

“US is funding counterrevolution”

University of Michigan IYSSE opposes war on Syria

Tim Rivers
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The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at the University of Michigan (UM) Ann Arbor held a demonstration Thursday afternoon. Students on campus and between classes took leaflets and carried picket signs denouncing war against Syria, as speakers from the IYSSE and the Socialist Equality Party called on them to turn to the working class to build a movement against war.

“The entire justification for US military action is based on unsubstantiated claims,” declared Andre Damon, IYSSE national secretary, as students gathered on the steps of Hatcher Library in the center of the campus. “From the standpoint of international law, the US government does not have a leg to stand on,” he said.

Citing the outbreak of the First World War a hundred years ago, Damon posed the real and present danger of a new global holocaust. “The root cause of the drive to war is the capitalist system,” he said, urging those attending to join the IYSSE and go to factories and work places to build a socialist movement that would overturn the system and put an end to war.

Speaking on behalf of the Socialist Equality Party, Larry Porter pointed to the overwhelming opposition to the drive to war among the American population. “More than 90 percent oppose it,” he declared. Billions of dollars would be squandered on bombs and rockets in the coming slaughter in Syria, he said, while the government was cutting jobs and pensions of workers in Detroit and threatening to sell artwork from the Detroit Institute of Arts. Porter called upon students to combine the fight against war with the struggle to defend the culture and social rights of workers at home.

Young people at the rally spoke out against the war

plans in comments to the WWS. “We really are part of a global community,” said Hayden, a first year PhD student in conservation ecology. “What we do affects everyone else. I think it needs to come to the attention of the general public.”

Hayden said that the US Government is “funding counterrevolution” to get control of the resources in the region. “Given our history and looking at Vietnam, it’s likely they will go to war despite public opinion. ... This is Bush round two,” he said, referring to the lies used to launch a war against Iraq in 2003.

“I also really disagree with the drones,” Hayden added. “If Bush had been using drones, there would have been a huge outcry.

“Now we are funding the insurgents in Syria. The Al Nusra Front [a branch of Al Qaeda] were given arms by the United States. Obama is pursuing an imperialist agenda.”

Hayden referred to the history of US involvement in central Asia. “This is the same as when the Soviets were in Afghanistan. The CIA gave training and weapons to Osama bin Laden.”

Troy is an arts student. “It is not our problem over there,” he said. “Going to war will only make it worse. The only thing that will result is more innocent people being killed.” Explaining the shift in public opinion, he said, “Obama is a hypocrite. He got elected [by claiming to be] against war.”

A first year student in pre-med courses added, “The war in Iraq ended in chaos. Now the rebels in Syria are contributing to the chaos. War is not the solution. They wanted to get rid of Saddam Hussein, and the war has been continuing for a decade.”

“I disagree with anything about imperialist war,”

added Conrad, a 20-year-old psychology student. “I don’t know the details about Syria, but I know enough about the history to oppose it. If we are aligned with Al Qaeda in Syria, then we do not stand for anything.”

Olga, a junior, agreed. “I don’t think the United States should be in Syria,” she said. “The US government is pursuing its own self interest. I think there is more to it than chemical attacks, but I am not really sure what is behind it.”

Most of the students who spoke to the WSWWS were skeptical of both the Democrats and the Republicans. “There is no such thing as a good side in American politics,” Olga said.

“I am against it!” declared Sarah, a graduate student in the English Department. “I recall that Obama was going to promote peace. And I was excited about Obama because they said he was a Marxist and socialist. I wish he were, but he’s not.

“Capitalism is alienating people. I believed that because Obama is familiar with different economic systems that he was actually going to make a radical change. Just the opposite. Now he is behind Larry Summers who is one of those directly responsible for the crash of 2008. He is directly supporting him,” she said with disgust.



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