

Students and workers speak out against Israeli genocide in Gaza at IYSSE meeting in Chicago

International Youth and Students for Social Equality (Chicago)
27 October 2023

On October 25, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality hosted a meeting in Chicago to discuss the ongoing Israeli genocide in Gaza, and to build a socialist opposition to war.

The event's main speaker was Joseph Kishore, the national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States. Kishore reviewed the situation in Gaza and its historical and political background.

The report focused on the support for the genocide by US-NATO imperialism and the significance of the mass demonstrations. Kishore made a powerful appeal for youth to turn out to the working class as the great revolutionary force in society and mobilize as a class against war.

More than 30 workers and students attended the meeting and spoke with members of the IYSSE afterward.

"The presentation was very helpful," said one attendee. "I learned about the [Sabra and Shatila] massacre in 1982 which, having grown up as a Jew for many years, was never mentioned. Which is not terribly surprising but pretty deeply upsetting."

She added that the meeting was "insightful to get a sense of the global perspective," and that "the genocide in Gaza is horrific and deeply interrelated to a lot of struggles going on around the world right now. I had not really thought about the relationship to Ukraine, and I look forward to reading more about that."

Another student shared, "I am Palestinian. My grandparents were forced to leave their homes when the 1948 Nakba happened. As a result, I was born in a refugee camp. This is part of my identity. They have no idea what real impact this has on people's lives, but they can just cut off the water."

She gave her thoughts on the meeting, saying, "The main takeaway was that you can always bring everything back to the ruling class. One of the other things that really stuck with me the most was that all the imperialist countries were responsible for so much antisemitism in an earlier period, and now they are claiming to be fighting antisemitism."

The same student added, "The double standards are so clear. There is a much bigger political and imperial agenda behind them. Like when they call it terrorism but are withholding water and electricity from Gaza."

A third attendee who spoke with IYSSE members said, "I thought the meeting was informative. It reaffirmed a lot of what I had been already thinking. The evening news and media coverage on Palestine, especially the coverage of the protests here in Chicago, are not being covered by the main media which is broadcast mainly to the older generation. So I have been thinking about the generational differences compared to what I get as a 26-year-old on social media. But it is reassuring to see older people here too who are defying that mainstream media and looking for the truth."

She continued, "I had asked the question in the meeting about calls to boycott corporations like McDonalds and Starbucks, because while I think it comes from a place of good intentions it's effectively useless in a capitalist system. So I found it really effective to think about the response to that instead, which is more a mobilization of the working class. We are the ones with the power. And although it may feel good to think that there is some individual consumerist power, what is more effective is the global mobilization of the working class."

Another attendee told the IYSSE, “What drew me out here was the rally on Saturday for the pro-Palestinian movement in Chicago. After reading some literature it prompted me to get more involved. I may have been somewhat ignorant to some of the struggles of both sides so I decided to attend. The insight I gained was really valuable because I started to look at the broader spectrum of classism and imperialism and how these machines continue to push on the working class.”

He continued, saying, “This is more of a class struggle for Palestinians and all people rather than just a Palestinian vs. Israeli issue. This is much more applicable to everyone and much broader than I had originally thought.”

When asked about the massive demonstrations throughout the world, he added, “What’s interesting is seeing all these protests and seeing how everyone feels, even in different cultures and different nations, it’s really moving, it’s encouraging me that what I’m feeling is right and this (the genocide in Gaza) is wrong and that something needs to change. But what’s frustrating is that our politics are pushing so much propaganda around the issue. The only way to know what is going on is to talk to the experts and attend events like this.”



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact