

IYSSE holds anti-war rallies in San Diego and Berkeley, California

Our reporters

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The International Youth and Students for Social Equality at San Diego State University and the University of California Berkeley held rallies Tuesday against the Obama administration's drive to war against Syria.

Speakers at the demonstrations exposed the lies being used to justify military aggression and explained the historical and political context of the drive to war.

UC Berkeley

The Berkeley demonstration was held at the university's Sproul Plaza. Up to 50 students held IYSSE picket signs and listened to speeches, while many more dropped in and out. *World Socialist Web Site* writer David Brown opened the rally with a speech that traced the political roots of the growth of militarism and the "war on terror."

"It's worth noting," he said "that next month marks the 12th anniversary of the invasion of Afghanistan and the beginning of America's endless wars. Next month children will turn 12 who have never known a day of peace."

Berkeley IYSSE president Joseph spoke next, explaining the international tensions driving the conflict in Syria. He also explained the difference between the IYSSE's politics and the traditional protest politics of the Berkeley campus.

"The previous protests on this campus tapped into a just anger in the student body over wars and budget cuts but channeled that anger behind electing Obama or Governor Brown, or writing letters to UC officials and holding drum circles. What have the results been?"

"Obama has been the most right-wing president in US history. Unwarranted spying and execution without trial are publicly defended by his administration. Meanwhile Brown has enacted unprecedented cuts to education.

"We are not here to appeal to the Democrats or Republicans but to organize students and workers for their own independent politics."

One student responded positively to the IYSSE's demonstration. "You're actually teaching us about the conflict and not just shouting slogans." Numerous students thanked the IYSSE for holding the rally.

That evening students interested in building the IYSSE attended the club's second meeting of the year to discuss the background of the Syrian conflict and begin planning the next stage in the fight against war.

San Diego State University

The San Diego demonstration was held at noon outside Hepner Hall, a busy intersection of students and faculty workers, and it attracted a mass of young people around the center of campus.

IYSSE members and branch president Jake Dean debunked the fraudulent justifications for military aggression against Syria and noted the similarities to the lead-up of the Iraq invasion in 2003. Speakers also covered related issues, such as the attack on democratic rights, exemplified by the manhunt for Edward Snowden, and the economic crisis. The speakers urged everyone in attendance to join the IYSSE at San Diego State University and the need to form independent working class organizations.

During the rally and after, IYSSE members interviewed students in attendance who voiced their opposition to the drive to war. Many expressed their desire to learn more about socialism and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality.

Estefanía, an SDSU student, said, “The war in Syria is not justified, there is no proof that Assad used chemical weapons. The US is inherently an imperialist country, and is going to attack Syria for its own gain.

“The US government is claiming that it wants to intervene on humanitarian grounds, but the US has been the complete opposite of humanitarian,” Estefanía said. “They say that children and innocent people are being killed, but there are constant drone strikes against Pakistan that are killing woman and children. The US has been the largest violator of international law and it’s hypocritical to say that these acts are being done for humanitarian purposes.”

Students expressed their anger about another imperialist war by the US government. Marna, a young woman who attended the demonstration, said, “Whether Assad used chemical weapons or not, we should be asking what is the role of the US in this conflict. Humanitarian intervention is only humanitarian when it benefits the US.”

Jaquelin, another student, expressed her frustration about the lie of chemical weapons. “It is absurd to say that other countries cannot use chemical weapons when the US used them in Iraq and Afghanistan. The US is the biggest hypocrite when it comes to international law.”

Asked about the potential consequences of a US war on Syria, she replied, “This can definitely lead to a third World War. What is to stop Russia and Israel from joining the war if the US plans to attack Syria?”



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