

Oppose war, fascism and oligarchy! Fight for socialism! Join the IYSSE!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality (US)
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Students are returning to campus for the fall semester in the US under conditions of unprecedented crisis. A global war is expanding on three continents, a fascistic government of the oligarchy is dismantling democratic rights, the capitalist system is driving the planet toward climate catastrophe and there is a growing movement of workers and young people throughout the world.

In Ukraine, the US-NATO war against Russia has produced an estimated two million dead and wounded. American forces have been at war against Iran for six months, killing thousands of civilians. Venezuela was invaded in January and its president kidnapped, and at least 221 fishermen and workers have been killed by Pentagon strikes in the Caribbean. The genocide in Gaza is approaching its third anniversary, with more than 73,000 Palestinians killed by official count.

These are not separate conflicts. They are fronts of a single eruption of imperialist violence aimed at a redivision of the world, whose central targets are Russia and China. Trump's \$1.5 trillion military budget is a budget for world war, to be paid for out of Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, education and housing. The ruling class is preparing to reintroduce the draft: this December, every young man between 18 and 26 will be automatically registered with the Selective Service.

This war threatens to become nuclear. Washington's own assessment, signaled by the CIA director's secret trip to Moscow last week, is that open warfare between NATO and Russia is an imminent danger.

For over four years, the Democratic Party has sold the war in Ukraine as a war for "democracy." The fate of Bogdan Syrotiuk exposes this as a fraud. On August 10, a Ukrainian court sentenced the 27-year-old Trotskyist, leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists, to 15 years in prison for "high treason." The evidence: six anti-war articles published on the *World Socialist Web Site* and his criticism of the state glorification of Nazi

collaborators. Bogdan opposed both Putin's invasion and the NATO war drive, and called for Russian and Ukrainian workers to unite against the war. He has been denied medical care, and his appeal must be filed by September 9.

Endless war abroad cannot be sustained without dictatorship at home. In 20 months the Trump administration has built a nationwide network of concentration camps and killed workers in the streets with impunity. After federal agents shot dead Renée Good, a mother of three, and Alex Pretti, a nurse who stopped to film an arrest, Vice President JD Vance declared the killer "protected by absolute immunity."

National Security Presidential Memorandum-7 names "anti-Americanism, anti-capitalism, and anti-Christianity" as the common threads of "domestic terrorism." The University of Michigan Eight face federal conspiracy charges carrying up to 20 years in prison for protesting the genocide in Gaza. The Minnesota Fifteen have been indicted for conspiracy to impede federal officers after opposing ICE raids. In the Prairieland case in Texas, 15 opponents of ICE were sentenced to a combined 556 years for "material support for terrorism." Amid the federal dragnet against Chinese scientists, University of Michigan postdoctoral researcher Danhao Wang took his own life in March, one day after a hostile FBI interrogation.

The Trump administration is a government of the oligarchy, by the oligarchy and for the oligarchy. Its function is to transfer still more wealth to the top through tax cuts, deregulation and the gutting of social programs. On this basis it is carrying out a systematic campaign to erect a presidential dictatorship. This is not the psychology of one man, but the outcome of a protracted breakdown of American democracy, rooted in a concentration of wealth incompatible with democratic forms of rule.

The Democratic Party is not an opposition to this regime but its partner. In January, 149 House Democrats voted for the \$839 billion war budget. In August, Senate Democrats passed the funding bill that keeps ICE and the camps running, which Schumer called a “responsible path forward.” Days later, Hakeem Jeffries met Jared Kushner to seek “common ground.” The Democrats’ quarrel with Trump is that he does not defend American imperialism effectively enough. What they fear is not dictatorship but the working class, and their role is to keep mass opposition to Trump under control.

The Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) serves this function on the party’s “left.” Its candidates, above all Zohran Mamdani, now mayor of New York, have won the votes of young people who reject capitalism. But the DSA is not a socialist party. It is a faction of the Democratic Party, peddling the illusion that capitalism can be reformed through electoral politics, and its role is to confine the radicalization of youth within the capitalist two-party system. Mamdani has twice met Trump at the White House and governs with the Democratic establishment, imposing austerity on the workers who elected him.

The opposition is enormous. The killings of Good and Pretti brought 100,000 into the streets of Minneapolis and set off high school walkouts across the country, feeding into the March 28 “No Kings” demonstrations, estimated at 8 million, the largest single-day protest in American history. Millions have marched against the genocide in Gaza, against ICE and against dictatorship. Among young people, capitalism’s standing has fallen to the lowest level ever recorded.

The problem is not a lack of opposition. It is one of perspective. These movements have not stopped the regime’s advance because they rest on the false premise that the ruling class can be pressured into changing course—that enough people in the streets will move the Democrats to act, the courts to intervene or Trump to retreat. But the ruling class is waging war and building a dictatorship because the defense of its wealth and global position requires it. It cannot be pressured. It can only be defeated.

The mass protests express a real determination to fight. What they lack is a perspective that connects this opposition to the one social force with the power to win. Only the working class possesses the objective social power to halt dictatorship, genocide and world war. It numbers more than 3.5 billion people worldwide, the vast majority of humanity, and it is the class that produces all

of society’s wealth. It is international, and its interests cannot be reconciled with capitalism.

In 1861, the defense of democracy required the abolition of slavery. Today it requires the abolition of capitalism. The politics of the IYSSE are not “student politics.” The IYSSE fights to break students out of the isolation of the campus and turn them to the working class—to bring the fight against war and dictatorship into the factories, warehouses, hospitals and schools.

This requires the study of history. The contradictions that produced the First World War in 1914 also produced the Russian Revolution in 1917, and those forces are at work today. Trotskyism is the Marxism of the 21st century. It continues the struggle waged by Leon Trotsky, who led the 1917 revolution with Lenin, against the Stalinist bureaucracy that usurped power and murdered the socialists who had made it. The Fourth International, founded by Trotsky in 1938, is carried forward by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), and the IYSSE is its youth movement.

On every continent, workers’ struggles collide with the trade union bureaucracies, an anti-strike police force for the corporations, against which the ICFI is building the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). The IYSSE fights to build rank-and-file committees on the campuses and in the workplaces, to unite students and workers in a common struggle against war, dictatorship and the oligarchy.

Amid the slaughter of the First World War, Rosa Luxemburg posed the alternative: socialism or barbarism. Which prevails depends on whether the working class finds its revolutionary leadership—and on whether you take up that fight. Take the fight to free Bogdan Syrotiuk onto every campus. Build IYSSE clubs. Join the International Youth and Students for Social Equality and fight for world socialist revolution.



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