

German youth protests: Education, not war! Mobilize the working class against social cuts, conscription and the police state!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality
29 October 2026

We are publishing here the statement of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) on the nationwide youth protests in Germany set for October 31, 2026.

On November 2, the IYSSE invite all interested school students, university students and young workers to an online discussion entitled “From the youth protests to the international class struggle: What perspective is necessary?” More information is available here.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) support the nationwide protests by school students, university students and young workers on Saturday against social cuts, dilapidated schools, rising living costs and the reintroduction of conscription. The growing opposition to the policies of the Merz-Klingbeil government is entirely justified. But to achieve these demands, a clear political perspective is necessary.

The decisive question is: How can a government be stopped that spends hundreds of billions of euros on rearmament and war while destroying education, healthcare and social security, and preparing young people to die on the battlefields of future wars?

We say clearly: The fight for better schools, affordable housing, secure jobs and a future without war requires the independent mobilization of the working class—that is, the vast majority who create all the wealth and are expected to bear the entire burden of war and crisis. The protests must not be confined to appeals to the government but must become the starting point for a broad movement against capitalism, militarism and dictatorship. This requires a socialist program. The major banks and corporations must be expropriated and placed under democratic control.

The government’s reaction to the announced protests already shows what young people are confronting. Even before the first demonstration has begun, politicians from the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Social Democratic Party (SPD) are warning of allegedly impending outbreaks of violence and extremist infiltration. The police and domestic intelligence service are preparing extensive operations. The Christian Democratic youth group in Berlin-Mitte has even demanded that the Bundeswehr be called upon to provide “administrative assistance” and that the protests be prevented.

These threats are no accident. The ruling class fears that the mass movement that has already engulfed France, Italy, Spain, Portugal

and numerous other countries will spread to Germany and merge with the struggles of the working class.

Events in France show what governments are prepared to do. President Emmanuel Macron has responded to protests against dilapidated schools, social cuts and militarism with brutal police violence. More than 10,000 people have been arrested and numerous young people seriously injured. Police weapons have torn off young people’s hands and destroyed their eyes. Yet the movement continues to grow. Hundreds of thousands are demonstrating, and increasing numbers of workers are joining them.

The events in France demonstrate that the ruling elites cannot simply be pressured into making concessions through protests and appeals. Macron is resorting to repression because his government intends to impose the demands of the financial markets and the enormous costs of military rearmament against the resistance of the population.

The Merz-Klingbeil government is pursuing the same policy. It is no more willing to abandon its agenda of war and austerity than Macron, the Meloni government in Italy or the Trump administration in the United States. Everywhere, the ruling classes are preparing to suppress growing opposition through authoritarian and dictatorial measures.

The destruction of education and the policy of war are not separate developments. They arise from the same capitalist crisis and the interests of the same financial oligarchy.

While schools are deteriorating, teachers are in short supply and families can barely afford their rent, hundreds of billions of euros are being mobilized in Germany for the largest military buildup since World War II. The Bundeswehr is to be massively expanded and prepared for a direct war against Russia. The reintroduction of conscription is a central component of these war preparations.

German imperialism is already driving forward the international escalation of war. Germany has become Kyiv’s largest European supporter and is fuelling the war against Russia with ever more weapons deliveries and military commitments. At the same time, the German government is providing political and military support to Israel in its genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza. More than eight decades after Germany’s war of annihilation against the Soviet Union and the Holocaust, the German ruling class is demonstrating that it is once again prepared to commit the worst

crimes to enforce its imperialist interests.

At the same time, social inequality is intensifying worldwide. A tiny layer of billionaires is accumulating unimaginable wealth while millions of people suffer from falling real wages, rising prices and social cuts. Governments subordinate all social needs to the profit interests of corporations and the military objectives of their states.

This policy cannot be ended through a change of government within the existing political system. The Left Party seeks to direct growing opposition toward appeals to the federal government and parliamentary manoeuvres. At the same time, it is preparing a coalition with the SPD and Greens in Berlin, whose joint exploratory agreement provides for further budgetary discipline and the expansion of the police and security apparatus.

The trade union bureaucracies also prevent the development of a united struggle. While they do not lift a finger here in Germany and themselves help organize the attacks in workplaces, they restrict the opposition in France to isolated days of action and negotiate with the very government that is violently attacking young people. They seek to keep the struggles under their control instead of mobilizing the entire working class.

The great strength of the current protest movement lies in its international development and the fact that it is drawing in ever broader layers of society. In Spain, masses are demonstrating against unaffordable housing; in Greece, school students, teachers and doctors are protesting against social cuts; and in Italy and Portugal, workers and young people are fighting against declining living standards and militarism. In Germany, too, tens of thousands of school students have already taken to the streets against conscription.

The next task is to consciously unite these struggles. School and university students cannot defeat the war policies and the power of the financial oligarchy on their own. This requires the mobilization of the working class, without whose labor no factory, administration or social infrastructure can function.

The working class possesses the social power to bring production to a halt and challenge the capitalist order. It must wield this power independently of the established parties and trade union apparatuses.

The IYSSE and the Socialist Equality Party (SGP) therefore call for the building of rank-and-file committees in schools, universities, workplaces and neighborhoods, democratically elected and controlled by those involved. They must be independent of the capitalist parties and trade union bureaucracies and link the different struggles together.

These committees must unite across national borders in the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). Their aim must be to mobilize workers in Germany and throughout Europe for a common struggle and to prepare a Europe-wide general strike against war, dictatorship and social devastation.

This is not simply about defending individual social gains. It is about which class rules society and in whose interests its enormous productive resources are used.

The demands for good schools, a secure future and an end to conscription are incompatible with a society in which the banks,

major corporations and super-rich control the economy and governments enforce their interests through war and repression.

The fight against social cuts and militarism must therefore be linked to the demand for the expropriation of the financial oligarchy and the taking of political power by the working class. The major banks and corporations must be transformed into public property under the democratic control of the workers, and the economy reorganized according to social needs rather than private profits.

The enormous resources currently devoted to war and the enrichment of a small minority must instead be used for education, healthcare, housing, secure jobs and the cultural needs of the entire population.

The international protest movement is an expression of a profound crisis of capitalism. The same crisis that drives the ruling classes toward rearmament, war and dictatorship is bringing millions of workers and young people into struggle. The decisive question is whether this resistance will be united with a conscious socialist program.

As the youth organization of the world Trotskyist movement, the IYSSE fight to build an international revolutionary leadership in the working class.

We call on all young people who want to fight against war, social inequality and oppression to study the program of the IYSSE and the SGP and take up the struggle for international socialism.

The alternative is socialism or capitalist barbarism!



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