

IYSSE resubmits application at NYU, draws large turnout for rally and meeting

Our reporters
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On Monday, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) submitted the paperwork to reapply for club status at New York University (NYU) after holding a well-attended rally and public meeting near campus last week. Roughly 400 students and faculty have signed a petition supporting the IYSSE's drive for official club status.

Last semester, the NYU administration and the Student Activities Board (SAB) denied the IYSSE club status on fraudulent and antidemocratic grounds, claiming that the school lacks the funds to support the club and that the IYSSE is insufficiently distinct from the International Socialist Organization (ISO).

The application begins by stating: "The IYSSE represents the student movement of the Socialist Equality Party, a distinct political party with a unique history, perspective and program. The IYSSE is the only youth movement that adheres to orthodox Marxism. It is a Trotskyist party and it traces its roots through the struggle waged by Leon Trotsky against the Stalinist bureaucracy and the Russian Revolution of 1917 to the works of the original theorists of scientific socialism, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels."

In response to the claim that the IYSSE and the ISO are too similar for both to merit clubs, the application states:

"The IYSSE and ISO represent two historically distinct tendencies whose differences date back to 1939/1940 and have diverged sharply on practically every political question over three quarters of a century. In fact, it was at this very campus that major differences between the Trotskyists and the ISO's predecessors, who became known as the Shachtmanites, took acute form. In 1940, NYU Professor James Burnham split from the Trotskyist movement as a leader of the Shachtmanites. Burnham

went on to become a major inspiration of the American neoconservative movement and editor of the *National Review*."

The IYSSE held a successful gathering off campus outside of Washington Square Park on February 2 that was attended by several dozen people. IYSSE and SEP speakers addressed the crowd and denounced Trump and the Democratic Party for laying the foundations for Trump's rise to power.

At the rally, SEP member Fred Mazelis told the NYU students in attendance: "It is important and commendable that youth from this school have joined this demonstration. However, students who want to oppose inequality, deportations, and war must expand their horizons beyond this campus. They must turn to the working class, to the exploited and historically progressive force that is capable of transforming society and reorganizing it along socialist and egalitarian principles."

Another IYSSE member referenced the fact that at the time of the rally, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement was holding an informational session on campus to recruit agents: "NYU has barred the IYSSE from club status, but it opens its doors to the government so that it can hire deportation agents. These officials will be responsible for splitting children from their mothers and deporting people back to the violence caused by American imperialism in Central America, the Middle East, and worldwide. The IYSSE categorically opposes this."

That night, the IYSSE held a public meeting titled "The fight against the Trump administration: The way forward."

The meeting's keynote speaker was Socialist Equality Party National Secretary Joseph Kishore, who addressed a room of over 40 attendees. Trump did not

come out of nowhere, Kishore said, nor is he a blemish on an otherwise pristine democratic system in America. Trump is the product of a deep crisis in American capitalism, in which the Democratic as well as the Republicans have presided over growing inequality and non-stop war.

“These are serious times, and serious times require serious politics,” Kishore said. “They require a rejection of pragmatic solutions. Among these is the idea that the Democratic Party can be transformed into an instrument for working people.”

Kishore explained the emergence of Trump from a historical standpoint.

“The Democratic Party has completely abandoned any pretense to be the party of social reform. Long gone are the days of the New Deal, the New Frontier, or the Great Society.

Beginning in the 1970s, Kishore explained, the American ruling class unleashed a period of social counterrevolution that each president has escalated. Obama, Kishore insisted, represented a continuation of these attacks on wages, living standards, and social programs, and an expansion of US imperialist wars abroad. The eight years of the Obama administration set the stage for Trump, Kishore explained, by increasing the powers of the military, the deportation machine, and the intelligence agencies and by driving tens of millions to abstain from voting.

The diverse crowd of mostly youth included high school students as well as students from NYU, CUNY, and Barnard.

Kyra, a first year student at NYU, explained, “I thought the rally was interesting. I received a pamphlet for it a few days ago, and I think it is important to defend immigrant rights,” she said. “What I was surprised at was the speakers attacking the Democratic Party because I have always been aligned with it. But it is two weeks of the Trump administration, and things are scary.”

Kyra agreed with connections the speakers brought out between US militarism and the refugee crisis. “We have politicians who say they care about not starting another war, but they are the ones who made the problems themselves. The terrorists are the result of the US invasions of those countries. The refugees are just running from what we all detest. There is a tendency to blame the people who are the most disenfranchised for

what is not their fault.

“For me, it comes down to the haves and the have-nots,” she added. “I want to hear more.”

Ali, a CUNY student who attended the meeting, gave his thoughts. “It’s only been two weeks since Trump took office, but it feels like two years with all that’s happened. It’s hard to process,” he said. “I think we got a detailed report with a lot of useful, significant information. To me the difference between the Democrats, the Republicans and the mainstream media are incidental. The message here needs to be widely disseminated.”

Alissa first encountered the Socialist Equality Party in Washington D.C. on a high school class trip to Washington, D.C. to protest Trump’s inauguration.

“The speaker said Trump is a continuation from what was happening before. I am not a supporter of Trump but I want people to know that it is not true that this is just since Trump’s been inaugurated. But now, more than ever, it is not going to go away, and not go away peacefully. That is because a lot of Trump supporters are not going to be peaceful. Trump supporters say he will give jobs back but he is against minorities and religiously bigoted.

“It is hard to see someone in his position who does not really see the problems. The Affordable Care Act was being discussed. Obama was supposed to give healthcare. Instead, low-income kids’ families will not be able to receive housing and healthcare and instead are condemned in a cycle to the bottom.”

The opposition of the young people in attendance to the policies implemented by Trump sheds further light on the urgent need to build a political movement based in the working class and aimed against the root cause for the rise of Trump: the capitalist system. The IYSSE expects a decision on its application from the SAB within two weeks.



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