

The pseudo-left, meanwhile, present Labor as victims of a far-right campaign in the wake of Bondi. Far from promoting a

socialist perspective to mobilise workers against the Labor government, these organisations are tying young people to the capitalist framework by channelling mass outrage into the impotent dead-end of parliamentary appeals.

This is because the pseudo-left are pro-imperialist tendencies who, while claiming to oppose the killing of Palestinians, have openly cheered on US imperialist violence in Libya, Syria, and Ukraine. As organisations based on a privileged layer of the upper middle class, predominantly in academia and the corrupt trade union bureaucracies, they have nothing to do with socialism and are trying to prevent a mass explosion of the working class, independent of the major parties.

Young people today are living in revolutionary times. Capitalism is hurtling humanity into the abyss, and we do not have unlimited time. The crisis will not be resolved through protest alone, or moral appeals to the powers that be. Instead, youth need to dedicate themselves to building a revolutionary movement of the working class.

That means going to the factories, warehouses, logistics hubs, universities, and fighting for workers to build their own organisations of struggle, rank-and-file committees, completely independent of all capitalist parties and their supporters in the union bureaucracies.

Such a movement must be based on a socialist program, aimed at expropriating the enormous fortunes held by billionaires, banks, and corporations and placing them under the democratic control of workers internationally.

Above all, youth who are serious in taking up this fight must educate themselves on the historical struggles of the working class in the 20th century. Socialism AI, a powerful new chatbot launched by the world Trotskyist movement, of which the IYSSE is the youth wing, must be adopted as a tool for this education and for the building of socialist consciousness among workers.

We appeal to all young people to get involved in the fight against world war and fascism today. Take your part in the struggle for socialism and join the IYSSE!



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