

Join the IYSSE in the fight for a socialist future against war, dictatorship and social devastation!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality (Türkiye)
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Students in Türkiye and around the world are returning to school amid an intensifying wave of war, dictatorship and social devastation. At the same time, social anger and struggles are growing in the working class and among young people.

The mass struggle of high school students against austerity that has spread across France, together with strikes, the protests by young people in Germany against conscription and militarism, and the movement against the housing crisis in Spain that has drawn hundreds of thousands and raised the call for a “general strike,” mark the development of an explosive social movement in Europe and internationally.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), the student and youth organization of the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi – Dördüncü Enternasyonal (Socialist Equality Party – Fourth International), is fighting, together with comrades all over the world, to direct the leftward movement among young people toward the only way forward: the struggle of the working class for international socialism against the capitalist profit system.

The war of aggression launched by the United States and Israel against Iran on February 28 has expanded from the Strait of Hormuz to the Red Sea and Yemen. In Gaza, the genocide carried out by the Zionist state of Israel continues under the cover of a “ceasefire.” The war waged by NATO against Russia in Ukraine has, in its fifth year, entered a new stage in which the European powers are escalating the conflict and the danger of nuclear war is publicly discussed. The ruling classes are resorting to dictatorial methods to impose programs of war and austerity that have no popular support anywhere. These and other fundamental global problems such as climate change arise from the essential contradictions of the capitalist profit system: between the social character of production and private ownership of the means of production, and between the global character of the economy and the division of the world into rival nation-states. The only progressive way out is the revolutionary intervention of the international working class and the establishment of a world socialist federation.

Imperialism, the highest stage of capitalism, is driving the great powers to redivide the world in the struggle for markets, resources and geopolitical supremacy. Gaza, Iran, Ukraine, the imperialist aggression against Venezuela and Cuba in Latin America, and the preparations for war against China are all fronts in the same global war.

The Turkish bourgeoisie, bound hand and foot to NATO and imperialism, is being drawn into these wars in pursuit of its own reactionary interests. This is expressed in the mounting tensions with Israel and Greece, the plans to provide military support to defend the Saudi regime in Yemen, and the growing collaboration with the NATO powers that are in a de facto state of war with Russia. War is an inevitable product of the capitalist system, and it is therefore impossible to fight

against war without fighting against capitalism and for socialism. The force that must lead this struggle is the international working class, the only force capable of building a global economy based on social need, not profit.

We will not be cannon fodder!

The powers that gathered at the NATO summit in Ankara in July reaffirmed their pledge to raise military spending to 5 percent of GDP. These resources will be cut from education, health care and jobs. While the cost of war and militarism is imposed on the working class and youth through intensified exploitation, taxes, austerity, destruction and death, resources are being transferred to the arms corporations and the financial oligarchy. Türkiye’s military spending rose 7.2 percent in 2025 over the previous year and has increased 94 percent since 2016.

In Europe, the way is being cleared for conscription. In Germany, all men turning 18 are required to fill out a military service questionnaire, with compulsory medical examinations to be introduced in 2027. France, Italy and Belgium are expanding their military service programs. But these policies are meeting growing resistance among young people.

The ruling classes are responding to this radicalization by turning to authoritarian forms of rule and cultivating fascistic and far-right forces. This international phenomenon finds its sharpest expression in the United States, in the Trump administration, which embodies the rule of the financial oligarchy. The government of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who boasts of being a “friend” of Trump—the imperialist war criminal who has enabled the genocide in Gaza and launched war against Iran—is also escalating police-state measures under the weight of mounting geopolitical and class pressures.

The connection between war and dictatorship is laid bare in Ukraine. The fascistic Zelensky regime, which defies popular opposition to the war and rules without elections, sentenced our 27-year-old comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk, the leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), to 15 years in prison on August 10. Comrade Bogdan was convicted of “high treason” for his political views: because he opposed the use of Ukrainian and Russian workers and youth as cannon fodder and wrote articles calling on them to unite against their own reactionary bourgeois regimes and against the war. The Socialist Equality Parties affiliated with the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and the IYSSE are waging a worldwide campaign to demand that Bogdan’s sentence is overturned and that he is released immediately. This campaign is an inseparable part of the struggle against imperialist war and fascism

today. We call on all students and young people to sign the petition demanding his freedom at and to support the campaign.

A generation robbed of its future

According to official figures, unemployment among young people aged 15–24 in Türkiye rose by 1.5 percentage points in the single month of July to 14.5 percent, and to 20.3 percent among young women. But the official figures do not count as unemployed those young people who have lost hope of finding a job or who work in temporary jobs lasting a few days. When they are taken into account, youth unemployment rises to 36 percent. This is 7 percentage points above the European Union average. The rate stood at 26 percent in 2002, when the Justice and Development Party (AKP) led by Erdoğan came to power.

Moreover, 6.5 million of the 24.1 million young people aged 15–34 are neither in education nor in employment. Worldwide, some 260 million young people are in the same situation. Artificial intelligence, which under the control of the working class would offer immense potential for the building of a socialist society globally, is being turned under capitalism into an instrument of mass layoffs and war.

The same profit system has turned hundreds of thousands of children into a cheap and precarious labour force under the guise of “vocational training” and the Vocational Education Center (MESEM) programs. While child labour and workplace deaths are on the rise, unemployment among university graduates is becoming chronic.

For most students, the years of university education mean great financial hardship and indebtedness. The grants and student loans provided by the Credit and Dormitories Institution (KYK) amount to just 4,000 lira (US\$81) a month for an undergraduate student. According to the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İİSİ), in August the hunger threshold for a family of four reached 37,388 lira (US\$760), and the monthly cost of living for a single worker reached 48,305 lira (US\$980). The KYK payment does not cover even one-tenth of the cost of living for a single young person.

With millions of students, KYK dormitory capacity is inadequate and shrinking. As a result, millions of students are condemned to exorbitant rents, fee-charging private dormitories or the foundation-run dormitories of religious communities. According to the August 2026 Rent Report, the average residential rent was 28,040 lira across Türkiye and 45,510 lira in Istanbul. The net minimum wage is only 28,075 lira (US\$570), meaning the average rent in Istanbul is 1.6 times the minimum wage. Many students work in precarious, low-wage jobs to be able to continue their studies and begin to worry about unemployment even before they graduate.

Repression intensifies

The government is responding to social conditions that have become intolerable by strengthening the apparatus of repression in every sphere. “Anti-disinformation” laws that place social media under state control are stifling freedom of the press and of expression. The blocking of hundreds of accounts in rapid succession, particularly on X, marks a major escalation.

As elected mayors are thrown into prison and removed from office, the right to vote and to stand for election is being trampled on. Political opposition and LGBTQ+ associations are being criminalized. Above all,

these police-state measures are aimed at preventing the development of a mass, independent movement of the working class. Emerging workers’ struggles are met with violent police repression. The mass detention of miners in Ankara and the arbitrary arrest of workers’ leaders this year show how the government will respond to the intensifying class struggle. The IYSSE demands the release of all political prisoners, the reinstatement of the elected officials removed from office, and an end to the political witch-hunt and censorship.

The Interior Ministry’s September 11 circular, “Security Measures at Universities,” orders the gathering of intelligence on student groups, the installation of cameras at protest sites, and the introduction of fingerprint and turnstile systems at campus entrances. The circular defines the housing and transportation problems that have been the subject of protests for years as areas of “exploitation” and “provocation.”

Amid this wave of repression, the establishment parties in the parliament expect people to believe the claim that “peace” and “democratization” are under way. But the negotiations and agreement between Ankara and the Kurdish movement are aimed not at a democratic resolution of the Kurdish question, but at forging an alliance of Turkish and Kurdish bourgeois nationalists in the deepening imperialist war in the Middle East. This is an integral part of the construction of a repressive regime directed at suppressing the growing opposition in the working class.

The IYSSE unconditionally defends the basic democratic rights of the Kurdish people, including education in their Kurdish mother tongue. This struggle requires establishing the political independence of Turkish and Kurdish workers and youth from their own ruling classes, and mobilizing them against both these ruling classes and their imperialist allies. All the political tendencies that attribute a progressive role to the Erdoğan regime or to the bourgeoisie as a whole, and support it on one pretext or another, have shown that they stand, in essence, not on the side of the struggle for democracy and socialism, but against it.

Join the IYSSE!

Basic social rights for all—high-quality, free education, housing, health care, access to culture and a decent job—cannot be secured under the existing socioeconomic system, which is dictated by the interests of the financial oligarchy. Imperialist war, which arises from these interests and from the insoluble contradictions of capitalism, cannot end without abolishing the nation-state system.

The struggle for peace, democracy and social equality requires an international program. Globalized production, by linking the working class across borders and immensely increasing its strength, has made clearer than ever that socialist internationalism is an objective necessity. The international working class is the only social force capable of reorganizing the economy based on social need rather than private profit. That is why the IYSSE fights to turn students to the working class and to Marxism, its scientific world outlook.

The world leadership of this struggle is the International Committee of the Fourth International. The ICFI is the political tendency that has upheld the heritage of the October Revolution of 1917 against the Stalinist betrayal and embodies the continuity of Marxism-Trotskyism. Learning the lessons of this history and developing a socialist understanding in the working class, in opposition to postmodernism and identity politics, are indispensable to the building of a revolutionary youth movement. We call on all students and young workers who want to fight for a socialist future to contact us to build an IYSSE club and take part in our political educational work.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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