

Hundreds attend IYSSE and Students for Justice in Palestine rally at Detroit's Wayne State University

Jacob Crosse
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On November 2, some 500 students and workers participated in a rally organized by the Wayne State chapters of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) and Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), called “Stop the Genocide in Gaza!” The protest was held at the Wayne State University campus in downtown Detroit, Michigan.

Speakers included students from the SJP, the IYSSE and the Socialist Equality Party. After the speeches, a march was held in which protesters chanted, “Biden Biden what do you say? How many kids did you kill today?” “Israel Israel you can't hide, we charge you with genocide,” and “Free free Palestine” among other slogans.

Prior to the march, Aya, the co-president of SJP at Wayne State University, pointed out that while the last 27 days have featured “relentless violence” and thousands of “shattered lives and lost dreams,” this is a continuation of “75 years of enduring injustice and relentless oppression.”

“It is time for change and it is time for action,” said Aya.

After Aya, a member of the IYSSE at Wayne State explained, “We believe that the only people who can stop the atrocities that are happening in Gaza, and throughout the world are the working class. Only through the unification of the working class can we change the world around us.”

After a brief review of the history of Palestine, including the Nakba and the ongoing blockade of Gaza, the IYSSE member spoke about the ongoing genocide, its censorship in the capitalist press and the slanderous framing of Palestinian protesters and opponents of mass murder as “antisemites.”

“The media is calling us terrorists and antisemites. They are not only calling us that, they are calling the Jewish people who support us this as well,” he said. “This shows that the fight is not between the people, this is a fight between the working class and the capitalist class.”

Another member of the SJP spoke on not only the history of the conflict, but on the “audacity” of the Israeli delegation to the United Nations of wearing a yellow star of David in protest. He said that this was “a narcissistic attempt to manipulate people

to sympathize and stand with them in the name of the Holocaust as they commit another one against the Palestinians. They said ‘never again.’ Yes, ‘never again,’ against anyone.”

IYSSE member and *World Socialist Web Site* writer Eric London stated, “The International Youth and Students for Social Equality calls for Benjamin Netanyahu, Joe Biden, Antony Blinken, and the leading politicians of all the imperialist countries to stand trial for war crimes for what is currently happening in Gaza.”

London said workers and students must never forget “the names of the imperialist politicians who have stood behind the Biden administration and endorse what is happening, especially those who once claimed to be opposed to war,” including Senator Bernie Sanders, “who has refused to call for a ceasefire as Israel bombed hospitals and schools and refugee camps” and “Democratic Socialists of America congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who already endorsed Genocide Joe, and told CNN that it was ‘absolutely legitimate’ to vote to fund the Israeli military.”

After concluding his speech, London read a statement of support that was sent to the rally by socialist autoworker Will Lehman, who won nearly 5,000 votes from autoworkers last year while running for president of the UAW.

In his statement, Lehman said he “unequivocally denounced the Israeli government’s ongoing slaughter of the people of Palestine, which has the full backing of the US government and both capitalist parties. What is taking place is nothing less than a war crime, and the working class must be mobilized to stop it.”

Pointing to the call by the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions for workers around the world to refuse to handle military and war material shipments to Israel, Lehman said, “I fully endorse this appeal and demand the United Auto Workers cease production of all equipment destined for the Israeli military.” Lehman also called for a stop to production of all

munitions and equipment for Israel with workers in affected factories compensated “100 percent of their salaries by the corporations who have profited from war crimes.”

Lehman called for a “coordinated education campaign” to ensure that “every UAW member knows about the ongoing genocide in Gaza” and for resolutions at “every UAW local demanding that this be ended now.” Lehman warned that the leadership of the UAW, including President Shawn Fain, have refused to implement, much less discuss, the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions appeal for workers of the world to refuse weapon and war material transports to Israel. Instead, Lehman explained, Fain invited Biden to a UAW picket line in September.

“Biden is not standing with workers,” read Lehman’s statement. “He is standing with Benjamin Netanyahu and the Israeli military as they massacre civilians and bomb hospitals and schools. It is not the Democratic Party or the trade union bureaucrats who will stop imperialist war. It will only be stopped through the independent and unified initiative of the working class on an international scale.”

In his comments, Joseph Kishore, the national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States, detailed the hell Gazans have suffered since October 7. “More than 25,000 tons of explosives have been dropped on Gaza... an area of 141 square miles, approximately equal to the area of the city of Detroit, has suffered the equivalent of two of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima.

“The Biden administration has rejected a ceasefire and has declared that there are no red lines for Israel’s actions,” Kishore said. “It has said that it’s placing no conditions on Israel’s use of American weaponry.

“If there are to be prosecutions for war crimes, and there must be, Biden and Blinken, along with Sunak in the UK, Macron in France, Scholz in Germany, Meloni in Italy and all the leaders of the US-NATO axis must stand in a dock next to Netanyahu.”

Kishore explained that the US-NATO proxy war against Russia in Ukraine and the war in Gaza are two elements of an expanding world war.

“The is not just a conflict between nation-states, as the genocide in Gaza demonstrates,” Kishore explained, “it is a war against all opposition to unrestrained imperialist domination... We must understand that we are fighting not only the Netanyahu government, but American imperialism, the US-NATO axis, the capitalist ruling elite that is waging war here at home as it wages war abroad.

“Our aim must not be to ‘pressure’ the perpetrators and

accomplices of genocide, the capitalist states of the US-NATO axis, we must instead turn to the working class, that social force that produces all of society’s wealth,” he concluded. (Read Kishore’s full statement [here](#).)

Thursday’s rally was one of several demonstrations against the slaughter that took place throughout the United States. Jewish Voice for Peace (JVP), which has led several demonstrations over the last three weeks, had three separate interventions on Thursday.

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, hundreds of members of JVP, along with the Philly Palestine Coalition and If Not Now Philadelphia, protested at the 30th Street Station calling for a ceasefire. After a couple of hours, police began arresting protesters.

This is the second time JVP Philadelphia has staged a large protest against the war. Last month, protesters massed inside Philadelphia’s City Hall in opposition to a resolution passed by the City Council which “condemned the Hamas terrorist attacks” and affirmed “the importance of supporting the State of Israel,” which they falsely characterized as a “democratic nation that shares our values of freedom, democracy and human rights...”

In Durham, North Carolina, over a hundred JVP protesters blocked Highway 147 for over two hours. Afterwards, hundreds of protesters took to the streets of Durham in a peaceful march. At the head of the march protesters carried banners that read, “NC Jews say Ceasefire Now.”

Thursday afternoon in Boston, Massachusetts, JVP, along with Christians, Muslims and others, held a “pray-in” inside the JFK Federal Building where the office of Senator Elizabeth Warren is. Demonstrators carried signs that read “My faith demands ceasefire.” Photographs shared by If Not Now Boston show clergy being arrested by police for refusing to leave the building.



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