

On the anniversary of the beginning of Israel's genocide in Gaza, students and workers protest across the US

Luke Galvin
9 October 2024

Throughout the week, with Monday marking the one year anniversary of the beginning of the genocidal onslaught led by the Zionist Israeli regime and US imperialism in Gaza, thousands of students and workers in major cities across the United States have participated in protests calling for an end to the genocide.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality, the youth section of the Socialist Equality Party, intervened in many of these protests. Members of the IYSSE spoke with workers and youth about the escalating plans of US imperialism for a third nuclear war, with the genocide in Gaza now expanding into a region-wide war against Iran and the US-NATO-led proxy war against Russia in Ukraine threatening to ignite a global nuclear conflict.

The following are reports from some of these campaigns.

On Monday, on the University of Michigan's Ann Arbor campus, over one hundred protesters participated in a rally and march led by the Tahrir Coalition of student groups against the genocide in Gaza. Members of the IYSSE at UMich attended the rally and spoke with many students and workers about the political perspective needed to end the genocide and war.

Roughly an hour and a half into the event, police descended on the march to seize a protester at the center of the crowd for arrest. During the violent assault, police forced their way through protesters with pepper spray, which they used so excessively that one officer was accidentally sprayed in the face. Students and protesters who attempted to intervene and stop the vehicle in which the arrested protester was to be transported were forcibly moved out of the way and subjected to further pepper spraying.

Nearly 150 students, workers and community members

marched to the UMich police department offices following the attack. The arrested protester, reportedly a UMich community member, was released roughly an hour after their initial arrest. It remains unclear why police targeted the protester for arrest.

UMich is one of the main campuses where the ruling class has spearheaded its national assault on the democratic rights of workers and youth protesting war and genocide. Last month, Democratic Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel announced felony and trespassing charges against 11 protesters involved in the months-long protest encampment set up in the UMich Ann Arbor campus Diag (the university's quad) last semester.

Supporters of the Socialist Equality Party were banned from campuses for a year as well last month after handing out flyers for a meeting with Presidential candidate Joe Kishore sponsored by the IYSSE.

These provocations follow incremental changes in UMich's conduct policies, which effectively allow any individual to file conduct complaints as a "member of the university," allowing outside consulting firms to gather information and file complaints and sanctions against students on behalf of the university. Additionally, the new conduct policies no longer guarantee an accused student the right to request an appeals panel of students, faculty, and staff, effectively erasing due process.

Members of the IYSSE asked students and workers about the ongoing strike by tens of thousands of Boeing workers on the West Coast and the recently betrayed strike by nearly 50,000 East Coast dock workers. Protesters responded warmly to calls to resume the strike by dock workers and unite the industrial working class in a conscious struggle to halt the US war machine and take the means to wage war out of the hands of the US ruling class.

Students also responded to a leaked interview U-Mich President Santa Ono released over the weekend. In it, Ono revealed that the US Congress and White House are deeply involved in directing UMich and other campuses' repressive responses to anti-war protests. Many expressed anger and disgust over the blatant admission.

An undergrad student, Lynn, spoke at length with members of the IYSSE. When asked about the strikes by workers across the country and their thoughts on waging a united national strike to end the war, Lynn replied, "I'm all for a mass strike and coming together against something so catastrophic; as a people, we should unite to fight against systems that are actively attacking our fellow man."

When asked if they felt the struggle against genocide and US imperialism's plans for WWII needed to be international, Lynn replied, "Absolutely! It should be international." Referring to the Gaza genocide and Israel and US imperialism's attacks on Lebanon and provocations against Iran, Lynn said, "It's not going to stop. That's not the point of this war. The whole point is to wipe out an entire population for the interests of an imperialist regime. I really think we need to come together and fight."

Hundreds of students participated in a walk-out protest called by the Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) at Wayne State University (WSU) to commemorate the anniversary of the Gaza genocide. Members of the IYSSE at WSU intervened in the walk-out to support the protest and present an international socialist perspective against the Gaza genocide and a growing global conflict spearheaded by US imperialism, which, after a year of protests appealing to the Democratic Party and other forces of the ruling class, have only grown in ferocity.

Joe Kishore, the SEP's candidate for US president, visited the walk-out to speak with students, who stopped to discuss the election campaign, including many who signed the petition last semester to help put the SEP on the ballot in Michigan with over 20,000 signatures.

One student who spoke with Kishore and members of the IYSSE asked how she should respond to accusations of throwing out her vote if she chooses to vote for a third party. Kishore responded, explaining that "both parties say that every four years, and whoever is elected, the entire framework of American politics moves to the right." He emphasized, that, "The danger of fascism and the danger of the Trump administration is very real, but you won't prevent fascism or put an end to the genocide

by voting for Harris and the Democrats."

On the point of fascism and the openly fascist campaign of the Republican Party and Donald Trump, Kishore elaborated, "Trump is able to exploit social anger that finds no outlet in the political system; the fight against fascism, as with the fight against war, must be developed as a movement of the working class, in opposition to both parties."

In Chicago, several demonstrations were held in opposition to the genocide in Gaza and the expansion of the war into Lebanon. On Saturday, a march was held in Chicago's downtown area that saw several thousand participants.

On Monday, several campuses throughout the city held walkouts, rallies, vigils and other forms of protest against the US-backed Israeli regime. Chicago campuses where students protested included the University of Chicago, Northwestern, the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), and DePaul.

At DePaul where students organized a walkout followed by a demonstration in the quad, the university called the Chicago Police to break up the demonstration. Students were ordered to end the demonstration, leave the DePaul quad, or be arrested for trespassing.

In a statement posted by the DePaul chapter of the Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), the group wrote, "The DePaul administration watched as students grieved during an emotional vigil, where some recollected their own families undergoing the current genocide, and their first response was to call CPD and threaten arrests."

The DePaul SJP statement noted that Zionist students were permitted to hold a pro-Israel event inside the school's student center without obstruction.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact