

IYSSE campaigns against war at San Diego State University

Our reporters
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The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at San Diego State University has held a number of events in recent weeks centered on the building of an international and socialist movement of the working class against war. This has included weekly meetings on current events and political theory as well as a graphic display on campus to educate students and workers about the global scope of US imperialism and its consequences.

The IYSSE has received a strong response from students, workers and youth.

Jasmine, a student originally from Iraq but now an American citizen, was deeply moved by the display, in particular the images of desperate refugees which she said she could relate to from personal experience. “I like the layout of the map, the presence of US troops. You’re able to see how spread out the US is around the world. I also liked the refugees section with the pictures which are painful to look at. A lot of people don’t understand what is going on.”

On the invasion of Iraq, she commented, “I was 100 percent against it. Look at the country now; it is torn apart.” When asked what she thought of the anti-war campaign of the IYSSE, she responded, “I think it’s a brilliant idea.”

Nick, a student who served in the military, also spoke to the IYSSE. “I was in the military from 2005 to 2010 and I went to Afghanistan and Iraq. The destabilization over there was because of the military. There have been worse problems since.”

When asked what he thought was the root cause of the war, he replied, “Money.” He added, “The military leaders and the politicians wanted to make money and a name for themselves. I think our political system is the root cause of war.” When the subject turned to socialism, Nick said, “I have heard of socialism. I like

the idea of a more socialistic system than we have now.”

Trevor, a student who has recently joined the IYSSE, shared his thoughts on the display. “It is awakening the students that don’t really know or haven’t been taught the consequences of US imperialism.”

He added, “Before this year I was politically awake, but I wasn’t sure what route to follow. I think the IYSSE has steered me in the right direction.”

Earlier this month, the IYSSE held a successful meeting that was attended by over 80 students and workers. The guest speaker was WSWS writer Bill Van Auken who gave a presentation on the war in Syria and the drive towards World War III.

Van Auken explained the connection between capitalism and war and the urgent need for an anti-capitalist and socialist anti-war movement. On the current war in Syria, he said, “The US did not have an interest in overthrowing ISIS in Syria, not until the terrorist regime expanded into Iraq. The real focus of the Syrian civil war for the US is regime change.”

Van Auken also explained how social needs at home are ignored to provide money for war. “The US is spending \$79 billion on a program to build new high tech military equipment. That’s more than is spent on education for the whole nation. The ruling class is more interested in ‘smart bombs’ than ‘smart people.’”

Speaking of Democratic Party presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, he asked the audience, “How can he be a socialist when he supports the foreign policy of the ruling elite?” He also implored the audience to join the IYSSE, remarking, “The question posed today is, ‘How will the crisis of capitalism be solved?’ Through world war or through socialist revolution?”

After the presentation, many participants expressed agreement with the overall fight for socialism and

asked what the next step should be.

Carlos and Diego are both in their first year at SDSU. Diego said, “The younger generation is in a transition, we want change but many of us are confused. We have lost faith in the political system, but we need still need to awaken. From what I have learned, the government represents the corporations, not us. Corporations try to influence culture, they spend millions to tell us what we need and how we should see things. Nobody represents us. The United States is purely run in the interests of the corporations and the rich.

“It’s funny, we are the ones who work and pay taxes, we pay for everything—even the wars and the military. The weird part is that they can’t exist without us. We all need to analyze this, we are more and they are less. We want change, we want true democracy and that will involve us.”

Carlos said, “Growing up in the United States you are taught to believe that this is the greatest country in the world. The true face is now becoming visible—it’s not the greatest, that is an image that is being destroyed. There is an authority in place and people want change. It seems as though we need self-government but it seems like that can lead to chaos. But it also seems like there has to be leaders, but leaders can be corrupt.”

Supporters of the IYSSE said that the working class and students need their own independent political party and organizations. They also discussed the Sanders campaign, which is aimed at bolstering support for the Democratic Party and the capitalist system.

“I have a friend that is pro-Bernie,” Carlos responded, “but Bernie, Hilary or Trump—for me—none represent my interests. I first thought that Bernie was a person for the people. Tonight definitely changed my perspective on that. At the end, the election is like a circus.

“We have the most productive society in the world today. We are the ones who make all this business—why can’t we run it instead of the CEOs and shareholders? The other thing is the revolving door between the companies and the governments, it is clear that the government is working for the corporations.”

Vicente is a sophomore studying film and art. He said, “A lot of what is discussed in meetings like this is not discussed outside of the schools. I think it was very informative. When I brought up the question, ‘How many people are financially unstable?’ it was very

reassuring that people were in the same boat as me.” Regarding what he thought about socialism, Vicente said, “Socialism is an ideology that I definitely advocate for. I want to be part of something and start a move toward that.”



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