

# No to the criminalization of anti-war views on US campuses! For a mass movement by workers and youth against the onslaught on Gaza!

**International Youth and Students for Social Equality (US)**  
**13 October 2023**

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in the US unequivocally condemns the attacks on students who have voiced solidarity with the Palestinian people and opposition to the Israeli government. These attacks are an attempt to intimidate and criminalize the immense popular opposition to a crime by imperialism of historic proportions.

The defense of democratic rights of these students must become a central part of the mobilization of the international working class against the genocidal onslaught on the Palestinians perpetrated by the fascistic Israeli government with the full backing of the imperialist powers.

At Harvard University, over 30 student groups face a vicious, state-sponsored smear campaign after signing a principled statement written by the Palestine Solidarity Committee which correctly blames Israel's brutal, decades-long occupation for the present bloody conflict. Larry Summers, former Harvard president and treasury secretary under Bill Clinton, vehemently denounced the students on X (formerly Twitter), calling the statement "morally unconscionable" and saying it "sickened" him.

On Thursday, a van rode around campus, plastered with the names and faces of many of the protesting students, slandering them as "Harvard's leading anti-Semites." This followed calls by billionaire hedge fund manager and Democratic Party donor Bill Ackman and other CEOs for the university to publicly blacklist and dox these students. Ackman has previously gone on record calling the fascist murderer Kyle Rittenhouse "a civic minded patriot."

At New York University (NYU), law student and president of the university's Student Bar Association (SBA), Ryna Workman, has come under attack for issuing a statement in solidarity with the Palestinians. The NYU administration, which has close ties to the Democratic Party, Wall Street hedge funds and the military, has aligned itself with right-wing slanders against Workman. The corporate law firm Winston and Strawn rescinded an offer of employment, and the SBA has initiated proceedings to remove Workman from her elected position.

The pogrom-like atmosphere being whipped up by the state, corporations and university administrations against left-wing

students has already resulted in violent attacks at the University of California, Los Angeles. Palestinian students and members of the Students for Justice in Palestine UCLA have reported being shoved, hit, spit on and threatened with knives by Zionists. A teach-in on the crisis on Thursday was interrupted by Zionists, who grabbed students' laptops and issued death threats against them.

In Brooklyn, New York City, an 18-year-old Palestinian youth was assaulted by a gang of Zionists on Wednesday night. On Thursday, at a pro-Palestinian demonstration at Brooklyn College, Trump supporter and New York City Councilwoman Inna Vernikov visibly displayed a gun, seeking to intimidate protesters.

The IYSSE rejects the slander that opposition to Israel's crimes against the Palestinians is "antisemitic." The students at Harvard, NYU and UCLA have voiced entirely principled opposition to Zionism and war crimes, which has always been a staple of genuine left-wing and socialist politics.

We also reject the implied claim that the Israeli government, in its crimes against the Palestinians, is speaking for the Jewish population. The far-right regime of Netanyahu speaks no more for the interests of the working class in Israel than the US ruling class did for the interests of American workers when it invaded and bombed Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya and provoked a war against Russia. In significant sections of the Jewish population in Israel and across the world, there is immense opposition to the Netanyahu government and its criminal policies.

The censorship campaign against left-wing students in the US is part of an international effort by the ruling class in the imperialist centers to criminalize and intimidate mass popular opposition to the war. In Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Australia, governments swiftly moved to ban pro-Palestinian solidarity protests.

In the US, politicians associated with the pseudo-left Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, have issued calls to "shut down" pro-Palestinian demonstrations. The DSA so far has refused to issue even a nominal statement in defense of the democratic rights of students who are voicing opposition to this war.

The ferocity of the attacks on these students and anti-war

opposition is an inverse reflection of the mass popular revulsion against a crime of historic proportions that is being committed in front of the eyes of the world's population.

The Israeli government, led by a fascistic cabal centered around Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, has launched missile strikes and imposed a blockade targeting the whole population of Gaza. Thursday night, Netanyahu issued a 24-hour ultimatum to 1.1 million people in Gaza—half of the entire population—to evacuate, effectively calling for them to go on a death march. Almost half of the 2.2 million people in Gaza are children under the age of 18, who have grown up in conditions akin to a concentration camp, deprived of their most basic human rights and the right to a future.

The neo-colonial and genocidal character of this war was stated bluntly by the Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who said, "I have ordered a complete siege on the Gaza Strip. There will be no electricity, no food, no fuel, everything is closed." Both Gallant and Netanyahu have used fascist language, referring to the Palestinian people as "animals" and "savages."

Even before the start of a planned ground invasion, over the past six days, an estimated 1,000 homes in Gaza have been completely destroyed, with 13,000 more damaged, rendering over 330,000 people homeless overnight. Over 1,400 have been killed, among them at least 500 children.

The US and European imperialist powers bear full responsibility for the atrocities now being committed by the Israeli government. They stand exposed as perpetrators and supporters of war crimes and fascistic policies.

The unfolding war in Gaza and the hysterical attacks by the ruling class on any opposition to it can only be understood in their broader political and historical context. It is a new front in the unfolding imperialist redivision of the world and is inseparable from the US-NATO war in Ukraine against Russia. Already, the conflict in Gaza threatens to expand to the rest of the Middle East, with reports that Israeli forces have launched drone strikes in Lebanon and missiles in Syria.

Like the war in Ukraine, the Israeli assault on Gaza has profound historical roots.

Seventy-five years ago, the founding of the state of Israel began the occupation of Palestine and the mass expulsion of the Palestinians from their land and homes. This was followed in 1967 by the occupation of the West Bank by Israel. Since 2006, Israel has maintained a blockade against Gaza, turning it into an "open air prison." Throughout this entire period, the Palestinians have faced routine violence, arrests, persecutions and killings at the hands of the Israel Defense Forces and far-right Zionist settlers.

Confronted with resistance against these intolerable conditions, the Israeli government and its imperialist allies, rocked by profound internal crises, have decided to "deal" with the problem of the Palestinians through mass murder.

In both Ukraine and Israel, the imperialist powers have aligned themselves with the most reactionary forces. While backing the fascist cabal around Netanyahu in Israel, and slandering criticism of Israel as "antisemitic," the NATO powers have funded and armed actual neo-Nazis in Ukraine who glorify Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera. Only weeks ago, the entire Canadian parliament, along with special guest Volodymyr Zelensky and representatives

from the NATO countries, gave a standing ovation to a Nazi war criminal, Ukrainian Waffen-SS veteran Yaroslav Hunka.

There is also another reason for the extraordinary ferocity and brazen criminality of the attack on the Palestinian people and all those who support it: The ruling class in the US and Europe, as in Israel, confronts growing domestic opposition and militancy within the working class and youth. In the US, the ruling class has been rattled by the emergence of the largest strike wave in decades, involving workers across the auto, healthcare, logistics and education industries.

Workers and students must be warned: The logic of the current campaign against anti-war views on university campuses means that the ruling class will set into motion its entire state apparatus, with the cooperation of the major corporations, universities and the media, to crack down on any expression of opposition to the war policies and propaganda of the ruling class. This campaign is meant to set a precedent to eliminate remaining democratic rights and intimidate and criminalize opposition by workers and youth to war and all other policies of the ruling class.

Workers and youth will not take these assaults lying down. Despite the concerted campaign to criminalize opposition to the war, mass demonstrations continue to break out in the US and worldwide. But these demonstrations need to be given a conscious political program and perspective upon which to fight.

The onslaught against Gaza cannot be stopped without the support of the masses in Israel and the imperialist centers, including the United States. The emerging strikes by the working class and demonstrations against the war in Gaza must be fused into a conscious movement by the international working class and youth against all exploitation, inequality and oppression.

This requires building a mass revolutionary, socialist movement in the working class and youth against war and the capitalist system itself. The IYSSE, the youth movement of the world Trotskyist movement, the International Committee of the Fourth International, is fighting to build such a movement. Over the coming weeks we will be organizing meetings across the US in opposition to the war in Gaza. We are also calling for the broadest possible turnout at demonstrations against the war and encourage youth, principled intellectuals and workers to raise the following demands:

**Down with Netanyahu's government! Stop the imperialist-backed Zionist onslaught against Gaza!**

**No to censorship, blacklisting and criminalization of opponents of war! Defend democratic rights!**

**For a unified movement against imperialist war and capitalism by American, European, Israeli and Palestinian workers and youth!**

**Build the IYSSE and the International Committee of the Fourth International! Fight for socialism!**



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