From youth protests in Europe to international class struggle: IYSSE meeting in Türkiye discusses the perspective for the movement

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On Tuesday, November 10, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in Türkiye held an online meeting titled “From the Youth Protests in Europe to the International Class Struggle: What Should Be the Perspective?” The meeting was attended by high school and university students and young workers. Alex Lantier, national secretary of the Parti de l’égalité socialiste (PES—Socialist Equality Party) in France, and Tamino Wilck of the IYSSE in Germany addressed the meeting by video.

Can Denizli, on behalf of the IYSSE, stressed that the meeting was itself an international event. The struggle of young people cannot be confined within national borders, he said. The source of the problems they face is the capitalist system, and youth must turn to the working class, the social force capable of building a world society based on human need. Denizli pointed to the explosion at the HABA? iron and steel plant in Alia?a, ?zmir, the previous day, which, according to official figures at the time, had claimed the lives of 16 workers. He described the disaster as the result of safety measures being disregarded in the pursuit of profit.

France: “October 2026 is a new May ’68”

Alex Lantier explained that France is passing through its deepest political crisis since the general strike of May 1968. The movement began on September 21 with the occupation of the Saint-Exupéry high school in Créteil, near Paris, and rapidly spread across the country. On October 17, high school students joined forces with the “yellow vests.” Even the Interior Ministry counted 550,000 demonstrators. The government has refused to make a single concession. Since September, more than 12,400 people, mostly minors, have been arrested. Dozens of young people have lost a hand or an eye because of police violence. On October 24, 70,000 police and soldiers were deployed.

Lantier traced the government’s intransigence to the bankruptcy of the French state. Public debt has reached €3.5 trillion, or around 120 percent of national income. Debt servicing alone this year amounts to €65 billion, more than either the education or the military budget. While the European powers are planning up to €800 billion in additional spending on rearmament, NATO is preparing a blockade of Kaliningrad.

The ruling class is pursuing a two-pronged strategy. Alongside repression, the trade union bureaucracies and Jean-Luc Mélenchon have been assigned the task of bringing the movement back under the control of the state. The bureaucracies held back the working class for six weeks and reduced national action to a single one-day strike on November 5.

Lantier pointed to the strike carried out on October 30 at 113 ports in 22 countries across five continents under the slogan “Dockworkers do not work for war.” This was a sign that the working class is beginning to enter the struggle against war. Action committees independent of the trade unions and the bourgeois parties, Lantier said, must unite through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) to prepare a Europe-wide general strike. Citing Trotsky’s *Whither France?* he stressed that a genuine general strike directly poses the question of power. The demands of young people and workers, he concluded, can be realized only through the expropriation of the financial oligarchy by the working class and the replacement of the European Union by the United Socialist States of Europe.

Germany: Money for education, not for war!

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Tamino Wilck reported that the spark of the movement has leapt to Germany, where 120,000 young people took to the streets, 15,000 of them in Berlin. The protests directly link the struggle against cuts in education with opposition to war, compulsory military service and a rearmament drive unprecedented since Hitler. As one student in Berlin put it: “I don’t want to go to war. I know that the people fighting on the other side are not my enemies, that my real enemies are the ones giving the orders.”

Wilck said the answer cannot be to appeal to the government. The protests must become the starting point for the mobilization of the working class and a Europe-wide general strike. He recalled that on the very day of the protests, the Left Party (Die Linke) in Berlin decided to open coalition talks with the SPD and the Greens to continue social cuts and rearmament. Taking the movement forward, he stressed, means fighting against capitalism—that is, fighting for socialism.

Türkiye: The same crisis, the same fear

In the second part of his remarks, Denizli addressed the significance of the international movement for young people in Türkiye. He said that the warning by Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) leader Devlet Bahçeli, “Don’t try to emulate France!”, and Erdo?an’s declaration that “Türkiye is not a country to be surrendered to the street” were admissions of the fear gripping the ruling class.

Denizli noted that of the 24 million young people aged 15 to 34, 6.5 million are neither in education nor in employment. In the draft budget for 2027, the resources allocated to defense, internal security and interest payments exceed those for education, health care and social assistance. As an example of the international character of state repression, Denizli pointed to the case of the Ukrainian comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk.

On November 6, the Turkish Grand National Assembly approved the Mecca Agreement, which binds Türkiye to a military alliance with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan that forms part of the US war against Iran. Denizli pointed out that the Republican People’s Party (CHP) also voted “yes,” and said that the “no” vote cast by the YEN? Party (NEW Party) should deceive no one. During the mass protests of March 2025, he recalled, the CHP leadership did everything in its power to prevent the movement from spreading to the workplaces.

Warning against the illusion that capitalism can be reformed, Denizli called for the building of independent rank-and-file committees in schools, workplaces and neighborhoods and for their unification at the international level through the IWA-RFC. He urged those in attendance to join the IYSSE and the Socialist Equality Party, stressing: “The choice before us is clear: socialism or capitalist barbarism.”

One of the contributions that followed focused on the case of Bogdan Syrotiuk. The speaker explained that the conviction handed down on August 10 was based not on a single act of espionage or sabotage, but on six articles published on the WSWS and on correspondence with its editors. The book *The Case of Bogdan Syrotiuk*, which brings together Bogdan’s writings and the documents of the case, was published by Mehring Books in September. The speaker called on participants to sign the petition at freebogdan.wsws.org.

Another participant spoke on the contemporary relevance of the 1917 October Revolution, whose 109th anniversary had been marked three days before the meeting. The speaker recalled that it was not diplomats, but the revolutionary movement of the working class, that brought the First World War to an end and stressed that what collapsed in 1991 was not socialism but Stalinism. Referring to the principles set out in “Socialism and the Fight Against War,” the statement issued by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) in 2016, the speaker explained that for young people in Türkiye this means fighting the war policies of the Turkish bourgeoisie, a member of the NATO alliance, and opposing the Mecca Agreement.

Another speaker addressed the correct approach to artificial intelligence and to Socialism AI, launched by the ICFI in December 2025. The ruling class, the speaker stressed, is using artificial intelligence for layoffs, surveillance, censorship and war. But the decisive question is not the technology itself, but which class wields it. Grounded in the Marxist classics and the WSWS archive of some 125,000 articles, Socialism AI is a tool for answering the questions of workers and young people based on the accumulated lessons of history.

Finally, an IYSSE member took the floor. Proceeding from Lenin’s dictum that “Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement,” the speaker presented the IYSSE’s program of theoretical education and invited those present to take part in it.

To set up an IYSSE chapter at your school and to take part in our online education program, contact us here.

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