

No to war against Iran! For an international movement against capitalism and war!

IYSSE holds first meeting in campaign for student parliament elections at Berlin's Humboldt University

Our reporters
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The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) held a meeting on Tuesday at Humboldt University in Berlin on the topic “No to war against Iran!” Although the meeting was organised at very short notice, the large seminar room was filled to capacity. Around 80 people came to the meeting to discuss with the IYSSE the dangerous developments in the Middle East and the need for a socialist and internationalist programme against war.

Helmut Wolf, one of the IYSSE's candidates in the student parliament elections, scheduled for January 29 and 30, chaired the meeting. In his introduction, he explained that the IYSSE seeks to build a socialist movement against militarism and war, social inequality and the rise of the far right. The entire series of meetings organised by the IYSSE prior to the election is focused on these issues.

The main speaker at Tuesday's meeting was Johannes Stern from the *World Socialist Web Site*. He first analysed the criminal assassination of Iranian Gen. Qassem Suleimani and explained it in a broader political and historical context. “The killing of Suleimani is the latest highpoint of the United States' criminal militarist policies in the region, which, following the wars and regime change operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria, is preparing for a new, more comprehensive conflict,” Stern explained.

Stern described the Middle East as a “powder keg” where all of the major and regional powers confront each other in close proximity and warned of the danger

of a third world war. The drive by the imperialist powers to militarily subordinate the entire region could rapidly erupt into a conflict with Russia and China, which have close economic and political relations with Iran. Stern pointed out that the latest US national security strategy refers to the “rivalry between the major powers” as the “primary focus” of US foreign policy.

Stern noted that the European powers are responding with the same aggressiveness to these developments. They defended the murder of Suleimani and intensified their threats on Iran. The German government in particular is pressing ahead with its return to an aggressive imperialist foreign policy, and preparing to expand its presence in the region, Stern explained. He also cited from the recent foreign policy keynote address by German federal parliament president Wolfgang Schäuble (Christian Democrats, CDU), in which he called for Germany to “use military force” to secure its “economic interests.”

Stern stressed that all parties in parliament agree on this point. “Since the Greens backed the first German foreign military intervention since the Second World War in Kosovo in 1999, they have supported every German army deployment as an opposition party.” The Left Party has also long been a pro-war party in the Middle East, continued Stern, and is now calling for Germany to pursue a more independent foreign policy, which is aimed at enabling Berlin to enforce its interests against the United States if necessary.

Based on Leon Trotsky's writings on the Chinese bourgeoisie from the 1920s, Stern analysed the reactionary character of the Iranian regime. It does not represent a progressive counterweight to the imperialist war drive, but is rather desperately seeking a deal with the imperialists. These tendencies will only be exacerbated by the increased external pressure from the threats by Trump and the European powers, and the mounting internal pressure from the growth of social and political opposition among workers and youth, the speaker explained.

The struggle against war must be led by the working class, the only revolutionary social force in society, which must unite all progressive sections of the population behind it, Stern said in summing up the principles of the International Committee of the Fourth International for the building of an anti-war movement. "It must fight the roots of war: capitalism. It requires a socialist programme. It must be organised on an international scale and counterpose to the imperialist war drive the enormous social power of the working class around the globe."

In an impressive chronology at the end of his remarks, Stern underscored how dramatically the global class struggle has accelerated over the past year alone. Mass strikes and protests have erupted in countries on almost every continent, including Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Nicaragua, Honduras, Sudan, Algeria, Zimbabwe, Hong Kong, Puerto Rico, Egypt, France, Chile, Lebanon, and in Iraq and Iran. The decisive question is to organise this revolutionary force independently and arm it with a socialist programme.

This perspective met with a warm response and led to a long, lively discussion. The questions ranged from the revolutionary potential of the working class to historical events and whether a party is necessary to overthrow capitalism. Two participants asked whether Iran is an imperialist power and suggested that the assassination of Suleimani had taken out "the right man." They were told that by taking this position, they were speaking the language of pro-war imperialist politics. Iran is an historically oppressed country and the position of Marxists is to oppose imperialist acts of violence in principle and condemn them.

Following the end of the meeting, informal discussion continued for some time at the literature table and many attendees registered as new members or election

supporters of the IYSSE. Most participants also said they intended to attend the upcoming meetings. The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 21 and is titled "75 years since the end of the Second World War. How the return of war and fascism is being prepared."



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