

Letter to members of the Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA)

By the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (US)
14 February 2020

The following is a letter written by the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) addressed to members of the Young Democratic Socialists of America (YDSA) who are holding their national conference this weekend in Chicago .

* * *

Dear members of the Young Democratic Socialists of America,

We are writing to you on behalf of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality, the youth movement of the Socialist Equality Party. The SEP is the US section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, which publishes the *World Socialist Web Site*.

You are attending this conference because you want to fight for socialism. The question is: What is socialism and how can it be achieved?

The dangers that we confront are enormous. The Trump presidency is a right-wing authoritarian regime, with distinctly fascist characteristics. Capitalism in the 2020s means a future of inequality, world war, mass shootings and climate disaster.

Socialists know that addressing these problems means a total overhaul of the economic superstructure of world capitalism. This would involve the confiscation of trillions of dollars in wealth from the ruling class and the reorganization of the economy to meet human need, not profit.

Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and the Democratic Socialists of America say it is possible to fight for socialism from within the Democratic Party. Such a political program is not real socialism and can only lead to disaster.

The Democratic Party is the oldest capitalist political party in the world. Founded in 1828, it carries in its political DNA all of the American ruling class's great crimes.

This was the party of the southern slaveowners before the Civil War, of the forced removal and massacre of Native Americans, of Jim Crow segregation and of the anti-Chinese and anti-Japanese restrictions of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is the party that jailed socialists and immigrants during World War I and dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the conclusion of World War II.

The Democratic Party launched and sustained the Korean War and Vietnam War, ended "welfare as we know it," supported the hyper criminalization of nonviolent drug use, voted for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, passed the PATRIOT Act, kept Guantanamo Bay open, and bailed out the banks after the market crash of 2007-08.

Bernie Sanders is far from the first to claim it is possible to reform this party, which is controlled from top to bottom by finance capital, the military and the intelligence agencies.

Throughout US history, when mass anger against inequality and war threaten to explode, "reformers" have come forward to lie to the leftward-moving masses, telling them they must not turn toward independent, revolutionary socialism, but must rather exert all their energy trying to change the Democratic Party.

Each failed effort at reform has paved the way for the Democrats' next crimes. It is for this reason that the party has earned the designation as "the graveyard of social movements."

Today's Democratic Party has facilitated Donald Trump's most reactionary policies, voting for his military budgets and agreeing to allocate billions of dollars to fund his attack on immigrants at the US-Mexico border.

The Democrats' impeachment effort gave the green light to Trump's fascist policies while focusing entirely on the claim that Trump is not aggressive enough against Russia.

Sanders won the popular vote in Iowa and New Hampshire (despite interference from the DNC) because of growing opposition to Trump and the right-wing, pro-corporate Democratic Party.

This has produced many worried articles in the corporate media over the growing popularity of socialism. To the ruling class, Sanders is a known entity. He has been in congress for 30 years and has caucused as a member of the Democratic Party. He voted for the war in Serbia, the war in Afghanistan and for some of the worst anti-immigrant measures in the 1990s.

In 2016, Sanders told his supporters to vote for Hillary Clinton, who embodies Wall Street and the military-industrial complex. In recent weeks he has again urged his supporters to vote for whichever Democrat wins the nomination, as though a Biden or Bloomberg presidency will advance the cause of socialism!

What the ruling class does fear, however, is that the growing opposition to capitalism will develop on an independent, revolutionary basis *in the working class*. Sanders serves to contain this opposition and, in his words, take discontented youth and "bring them into the Democratic Party."

The attendees of the YDSA conference want to take action in the fight for socialism. Good—urgent action is required to save the planet from capitalist barbarism. But action that ends up strengthening the Democratic Party is worse than useless and will only create cynicism and disillusionment.

Instead of helping Sanders save the Democratic Party, the IYSSE and SEP appeal to you: take action by supporting real socialist candidates in the 2020 elections, Joseph Kishore for president and Norissa Santa Cruz for vice president.

Our campaign recognizes that the fight for socialism means turning toward the working class, the chief progressive social force under

capitalism. This class, comprised of billions of people in every country, has the power to transform the world.

Awakening the tremendous political energy of this social force requires educating workers and dispelling the lies of the corporate media. Fighting for socialism means making workers aware of their common class interests, giving them an understanding of the nature of capitalist society, and explaining the role of the state, the police, the courts and the political parties of the different factions of the capitalist class.

For 150 years, the socialist movement has fought to introduce into the working class the highest level of understanding of the history and the lessons of the class struggle to develop a revolutionary strategy and fight for the unification of the working class on this basis.

Leon Trotsky, the great revolutionary who led the Russian Revolution alongside Vladimir Lenin and then led the struggle against the degeneration of the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin, explained:

History is no indulgent, soft mother who will protect the working class: she is a wicked stepmother who will teach the workers through bloody experience how they must attain their aims. ... The working class needs not the universal forgiveness that Tolstoy preached, but hard tempering, intransigence, profound conviction that without struggle for every step, every inch of the road leading to betterment of its life, without constant, irreconcilable harsh struggle, and without organization of this struggle, there can be no salvation and liberation.

YDSA members: Join the International Youth and Students for Social Equality. Visit the SEP campaign website, socialism2020.org, and get involved in our campaign to fight for socialism in the working class, not in the Democratic Party. Take up the study of genuine, scientific socialism and of the history of the class struggle. Join our fight for world socialist revolution!

Recommended readings:

The New York Times 1619 project: A racist falsification of US and world history

Despite the pretense of establishing the United States' "true" foundation, the *New York Times*' 1619 Project is a politically motivated falsification of history. Its aim is to create a historical narrative that legitimizes the effort of the Democratic Party to construct an electoral coalition based on the prioritizing of personal "identities"—i.e., gender, sexual preference, ethnicity, and, above all, race.

The 1619 Project and the falsification of history: An analysis of the New York Times' reply to five historians

This pamphlet presents a Marxist analysis of the reply by Jake Silverstein, editor of the *New York Times Magazine*, to five prominent historians who requested that the *Times* correct historical falsifications upon which the *Times*' 1619 Project is based.

The Political Lessons of the 2016 Bernie Sanders Campaign: What the WSWS Said

As the articles collected in the new pamphlet demonstrate, the WSWS warned that Sanders was not the voice of working-class opposition, but rather the response of forces within the ruling class to the dangerous growth of this opposition. This analysis covers the period from Sanders' official announcement in the spring of 2015 to his ignominious endorsement of Hillary Clinton at the Democratic National Convention.

The Russian Revolution and the Unfinished Twentieth Century

Over hundred years after the outbreak of World War I and the Russian Revolution, none of the problems of the 20th century—devastating wars, economic crises, social inequality, and the threat of dictatorship—have been solved. In fact, they are posed even more sharply today.

The Frankfurt School, Postmodernism and the Politics of the Pseudo-Left: A Marxist Critique

The polemical essays in this volume examine the complex interaction between history, philosophy and politics. The author defends historical materialism against contemporary anti-Marxist philosophical tendencies related to the Frankfurt School and postmodernism.

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>