

Mobilize students and turn to the working class to defend immigrants and democratic rights!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality (US)
5 February 2025

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in the US welcomes the growing wave of student walkouts protesting Trump's fascist assault on immigrants and democratic rights. These protests, which have erupted in cities across the country, are an initial expression of the broad opposition to Trump's efforts to establish a dictatorship and scapegoat immigrants for the crises produced by capitalism.

Trump has deployed ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) to tear families apart in cities and towns nationwide. His administration has issued executive orders preparing the military for deployment on US soil, transforming Guantanamo Bay into a massive immigrant concentration camp with 30,000 beds, and effectively criminalizing dissent by making non-citizens subject to deportation if they criticize the government or speak out against the genocide in Gaza.

He has declared that ICE can raid schools, has attempted to strip US-born children of their constitutional right to birthright citizenship and is laying the groundwork to deploy the military domestically. He justifies these dictatorial measures with the absurd lie that immigration constitutes an "invasion" and that our immigrant classmates and coworkers are waging war on the United States.

On high school and college campuses, Trump is attacking free speech, seeking to silence students and dismantle public education altogether. One of his executive orders mandates that elementary schools teach only "patriotic" history, a move aimed at suppressing discussion of past struggles against monarchy, slavery and capitalism.

Another order seeks to turn universities into

surveillance and enforcement arms of Trump's deportation machine, directing school administrations to "monitor for and report activities" critical of American "culture, government [and] institutions." The Trump administration has made clear that it intends to deport opponents of the genocide in Gaza. As an ominous sign of what is to come, Secret Service agents were dispatched during Trump's first days in office to intimidate an 11-year-old elementary school student in Chicago over a social media post criticizing the president!

Protest is necessary and welcome, but this emerging movement must have a clear political orientation. The Democratic Party is waiting in the wings to intervene—only to shut these protests down, talk "left" and divert opposition into dead-end promises of reform.

It was the Democratic Party that banned asylum, expanded immigrant detention and deported 1.5 million people under Biden. For decades, it has worked with the Republicans to pass the very laws now being used to deport millions and separate families. It played a central role in expanding the network of immigration detention camps across the country.

Now, the Democrats are actively collaborating with Trump's attacks on immigrants, providing critical votes for his far-right nominee for Secretary of Homeland Security, Kristi Noem, and helping pass the anti-immigrant "Laken Riley Act," which mandates detention for all immigrants accused of even minor crimes like shoplifting.

In 2017, leading Democrats rushed to airports to posture as opponents of Trump's ban on travel from Muslim-majority countries. In 2018, Democrats like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez traveled to the border for

photo-ops expressing their “anger” over Trump’s “Zero Tolerance” family separation policy.

But once the protests died down and Biden came to power, all the Democrats’ talk about “abolishing ICE” and “defunding the police” was swiftly discarded in favor of increasing funding for both. The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), falsely presented as opponents of the establishment, have played a key role in this process. While posturing as socialists, they have voted with the political establishment to fund US wars abroad and illegalize strikes by railroad workers.

Above all, the Democratic Party fears that any serious challenge to Trump could spark a broader wave of social opposition that would threaten not only his administration but the entire capitalist system. This is why figures like Ocasio-Cortez have focused their fire not on Trump but on the left-wing opposition to Biden, dismissing criticism of the Democratic Party as “privileged” and “bad faith.”

The political situation is extremely serious; it demands serious politics. The IYSSE is the student and youth section of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), which has called for the formation of school, neighborhood, and workplace committees to mobilize the working class in defense of democratic rights and to oppose the ruling class’s efforts to divide the working class on ethnicity and immigration status.

In a statement published last week, the SEP (US) explained that such committees will:

- Serve as hubs for disseminating information and mobilizing mass opposition to Trump’s dictatorial attacks on immigrants and democratic rights.

Bring together teachers, students, parents and workers to organize lawful public responses to ICE raids and other state repression under the principle: **“An injury to one is an injury to all.”**

- Counter the efforts of both big business parties and the trade union bureaucracy to divide workers along national and immigration lines.

- Expose the xenophobic lies of the corporate media through a campaign of political education aimed at making workers and youth fully aware of the threat to democracy.

- Orient youth and students toward the social force capable of leading the fight for democratic rights—**the working class.**

The IYSSE will actively assist in the formation of

such committees, working to link them across schools, workplaces and national borders into a powerful, organized movement. We will fight to introduce a socialist program that connects the defense of immigrants to the struggle for the democratic and social rights of all workers.

We will advocate for a program based on the class struggle, which throughout American history has proven necessary to bring together workers of all backgrounds to crush political backwardness and state repression, and we will ensure that these historical lessons are introduced into the emerging movement. On this basis we will strive to transform the defense of immigrants into an offensive fight by the international working class against Trump and his source—the capitalist system.

Those interested in joining this fight and establishing a committee to carry forward this struggle at your school—Join the IYSSE today and take up this fight!



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact