

FIGHT GUN VIOLENCE!

FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM!

Rosa Luxemburg once said that humanity is faced with a choice between socialism and barbarism. The longer capitalism survives, the more stressful and violent life becomes. Is there anything more barbaric than a teenager going to an elementary school to kill young children? The Uvalde massacre marks a tipping point, transforming the shock and grief of thousands of students into outrage and a vow to put an end to the seemingly endless stream of mass school shootings.

The young generation has grown up in a world of crisis, violence, and conditions of perpetual fear and insecurity—the new normality in US schools. Such tragedies are always met with rehearsed outrage, platitudes, and crocodile tears from politicians and the media. But the youth are speaking up—rejecting the hollow “thoughts and prayers” from Biden and the rest of the capitalist politicians.

The nascent movement is giving voice to a range of social demands that go far beyond the empty and impotent “culture war” debate over gun control that has prevailed in Washington and the media until now. The question of safety at school and in working-class neighborhoods is a social question tied to jobs, housing, healthcare, funding for education, and more. This is not something that can be entrusted to the armed bodies of the capitalist state!

Although many students have expressed support for liberal gun-control measures, it's clear that a growing section of working-class youth has no trust in the capitalist state's ability to provide safety for the workers and poor. This is especially true in the aftermath of the historic George Floyd movement against police racism and brutality, and given law enforcement's abject failure to “serve and protect” in Uvalde.

The question of how the working class can defend itself against such attacks must be part of a broader discussion in the context of the crisis-ridden system of capitalism. This truly is a fight for our lives and futures. As long as the capitalists and their government control the main levers in the economy and society, there can be no guarantee of safety or quality of life for the working-class majority. For one, the production and distribution of arms must be placed under democratic workers' control. And starting immediately, teachers must be provided with school nurses and psychologists, counselors, social workers, more calendar days for teaching and fewer standardized tests, and smaller class sizes to allow teachers to get to know students and parents better.

Even the very young can sense that these shootings reflect a much deeper and systemic problem. As one New York City sixth-grader put it after yet another shooting, “My dad said he never worried about school shootings or had lockdown drills. Something had

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to have changed to go from not having to worry about it, to multiple school shootings. We have to see what changed to allow this to happen, to see what needs to change.”

For Marxists, this tragic pattern is, above all, an indication of the social decay of a system that was ripe to be overthrown long ago. Whatever the immediate motivations of the shooters, these mass killings, as with other forms of terror, reflect the impasse of a society in decline. A century after Lenin described capitalism as “horror without end,” millions of people find themselves living in a society in which they can see no future for themselves. Today’s youth are the first generation to have a lower standard of living than the one that came before it. As a result, off-the-chart levels of desperation, alienation, depression, mental illness, and countless other consequences of soul-crushing life under class society are pushing humanity to a breaking point.

After the Parkland massacre in 2018, the CEO of the NRA, Wayne LaPierre, warned that the growing youth movement was part of a “new socialist wave in America.” If young people continue to draw radical conclusions about the need to fight for social demands through class struggle—which must include a break with both the Democrats and Republicans—the aptly named “Generation Z” may indeed leave its mark on history as the last generation to come of age under the inhuman conditions of capitalism.

For a revolutionary socialist solution!

The working class can depend only on its own forces and organizations to guarantee its safety and quality of life!

Schools should be democratically run and defended by teachers, school workers, students, and parents, and the broader working class!

Quality education, childcare, and healthcare should be free and universal from the cradle to the grave!

Nationalize the arms industry under democratic workers’ control!

Break with the parties of Wall Street and build a mass, working-class socialist party!

**A BETTER WORLD IS POSSIBLE.
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