

IYSSE campaigns at UK universities and town centres for international anti-war rally on December 10

Our reporters
8 December 2022

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

Thousands of copies of the IYSSE's 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, including at two universities in Northern Ireland.

Manchester

Ryan, a Chinese student at the University of Manchester (UoM) said, "I think the cause of the war is probably and especially the United States. I think we should stop this war... because this war could cause World War III."

UoM political economy student **Han** said, "I'm against the war in Ukraine. I think America wants to get more power and control the world. Now the development of China is threatening the control of America. They are trying to increase the war and make other countries provide the weapons."

"China is trying to find another way to increase the economy on top of cheap labour through high-tech solutions. America thinks that is threatening their operations, they want hegemony."

"Teachers in the universities went on strike last week in the UK. Because of the energy crisis workers are in a bad situation. Workers have the right to do such things."

Han said she was surprised to learn from WSWs reporters that the right to strike is threatened in the UK and US, with President Joe Biden banning a national rail strike last month.

A student from Spain said, "I oppose war, and this is a dangerous situation, but I can't understand why there's no reaction to what is happening."

Freya, a UoM student, said of the war in Ukraine, "It's everything all at once. One catastrophe leading to another and another catastrophe. I just fear it's going spiral out of control."

Joey, a social research postgraduate student at UoM, said, "I want the world to be peaceful. Those people who want warfare are detrimental to all human beings in the world. I hope people in the world can get together and stand up for their rights and stop the war."

Ayesha, a second-year student at Manchester Metropolitan University, said she had already registered for the IYSSE online rally.

She said it was "always the American governments" who were causing wars, "It's almost like apartheid, taking over people's lands, leading us to the brink of nuclear genocide. It's all about the conglomerates finding ways to make money. The people from Palestine have similar problems."

Bradford

Aman, a student at the University of Bradford, said of the war, "In the middle of it are innocent people who are dying. You've got people that are losing their lives. Children, innocent people who have done nothing wrong. So, I'm completely against war."

"I'm not pro-Russia, nor am I pro-Ukraine. I'm just against war in general. I feel it's not worth losing the lives of so many thousands of people over politics, over land. And that goes across the board, not just with Ukraine and Russia, but in the Middle East. We see it with Lebanon, we see it with Syria. We see it with these third world countries, who the media doesn't even like to show. They're not getting the coverage they deserve, but there's people dying out there on a regular basis. I feel like it's important for us to make a stand against it."

"There's not enough pressure, there's not enough conversations being had about something serious like this. Because we're not talking about something small, we're talking about them losing their lives, of children, innocent people who have done nothing wrong."

"As you said, it is the bigger powers out there, powerhouses of the world, the superpowers, the likes of US, the big countries who are morally responsible for it."

Hasseem, a Bradford university student originally from Pakistan who is studying management said, "I am concerned about the development of the war in the Ukraine where it could escalate into a war on a world scale, including the conflict between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan over borders, as nations are taking sides."

Justin said the truth about the war in Ukraine was not "on the mainstream media, It's not on BBC, ITV, it doesn't suit their agenda. So, it's a great job that you're doing out here, telling people the truth about what actually happened."

Kunle, originally from Nigeria, is doing a marketing course at Bradford University. He said of the IYSSE statement headline, "Unite workers and youth in a mass movement against the war in Ukraine,"

“That’s a nice one”, and asked, “Do you think they are going to listen to us? You need to have power to do that, you have to mobilise. The war is completely uncalled for, it doesn’t make sense.

“How come we spend so much time on killing? They should be using that money to feed the poor, there is starvation everywhere. Look at these rockets that they use, they cost a lot of money. It’s madness.”

On the danger of a world war, Kunle said, “That’s a threat, because it’s mad, why would anybody think that way, why would anybody think of sending the entire world into extinction? Why would they develop nuclear weapons to wipe out humanity? Nuclear development is a good thing but not using it in a destructive way.

“I understand there is a conflict between the US and China in Africa. Is that not greed?”

Croydon

A team spoke to students at Croydon college in London. One student said she had been to many demonstrations and that the younger generation needs to get involved as “We are the future.”

The UK government was pouring more weapons to Ukraine and “western powers are not trying to stop the war.”

A student from Iraq said the war in Ukraine is being orchestrated by the US and NATO. He recalled the US intervention in Iraq and its destruction of Fallujah and Basra, which were razed to the ground. A student from Ukraine said he was against the war and was interested in reading the statement.

Cardiff

Finn described how his views of the war had changed: “At the very start it was a lot more, ‘look how evil Russia is for invading innocent Ukraine,’ because that’s what all the media at the time was saying, and we hadn’t really had time to think about it in a more nuanced way.” Having read coverage of events on the *World Socialist Web Site*, he said, “It was a very different perspective, in a good way, in that it wasn’t just purely anti-Russia. Once you read it and understood it and had time to think it made a lot more sense than what the more general media was saying.

“A big thing for me was reading that NATO was never meant to pass East Germany, and now there are many states east of Germany that have joined NATO. There has to be an element of blame for provoking Russia in that way. And that was a very conscious decision. The working classes on either side don’t want to go to war. It’s the elites provoking each other that’s led to the situation.”

Finn said the ruling elites were motivated by “nationalism and greed,” adding, “Thinking back to the way they treated the working class through COVID, and sacrificing their lives there, it’s not a crazy leap to make that they would be willing to sacrifice millions of lives to maintain that power.”

Asked why he thought it was important that students and young people take an interest and get involved in the struggle against war, he said, “People who are killed in wars are generally young people. In

World War I and World War II, people in their 20s were killed in their millions. And it’s our futures that are being affected by this war.”

Another student added, “These issues affect us and the people around us, and we have something to say about that. If we don’t have these conversations then we just suffer in silence. We need to form our own views and act on them.”

Laura told the IYSSE, “I think the threat of nuclear war is very real. I think the situation we’re in now is similar to World War I and World War II. I feel like that’s what happening now. Something has to be done about that.

“Maybe the rising prices and economic crisis are manageable now, but if we let it keep going it could lead to a complete mess and annihilation of our society—I really do believe that.”

Belfast

In Belfast the SEP campaigned at two universities this past week, Queens University and Ulster University. There was an especially warm response at Ulster with hundreds of statements distributed, and many students stopping to talk. **Christopher** joined the campaign at both campuses. He said, “I think a lot of people were generally interested. They hadn’t heard of the WSWs and the SEP and so we explained what we’re about and what we’re trying to achieve, trying to get the working class at an international level to fight for socialism.

“There was a Pakistani student who said he was a supporter of socialism. He said the cost-of-living crisis was terrible, and he didn’t understand why the energy bills are so high while the likes of BP are making record profits. He said he’ll definitely be there for the meeting. I’m pretty sure some of the other ones who stopped to talk will come too, because they seemed really interested in what we were saying.”



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