

# IYSSE campaign for online anti-war meeting at UK universities and town centres

**Our reporters**

**27 November 2022**

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) has been campaigning throughout the UK for the December 10 international online meeting to oppose the war in Ukraine.

Thousands of copies of the statement, “For a mass movement of youth and students to stop the war in Ukraine!” have been distributed at universities, colleges, workplaces and high streets.

## Scotland

The IYSSE branch in Inverness, Scotland, has been campaigning at the city’s University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and on the high street, with a team including members who have recently joined based on agreement with the statement calling for the mobilisation of a socialist anti-war movement.

Calum explained his reasons for doing so, saying, “The campaign of the International Committee of the Fourth International and the IYSSE against the NATO-Russia war sets it apart from the liberal anti-war movements of the past by insisting on the working class being the only real hope for change, and making clear that an end to all war can only come through socialism.

“When facing the potential for global nuclear war, the supposed ‘left’ parties throughout the west bow down to the hawks. Facing the end of both the American empire and an unprecedented crisis of capitalism, the political classes unify in their suicidal drive to assure their global domination or kill us all trying. A real international anti-war movement is the first step to a broader international alliance of the working classes and the first stage of a real global revolution.”

Joe said, “Youth are becoming disillusioned with or are completely losing faith in our government and other governing bodies worldwide. This is true of the propaganda surrounding the war effort, or justifications for the mass death caused by COVID-19, or the cost-of-living crisis making many of us unable to eat or heat our homes while companies like Shell make £31 billion in profits.

“Former prime minister Liz Truss showed her indifference to human life when she pledged she would drop a nuclear bomb on Russia. Now Rishi Sunak has vowed to continue fighting the ongoing war, stating that his priorities include supporting our armed forces to back a war that must be ‘seen to its conclusion’.

“With NATO practising nuclear bomb drops in Europe, and Biden warning of Armageddon, what is seen to many as an isolated war is the enactment of a long-standing US imperialist war strategy. We are heading towards a global conflict. These are among the reasons why I

stand with the ICFI and IYSSE in building a global movement against imperialist war among the youth and working class.”

Sandy said, “The war in Ukraine is justified hypocritically by invoking the self-determination of nations, which I reject. The national state is historically incompatible with the development of an integrated and interdependent global economy. The working class’s interests are suppressed by the state apparatus in the interests of the national bourgeoisie and global imperialism.

“The US has since the dissolution of the Soviet Union sought to reverse its long-term economic decline and suppress its internal class tensions through imperialist wars, justified by citing falsified threats to ‘human rights’ for which it is the only judge, jury and executioner.

“The US-NATO backed war in Ukraine has the overarching goal of the dismantling of Russia and control of its resources, which threatens humanity with nuclear annihilation. Opposition to the war is growing, but the IYSSE must develop a scientific understanding among workers of history, knowledge of the capitalist mode of production and the social relations it gives rise to, and insight into the real nature of the present war.”

An IYSSE team at Glasgow Strathclyde University spoke with students from several countries, including India, Iran, Russia and Kazakhstan. At Glasgow University 22 contacts were made, with many students expressing concern at how little serious reporting of the war was available. Other students were aware of the NATO drive to the east and its relationship to the collapse of the Soviet Union and feared the consequences could be a world war.

## Cardiff

In Cardiff, Wales, the IYSSE found that the threat of an escalation to nuclear annihilation had led to strong anti-war sentiment among students and young workers. One student responded that “In their desperation for power, imperialist governments are pursuing a policy of reckless military armament, no matter the consequences.”

Another said, “The working class needs to band together to actively oppose the war.’ She added, “The economic crisis has gotten so bad. Too many people are dying and starving while billions are spent on militarisation.”

Several young people raised the deliberate silence about the war on campuses and more broadly in the mainstream media. Another said, “The youth are the people that will be in charge in the future, so it’s even more important that people in our age group take a stand.”

## Manchester

At the University of Manchester, Jasmine, who is doing an MA in biotechnology, said, “It’s useless to have war. At the end of the day everyone will be affected, whether in Ukraine, Russia or the rest of the world. Today it might be Russia, China or the USA who want to be superior in the world. Even if a country is a democracy, it’s still capitalism. Stop the War!”

Amelia said, “A war in Ukraine is not surprising. I feel that both sides, America and Russia, are so ready to act.”

A student from Rwanda, studying international negotiations, noted that, “It’s ordinary people like you and me who get killed in a war. Economics is behind the war. It serves the interests of the US and Russia to keep the war going.”

Zoology student Oscar made the connection between the attack on democratic rights at home, war abroad and the cost-of-living crisis: “I went to Julian Assange protests. There’s not enough talk about stopping the police and crime bill. Hardly anyone hit the streets to kill the bill, but it’s costing us our right to protest. They’re deliberately scaring people. They bring in laws they won’t enforce until they really need it, directed against the working class.

“My energy bills have gone through the roof, but the profits of the energy companies are increasing.” He was “disgusted” at the media and government scapegoating families on “free school meals, and asylum seekers, while spending £35 billion on track and trace during the pandemic that failed to deliver.” That money “could feed everyone.”

Chris, a final-year science student from China, condemned the war in Ukraine, saying, “We need to keep a peaceful world, we need to help people. I want people to be aware of the bad effects of war so we can take action. If there was a nuclear war it would be a disastrous situation. We must stop that.

“Many Chinese people are suffering because we are prohibited from purchasing microchips due to US sanctions. It’s part of trade war. The US has become the strongest and wants to prohibit other countries’ growth.”

Jane, studying international business management, said, “It doesn’t make sense why they’re having these wars and why the Ukraine has to be the target.

“You’re right about capitalism. It has brought about two world wars. Inequality is very deep. You have people who are extremely rich and people who are extremely poor. There should be a system in place that can solve that.”

## Bradford and Leeds

IYSSE and Socialist Equality Party members met a warm response when they campaigned among students in Bradford and Leeds. Hundreds of leaflets were distributed advertising the online meeting and 14 young people signed up to participate. Among those expressing their interest in the meeting were students studying law, economics and public health. Several said they supported the anti-

capitalist and internationalist axis of the campaign.

Outside Leeds Beckett University, campaigners spoke to Andy, who said he thought the idea that nuclear weapons might be used as part of the war in Ukraine was “just idiocy!”

Khashayar, a Middle Eastern Studies student, said he felt it was important to attend the meeting because “it would be hypocritical to say I am against war but not try and do something.” Many of the borders that now existed in the world, he said, “were just lines drawn on a map by rich men. Lots of people die trying to get from one border to another.”

Asked about the growth of nationalist tendencies in every country, Khashayar said it was dangerous because it prevented the unity of working people who share common interests.

## Sheffield

At Sheffield Hallam university, a West Indian worker said, “It’s too easy to blame the Russians as the bad guys” and said that the Iraq war and other crimes of British imperialism must be remembered.

Students from India, the Middle East, Latin America and Eastern Europe as well as the UK were concerned about the conflict in the Ukraine becoming global and several thanked campaigners for explaining a complex situation, cutting through the vilification of those opposing NATO as pro-Putin.

One student, who declared himself to be a socialist, noted that during the pandemic, “Profits were put before social interests” and he thought the real motives of NATO were “imperialist.”

A student from Jordan registered for the webinar. He described himself as a socialist and said he had searching for an explanation of the deeper causes of the war.

**Register to attend the international online meeting here.**



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