

Humboldt University discussion: “The Charlie Hebdo campaign is being used to suppress freedom of speech”

Our reporters
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The comprehensive report and discussion at the International Youth and Students for Social Equality’s final meeting in its campaign for the student parliament elections at Humboldt University in Berlin encouraged several participants to speak out afterwards.

Christian and Dominik are about to graduate Kant High School in Berlin-Steglitz and are preparing for their final exams. Christian has been engaged with the political situation for some time, above all with the drive to war. He has relied mainly on the Internet for sources of information. “Then, when I was handed the flyer for the IYSSE meeting and read it,” he said, “I knew I had to come.”

The official media has been misleading with its reports on events in Ukraine last year, Christian said, “presenting Russia as the enemy in every sense.” Even the film footage showing Russian soldiers in eastern Ukraine had been falsified. “Even if Russian soldiers are there, no one in the media is asking the question, Why?” On the role of Germany in Ukraine, Christian added, “The [Christian Democratic] Konrad Adenauer foundation supported the coup in Kiev behind the scenes.” A nuclear war had to be avoided at all costs, he said.

Dominik, who was born in St. Petersburg and has been a resident in Germany since the age of four, agreed. “I came to this meeting because I want to understand the world better. We’re living at a time where you have to be wide awake. You can’t relax,” he emphasised. NATO’s militarist policy in Ukraine last year had alarmed him. The expansion of NATO to the Russian border would “provoke Russia.” With Germany drawing Ukraine into the EU, and as a further step into NATO, NATO bases would be established in

every country bordering Russia, he said.

Both spoke out against the campaign in the name of freedom of speech in the wake of the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*, which was discussed in detail at the meeting. It was, in reality, the governments that were restricting freedom of speech in order to deceive the public about their political goals. “That was already clear with the suppression of WikiLeaks,” said Christian.

Dominik also shared this view. The elite organisations were using the *Charlie Hebdo* campaign as a “cover to eliminate freedom of speech.”

On the publication of the foul caricatures by *Charlie Hebdo*, he remarked, “Religion has an influence on suppressed people. One is allowed to criticise religion, but not make fun of it.”

Martin, a geographic sciences student at the Berlin Free University, found the meeting and discussion very engaging. He said that the connection between the German universities in the Nazi period and today’s current developments were particularly thought-provoking.

Martin comes from Guatemala City and has studied over the past three years in Jerusalem. He compared the intensification of police state measures in the wake of the *Charlie Hebdo* attack with his Latin American home. Since the murder of protesting students in Mexico and the protests that followed, the situation in Guatemala was also tense.

When he recently visited his mother, her residential district was surrounded by barricades and guarded by security personnel. “I had to wait in a queue for 20 minutes,” Martin said, “Then I had to identify myself.” This is escalating in the Guatemalan capital, he said, where wealthier citizens are organising and blocking

off their districts from the poor with barriers and security personnel. “This campaign for more security measures is disturbing,” he said. It makes the lessons from history current.

Arthur, a 22-year-old student from Potsdam, thought it was important to protest against militarism and the growing danger of war. He also believed that the universities were moving rightward. Therefore he supported the campaign of the IYSSE and intended to point it out to fellow students.



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