

Join *the* **ISSE**

Statement of the International Students for Social Equality

The state of world affairs as mankind enters the second decade of the 21st Century shatters any hope that the new millennium would put an end to the wars, violence, and poverty of the 20th Century.

Despite the integration of world economy and enormous advances in technology and communications, billions live in hunger, while humanity is beset by an unending series of wars. The decade begins with an earthquake in Haiti, the Western Hemisphere's poorest country, which in its truly horrific death toll reveals the ugly state of world capitalism.

In the United States, millions have been thrust into poverty, while the jobs situation is the worst since the Great Depression. After handing out trillions to the banks, the government, at both the state and federal level, is pushing through unprecedented cuts in education and other social programs.

The financial elite, with the arrogance and sense of entitlement of an aristocracy, has exploited the crisis of its own making to vastly enrich itself, inflating new speculative bubbles that will lead inevitably to another financial crisis.

The war against the working class domestically is coupled with war abroad. Continuing on Bush's "wars of the Twenty-First Century," Obama has launched a "surge" in Afghanistan, quickly followed by the addition of a new potential target in the unending "war on terror"—Yemen. At the same time, the US is increasing threats against Iran and China.

Without the independent intervention by the working class, deepening world conflicts are leading to a world war bloodier than those of the 20th Century.

A socialist program

The ISSE is an organization of students around the world that insists that the great problems of our epoch can only be solved through a socialist movement of the international working class. Human progress is blocked by the capitalist system, which subordinates all considerations to the drive for corporate profit and the accumulation of personal wealth. We demand:

End the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan! The ISSE calls for the immediate withdrawal of all US troops and private mercenaries from Iraq, Afghanistan and every other country the US seeks to subjugate. The American war machine must be dismantled, and the vast sums expended upon it used to pay reparations to the societies devastated by American bombs and to help meet pressing social needs at home.

Billions for education and social programs! The ISSE demands a massive reallocation of resources worldwide to provide employment for all those who need it. There is plenty of work to be done, including meeting the basic needs of the population for food and shelter, rebuilding schools, expanding access to health care, and providing cultural institutions accessible to workers and young people.

Nationalize the banks and major corporations! The financial aristocracy is the principal block to any solution to the crisis facing billions of people. To break its stranglehold over the world economy, the ISSE calls for the nationalization of the banks and all large corporations under the democratic control of the working population.

For social equality! Democracy is incompatible with the immense levels of social inequality that prevail in the US and throughout the world. The ISSE calls for a program of wealth redistribution, including a sharp increase in taxes on the rich and the expropriation of all sums amassed through speculation and fraud.

For the political independence of the working class

The issues students face—including rising tuition, massive debts, the starving of resources for public education—are inseparable from the broader questions confronting the working class. None of these problems can be solved on the campuses alone. Students seeking to oppose war and inequality must reach out to workers throughout the country and internationally.

A turn to the working class does not mean an alliance with the trade unions. These organizations, supposedly defenders of the working class, are in fact dominated by well-heeled executives and partners of corporate management. They have collaborated in pushing through concessions while seeking to keep workers tied to the political establishment. The ISSE calls for the building of independent rank-and-file education, workplace, and neighborhood committees to unify all sections of workers and youth.

Above all, however, the working class needs its own political party, in opposition to the Democrats and Republicans, the parties of the corporate elite.

Many young people voted for Obama hoping for “change” from the Bush administration. These hopes have very rapidly turned to disillusionment and anger as the new administration has only deepened the right-wing policies of its predecessor. The author of the Audacity of Hope has turned out to be the most audacious of liars.

The experience of the Obama Administration demonstrates that there can be no change through the existing institutions. The US is a democracy in name only; behind the façade of elections lies a completely corrupt political system beholden to the financial aristocracy.

The ISSE seeks to build a mass political movement of the working class that will fight for power, establish a workers’ government, and reorganize society on a democratic, egalitarian and rational basis.

For socialism and internationalism

The two basic features of capitalism—private ownership of the means of production and the division of the world economy along national lines—block the rational use and development of man’s productive forces. None of the problems humanity confronts can be dealt with on a national level.

The problems faced by working people and youth of every country are fundamentally the same. In all countries, the ISSE opposes nationalism, chauvinism, racism and protectionism, which are simply means to divide and weaken the working class. Working people of all countries must join together in a common struggle.

Socialism—the rational and democratic control of the economy to meet social need, not private profit—arises as a historical necessity from the breakdown of capitalism. The ISSE has unshakable confidence in the development of an international socialist movement because socialism corresponds to the objective interests of the working class, the vast majority of humanity.

Socialism can only be achieved by conscious effort. A movement must be built and a struggle waged. We call on students and young people to carry forth this fight and build the ISSE.

Join the fight for socialism! Join the ISSE!

The International Students for Social Equality is the student organization of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), the world party of socialist revolution. The ICFI publishes the World Socialist Web Site (www.wsws.org), the most widely read socialist publication in the world.

We urge all students to study the program, history and analysis presented on the World Socialist Web Site. Make the decision to join and build the ISSE and help build a club of the ISSE at your school or university.