Oppose right-wing censorship at Leipzig University!

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality
23 November 2017

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) protested in an open letter on November 11 the decision by the student council at the University of Leipzig to refuse to grant the IYSSE the status of a working group (WG). Recognition as a WG is a precondition for securing rooms and being permitted to work on campus. The members of the student council have now responded to the open letter.

Their answer confirms that the decision against the IYSSE is a fundamental attack on the basic rights of freedom of opinion and association. The right-wing sees new opportunities opening up: the Alternative for Germany (AfD) has become the strongest party in the state of Saxony, the federal government is strengthening the domestic and external repressive state apparatus, and social inequality is growing. Under these conditions, the student council is barring access to the university for a socialist students' group that is combatting right-wing forces, militarism and capitalism.

The accusations against the IYSSE from the student council are groundless and slanderous. Without a trace of evidence, it accuses the IYSSE of anti-Semitism. The Trotskyist movement, in whose traditions the IYSSE stands, has fought more than any other tendency against anti-Semitism and all forms of social, racial and religious discrimination. Thousands of Trotskyists lost their lives in the struggle against the Nazis, fascism and Stalinism. Leon Trotsky's writings against the Nazis remain to this day unsurpassed in their clarity and accuracy.

The IYSSE has itself been the target of embittered attacks from the bourgeois media in recent years because it has fought at universities against the downplaying of the Nazis' crimes. The IYSSE's critique of the right-wing extremist Humboldt University professor Jörg Baberowski, who defends the Nazi apologist Ernst Nolte and declared that Hitler was "not vicious," has been supported by several student representative bodies.

And how does the Leipzig student council respond? It aligns itself with the RCDS, the right-wing student association affiliated with the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU). The RCDS has invited Baberowski to universities, maintains close ties with the extreme right-wing milieu and hails Sebastian Kurz, who is preparing to enter a government coalition in Austria with the far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ)—an organization full of anti-Semites!

The Leipzig RCDS, which was awarded the status of a working group by the student council, published two statements over the past week celebrating the student council decision as an important step in the struggle against "extremism." The RCDS's federal executive went as far as to demand a blanket ban on all radical left-wing student groups, the review of their activities by the domestic intelligence agency and the banning of left-wing students from universities—measures that exist only under fascist regimes or military dictatorships.

The student council's response leaves no doubt that its main concern is the suppression of socialist and anti-militarist views. As well as the groundless accusations against the IYSSE, such as the assertion that it employs the Nazi cliché of "constructive and money grubbing capital," the student council denounces any criticism of capitalism as "anti-Semitism."

The student council also does not want any references to the "elite as a united social actor." According to this, one is no longer permitted to criticize the fact that eight billionaires possess more wealth than the bottom half of the world's population, and that a super-rich financial oligarchy controls all levers of power.

According to the student council, the allegation that the capitalist elites want "to dominate Europe and impose economic interests internationally" is unacceptable. And this even though the ruling elite is explicitly demanding such policies. For example, Humboldt University

Professor Herfried Münkler, an advocate for German foreign policy, called in his book *Power in the C ent r e* for Germany to become the "hegemon" and "disciplinarian" of Europe. One can read how Germany wants to enforce its own economic interests internationally in the German army's official defence policy guidelines.

The student council describes the IYSSE's protest against Google's censorship as the expression of a "world outlook based on conspiracy theories." However, Google's censorship is an indisputable fact.

Ever since Ben Gomes, the vice president of search engineering at Google, declared in April that the company intended to promote "authoritative" sites at the expense of "alternative" news, search traffic from Google to 13 leading left-wing web sites has declined by 55 percent, with the *World Socialist Web Site* suffering a 74 percent drop. Articles by Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Chris Hedges suddenly disappeared from Google News after he gave an interview to the WSWS. "After the interview, they blacklisted me," he told the WSWS. The *New York Times* has also reported on the censorship of the WSWS by Google.

It is obvious that the student council backs the censorship of the WSWS, an international publication writing daily against war, militarism, social inequality and capitalism. It even declares the concept "establishment media" to be unacceptable. Instead, it demands that the WSWS bow to the censors. "Of course, it would also be possible to question one's own commentaries when the change of an algorithm to combat fake news disproportionately impacts your web site," wrote the council.

The IYSSE will again apply for the status as a WG. The members of the student council should think twice how they vote: If they want to support the right of the IYSSE, an international socialist youth and student organization, to work on campus, or if they want to become the tool of a reactionary campaign that will strengthen the most right-wing forces.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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