

The SEP and IYSSE begin nationwide meetings on the significance and implications of the Trump election

A WSWs reporting team
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The Socialist Equality Party and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality have held the first in a series of nationwide meetings outlining a program to mobilize the working class against the extreme right-wing policies of the administration of President Donald Trump.

In the first of the series, SEP National Secretary Joseph Kishore spoke at San Diego State University (SDSU) in California on January 24. About 50 people attended, including students as well as readers of the WSWs. Kishore's report detailed the political background of the election of Trump and provided a detailed analysis of the personnel and policies of the new administration.

A lively discussion followed the presentation, with questions asked about the drive to war against Russia, the politics of Noam Chomsky, the differences between pragmatism and Marxism, revolutionary strategy for building an international socialist movement, and the role of the trade unions.

One student asked if there was any truth to the claims that Trump is working with Russian President Putin. "This question has dominated the media since the election of Trump," Kishore said. "But the 'intelligence reports' provide no factual substantiation that Russia is responsible. We've heard that 'Seventeen US intelligence agencies are unanimous in their determination.' Well, they were unanimous in 2003 on the fact that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction, and that was a lie."

He explained that the divisions within the state were over US war policy, and that both Democrats and Republicans were united in the basic elements of class policy.

Another questioner asked, "I agree that we have to reject 'lefties' like Sanders and Warren, but how do you deal with the pragmatic argument" that it is necessary to support the "better alternative"?

"Pragmatism corresponds to a politics of wishful thinking," Kishore responded. "Maybe, somehow, things are going to get better if we support some politician in the establishment. Wouldn't it at least be better if Clinton was president?" Sanders said this. "You have to support Clinton to stop Trump." Kishore reviewed the way in which the character of the Democratic Party and the politics of Sanders had paved the way for Trump.

"What is really needed," he continued, "is a politics that is based on the objective interests of the vast majority of the population, the working class. There is going to be mass opposition to the policies of the ruling class. If struggles erupt, but all that's in place is someone who says 'vote Democrat,' that's a recipe for disaster. Like the Iraq war protests, which were all channeled behind Obama. And now what do we have? Eight years of war, and it vomited up Trump in the end. We need to really work through how this came about, what is it about the society in which we live that made possible the election of Trump, and base our politics on *that*."

Kishore explained that "ours is a politics based on materialism, a politics that begins with objective reality. Society is divided by classes. The rich control the whole system, and the Democrats and Republicans both represent them." He stressed the need to turn out and politically mobilize and organize the working class, whose interests are completely unrepresented in the entire political system.

Another student asked, “In the weeks and months ahead, what are the strategy and tactics that the IYSSE will adopt in San Diego, nationally and internationally?”

SDSU IYSSE member Genevieve Leigh responded, “The IYSSE meets each week to work through political developments, but it’s not just an intellectual journey. We’re doing it to transform society. Our work on campus extends out into the working class. San Diego is a very interesting place in the world. We have problems that are global problems. Immigration, refugees, the military—twenty-two percent of San Diego’s economy is based on the defense industry. We intervened in the recent protests against police murder in El Cajon, connecting the fight against police violence to the fight against the capitalist system.

“Nationally and internationally, this year the IYSSE will be taking up a serious study of the Russian Revolution of 1917. One can’t wage a struggle for socialism without understanding that event and drawing out the political lessons.”

Jahred, a senior studying philosophy, told IYSSE reporters after the meeting, “I felt like I was at the end of the rainbow at this meeting. The information and analysis was really riveting, when we talked about this vast income inequality, the top one percent and what they own.

“Trump is definitely a conduit for the forces that represent the decay of our society,” he said. “I think the Democrats and Republicans are wolves in sheep’s clothing, but Trump is now ripping off that disguise. The quotes that [Kishore] provided in his presentation were very significant. When [incoming defense secretary] ‘Mad Dog’ Mattis says, ‘It’s fun to shoot some people’ and ‘you don’t have to hate them, it’s just business,’ that is profound in its simplicity. That’s the situation we’re in, and it demands action.”

Also on January 24 *World Socialist Web Site* Labor Editor and SEP 2016 presidential candidate Jerry White spoke before an audience of both students and workers at Wayne State University in Detroit. After reviewing the SEP’s analysis of Trump’s victory and the outpouring of opposition to Trump’s policies expressed in the mass demonstrations over the weekend, White went on to outline the program needed to guide the growing opposition in the working class.

Many audience members participated in the

discussion period following the presentation. Among the questions discussed was the meaning of the term “opportunism,” the role of Bernie Sanders, the Russian Revolution and the nature of the former Soviet Union.

One student identified herself as a supporter of Hillary Clinton. In opposition to the report, she said that she felt the demonstrations against Trump were not about issues related to the working class but about women’s issues.

White explained that, just as the Trump administration promoted American nationalism to cover up the class divisions in American society between the billionaires like himself and the vast mass of working people, the issue of gender was used in the same manner. Those like Hillary Clinton, who claimed to speak in the name of women, in fact were the representatives of a privileged social strata of wealthy and upper middle class women who sought to carve out greater opportunities for themselves. In fact, the capitalist system for which Clinton and Trump both speak is based on the brutal exploitation of workers, both male and female, for the enrichment of a tiny handful.

Another student noted that he had not voted for either Clinton or Trump, “because I have to sleep at night.” He pointed out the deplorable conditions he had seen in Africa and other parts of the world due to global domination of the capitalist profit system.

An IYSSE member at Wayne State pointed out that despite Trump’s claims to be fighting to protect the jobs of American workers, just a few miles from the university some 1,300 workers at a General Motors plant were scheduled to be permanently laid off in just a couple of weeks. He stressed the need for workers and young people to become involved in fighting to bring a socialist program to the working class to arm it in the fight against the Trump administration. *A full list of SEP/IYSSE meetings can be found here. To organize a meeting in your area, click contact the SEP.*



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