

Updated: Letters oppose barring of SEP panel on the fight against fascism from Historical Materialism conference

19 February 2019

Socialism in Our Time, a public event organized by the journal *Historical Materialism* and produced in conjunction with Jacobin Magazine and the Socialism Conference, has rejected a proposed panel submitted by the Socialist Equality Party on “The fight against fascism and the lessons of history.” Jacobin Magazine is produced by supporters of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA). The Socialism Conference is directed by the International Socialist Organization (ISO).

The SEP panel was to feature as its main speaker Christoph Vandreier, deputy national secretary of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP) in Germany.

The WSWs published a statement denouncing this action and calling on readers to send protests against the act of censorship to: socialisminourtime@gmail.com. [Forward a copy to: sep@socialistequality.com]

Below is a selection of letters received.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at New York University condemns the censorship of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), which has applied for participation in the New York City conference, *Socialism in Our Time*. The conference is presented by the journal *Historical Materialism* in collaboration with DSA-backed *Jacobin* magazine and the International Socialist Organization’s Socialism Conference.

The proposed panel featured Christoph Vandreier, deputy national secretary of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP—Socialist Equality Party) in Germany and author of *Why Are They Back? Historical Falsification, Political Conspiracy and the Return of Fascism in Germany*, as well as contributions on the struggle against the far right in Brazil and the United States. No reasons for the exclusion of the panel from the conference were offered.

The IYSSE and the Socialist Equality Party have for years been at the forefront of the struggle against the resurgence of the far right, insisting that combating the rise of fascism requires a political mobilization of the international working class on the basis of a socialist program.

As a leader of the SGP and IYSSE in Germany, Vandreier has played a critical role in this fight, exposing figures such as the right-wing extremist Professor Jörg Baberowski from Berlin’s Humboldt University, who is relativizing the crimes of the Nazis and Hitler in order to ideologically prepare Germany’s re-militarization. With the backing of the university administration and the media, Baberowski has encouraged a series of blatant right-wing attacks on the IYSSE and SGP. Most recently, the youth organization of the fascist Alternative for Germany (AfD), Young Alternative (JA), has attempted to disrupt IYSSE meetings. These attacks have been publicly condemned by several student parliaments at German universities.

The exclusion of the SEP’s panel is an act of censorship and can only be understood as an attempt to prevent a broader, international discussion of the significance of these developments. It is aimed at preventing students and workers from hearing a Trotskyist perspective on the fight against fascism under conditions where far-right forces have been mobilized internationally by bourgeois governments. Since the panel was proposed, there has been a march of fascists at Auschwitz and desecrations of Karl Marx’s grave by far-right individuals. In the US, President Donald Trump, who has been promoting fascist forces throughout his presidency, has declared war on socialism.

Historical Materialism states that it “do[es] not favor any one tendency, tradition or variant.” However, in reality, it is closely aligned with the ISO and DSA. The rejection of the SEP’s panel rides roughshod over the conference’s stated purpose and exposes the deliberate exclusion of perspectives that come into conflict with the DSA’s and the ISO’s collaboration with the Democratic Party. In stark contrast to the stand taken by the conference organizers, the IYSSE at NYU and at Portland State University (PSU) have consistently defended the democratic rights of the DSA and ISO against political censorship and fascist attacks. The IYSSE has defended the DSA’s right to have a club at NYU and has opposed threats and provocations preventing the DSA and ISO from freedom of assembly in Portland.

The IYSSE at NYU calls on the organizers of *Socialism in Our Time* to reverse their decision and feature the SEP’s panel at their conference to present a historically-rooted perspective to fight against the growing threat of fascism.

I write to urge you to reconsider your rejection of the SEP’s proposed panel for your upcoming conference.

Your website says that you “welcome contributions that address UNDERSTANDING CAPITALISM; CAPITALISM AND OPPRESSION; IMPERIALISM AND COLONIALISM; THE ECOLOGICAL CRISIS; and CRITICAL/ANTI-CAPITALIST PHILOSOPHIES.” It goes on to say, “to prepare for the fights ahead, we have to study the struggles that came before us.”

If you genuinely mean what you say, your refusal to allow SEP members to participate makes no sense. You are surely aware that the SEP members who would participate, should you allow them to, are among the most knowledgeable, active and intensely committed proponents of socialism you will ever find. Indeed, had they not brought a proposal to you, you should have sought them out proactively and invited them.

Why have you refused the SEP’s proposal? What are you concerned about? If you have political differences, so much the better. You should be eager to air the issues. If your reasons have to do with legitimate logistical or other concerns related to the conference program, why not offer a

counterproposal of some kind?

As it stands now, your position seems cowardly and unseemly. Please show us you can do better.

David Mintz

To whom it may concern.

I wish to forward my disgust at your refusal to allow speakers from the SEP to speak at your conference, however I am not surprised in the slightest.

I had the “privilege” to attend the Momentum conference you organised in Liverpool last year. An event that was dominated by every Stalinist imaginable.

It is not an accident that as the door was opened by Stalin for Adolf Hitler, the reinvention of the Communist Party and its courtiers of allies in the trade Unions and Labour party since has been to play precisely the same role as then. To corral the working class down a populist agenda for “reform of the irreformable”. As then, your treachery knows no bounds for what you have done by acting in this way is to show precisely your hostility to any proposition that the working class can and should develop its own political party in line with its objective needs, and that the ruling classes must by definition be dispossessed of their power over Society as a whole.

What you have done here is unconscionable. You are masquerading as an alternative for the working class, whilst resolutely holding onto the coat tails of the system that oppresses them. A system that for a 'third' time is descending into the abyss of nation state against nation state.

In short, you are the 5th column within the workers movement. You are the Pied Pipers of reaction dressed as radicalism seeking to lead the working class back to where they are attempting to escape from, i.e. the clutches of capitalism and its saviours, fascism.

John Kendall

“The world is not to be comprehended as a complex of ready-made things, but as a complex of processes, in which the things apparently stable ... go through an uninterrupted change of coming into being and passing away ... For dialectical philosophy nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it, except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain.” Thus, according to Marx, dialectics is “the science of the general laws of motion, both of the external world and of human thought.” -F Engels.

Dear Organizers of Socialism in Our Time,

I have learned that you have rejected a panel called “The Fight Against Fascism and the Lessons of History” proposed by the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) for the upcoming Socialism in Our Time public event. On the event’s website, you state that the purpose of the conference is to develop our understanding of capitalism and to consider struggles to build an alternative. The SEP’s proposed panel would achieve these objectives.

The current resurgence of the far right and neofascism is inextricable from the intensifying crisis of capitalism and the historic growth of social inequality. The SEP proposed Christoph Vandreier as the panel’s main speaker. In his book “Why Are They Back?” Vandreier analyzes the growth of the neo-fascist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), which is now part of the German government, and the German government’s attempt to falsify history and whitewash the crimes of the Nazis. Vandreier would speak about the connection between the AfD and similar parties in France, Spain, Austria, Hungary, and other parts of Europe.

Other proposed speakers include Bill Van Auken and Fred Mazelis, both of whom have decades of experience in the socialist movement. Van Auken, an expert on Latin American history and politics, would speak

about the factors that contributed to the election of Bolsonaro, who leads the most reactionary government in Brazil since that country’s dictatorship. Mazelis would speak about Trump and his efforts to encourage white nationalists and establish a personalist regime that relies on the military and police.

All of the speakers would establish the historical parallels between the current crisis and the previous experience with fascism of Germany, Spain, and other countries. They would outline the invaluable analyses of fascism provided by Leon Trotsky and draw out the concrete ways in which these lessons must be applied today in the working class’s struggle against capitalism.

The SEP submitted its proposal before your deadline. In rejecting this proposal, you provided no explanation for your decision. Given that the topic that the SEP proposed is manifestly relevant to the purpose of the conference, and that the speakers are eminently qualified to talk about their respective subjects, the only possible explanation for your decision is your opposition to Trotskyism. This is an inexcusable act of censorship. I urge you to rescind your rejection and allow the SEP to hold its panel during your conference. Only historically and theoretically grounded discussions such as those the SEP proposes can prepare the working class for its historical mission of overthrowing capitalism.

Sincerely,

Erik Schreiber

I have been a regular reader of the WSWS and a supporter of the SEP for a number of years. I also had the opportunity, a couple of years ago, to attend and present a paper at a Historical Materialism conference. As a classical Marxist, it has always been obvious that theory is only strengthened and built by the free exchange of ideas and engagement in polemics.

It is with concern that I read of your decision to censor political thought in such an off-hand manner. Surely there must be room within such a forum to present ideas that the organisers might not expressly agree with. It is in the sharing of ideas and polemic that theory is moved forward. What is becoming evident is that HM is deliberately narrowing its focus and is increasingly speaking only to an isolated few. This has nothing to do with the theory that was built by generations of Marxists—a theory that exists to change the world.

Dr. William Briggs

Hobart, Australia

I am writing in protest against the disqualification of the Socialist Equality Party speakers from the *Socialism in Our Time* conference and the rejection of their proposed panel on “the fight against fascism and the lessons of history.”

It is difficult to comprehend why the SEP speakers were not selected to speak.

As the most widely read online socialist daily publication, the SEP has made, and continues to make an invaluable contribution to an understanding of arts, culture, history, economics, philosophy and current affairs from a Marxist/Trotskyist perspective through the freely available journalism on the *World Socialist Web Site*. With an archive spanning back decades, and its journalism in a number of languages, there is no other publication in the world like it. They exercise an immense political authority.

As such, important questions must be answered:

On what basis was the SEP’s application to speak rejected?

And why did the SEP only receive their reply from event organizers two days later than the official deadline of February 11?

If, as the SEP have claimed, they were barred from speaking on partisan grounds, shame on you and your organization.

Regards,
Owen
ClassConscious.org

I have found out that you have rejected a submission from the Socialist Equality Party in the US to field an international panel at your conference, on the subject “The fight against fascism and the lessons of history.” Christoph Vandreier, member of the SGP in Germany, along with others in the political party, has played a prominent role in the struggle against the resurgence of fascism in Europe.

While you have every right to disagree with the politics of the SEP and its sister parties in the ICFI, you should not blatantly politically censor those with whom you disagree. Have you no confidence in your own perspective? Surely the censorship without an explanation contradicts your own stated aim to “welcome contributions that address History of Social Struggles and Movements; History of the Labor Movement; History of Organizations and Parties; Legacies of Particular Thinkers and Activists.” This includes the internationalist perspective of Trotskyism in the struggle against fascism, whether you disagree with us or not.

Christoph Vandreier is author of *Why are They Back?: Historical Falsification, Political Conspiracy and the Return of Fascism in Europe*. His proposed presentation on “Back to the 1930s: Trotskyist Policy in the Fight Against War and Neo-Fascism,” drawing on the lessons of history for today’s struggles, is still relevant to the concerns proposed by the audience in your conference. In good conscience and in the spirit of democratic rights, to deny the participants the right to hear the Marxist theoretical analysis and political experience of such significant socialist activists and intellectuals does a disservice to workers and youth internationally and does nothing but continue the rise of fascism.

The Socialist Equality Party in the United States defended the democratic rights of the ISO and DSA against the far right in late January of this year after the two political meetings on college campuses in Portland were shut down by campus police after provocations at Portland Community College.

In January, the SEP condemned that blatant attack on free speech and the right to assembly on campuses. Despite our political differences with the ISO and the DSA, we defended your right to hold meetings, carry out your political work and exercise your free speech, without repression by the state or attacks from the far-right. I expect the organizers of the conference to do the same with our party as we have done for your parties. Otherwise, fascism will return.

Sincerely,
James

This email is to register my opposition to your rejection of the panel proposed by the Socialist Equality Party for your *Historical Materialism* Conference.

Why, in spite of your frequent advocacy for “transparency” in public affairs, would you exclude Socialist Equality Party participation in such an event? Could it be that, flush with the publicity you lately enjoy as members of DSA and the ISO, you are reluctant to do anything that might loosen your grip on the tattered coattails of the Democratic Party?

After so many years in the shadows, it must be gratifying to Sunshine Socialists and Limousine Liberals like you to find yourselves so much in the spotlight now that several congresspersons, both old and new, have drawn attention to their carefully unarticulated notion of what they call “socialism.” John Nichols is the darling of talk show hosts on Sirius XM radio’s so-called “Progress” channel, as well as a popular guest on Pacifica stations. Others make news in 140 characters or on Facebook, though they are always quick to “edit” (i.e., recant) the moment they feel that sharp swat on the wrist from Nancy Pelosi or Chuck Schumer or even Chuck Todd. This newfound celebrity must be heady stuff, but it is

NOT socialism.

By censoring the scholarship and activism of the Socialist Equality Party, you have denied conference participants the opportunity to hear the materials their speakers would present on “The fight against fascism and the lessons of history.” The Socialist Equality Party has deep roots in the Left Opposition to the repression and purges of Joseph Stalin, a figure that retained the support of some of your political antecedents long after support could be excused! It is disgraceful to silence them, but like “Uncle Joe,” you are shameless.

Enjoy the limelight while it lasts. If Donald Trump doesn’t come and get you, as he’s promising to do, the Democratic Party will, the moment you begin to cost its establishment figures a handful of votes or dollars. As far as I’m concerned, you’ll deserve your return to obscurity whether it comes from the right, or the so-called “left.”

Beverly Lozano

This is to protest the unexplained decision by organizers of the “Socialism in Our Time” conference to reject the panel on “The Fight Against Fascism and the Lessons of History” proposed by members of the Socialist Equality Party. The SEP and its youth group have been at the forefront of the fight against resurgent fascism at Humboldt University in Berlin for years. The panel proposal clearly suits the conference theme of “History of Social Struggles and Movements.” For socialists to make sense of the current upsurge of fascist and neo-fascist currents in Europe, and in the MAGA movement in the US, the lessons of its historical manifestations are of crucial importance for any discussion of “socialism in our time.”

Obviously, conference participants would benefit from the perspective of Christopher Vandreier, author of *Why are They Back?: Historical Falsification, Political Conspiracy and the Return of Fascism in Europe*. His proposed presentation on “Back to the 1930s: Trotskyist Policy in the Fight Against War and Neo-Fascism,” drawing on the lessons of history for today’s struggles, is of pressing relevance to the concerns proposed by your conference. The same can be said of Bill Van Auken’s presentation on Bolsonaro’s victory in Brazil. Would the organizers of the conference, in good conscience and in the spirit of workers democracy, deny to participants the right to hear the theoretical analysis and political experience of such significant socialist activists and intellectuals? This decision by the conference organizers does a disservice to the socialist movement.

The website of *Historical Materialism* clearly states: “In our selection of materials, we do not favour any one tendency, tradition or variant.” How can this statement be squared with the leading role of the DSA and the ISO and the exclusion of the SEP panel? The only explicable reason for this decision can be blatant political censorship of viewpoints at odds with the narrow nationally based perspective of the conference organizers.

As a revolutionary socialist activist for the past half century, I call on you to reverse this egregious decision and include the SEP panel in the conference program.

Bob Montgomery

On Monday, US President Donald Trump delivered a fascistic speech, excoriating socialism. He presented himself and his administration as leading a global crusade to eradicate it and to prevent socialists from coming to power in the US, while basking in chants of “USA, USA, USA” and “Trump, Trump, Trump.”

His speech followed the closure in January by the police of two political meetings on eco-socialism to be held on college campuses in Portland, Oregon, following far-right provocations. This is not just a US but an international phenomenon whereby far right organisations are being encouraged by the ruling class, under conditions of growing class struggle and support for socialism. Fascism and its incubator—right wing

populism—is a crucial weapon in the arsenal of capitalism against socialism.

This is the context in which the organisers of “Socialism in our Time” (scheduled for April 2019 in New York) have rejected the panel proposed by the Socialist Equality Party (US) and International Youth and Students for Social Equality (US) on “The fight against fascism and the lessons of history.”

Yet your conference call states explicitly that “To prepare for the fights ahead, we have to study the struggles that came before us.” It adds that contributions addressing “the history of social struggles and movements, history of the labour movement, history of organisations and parties, and legacies of particular thinkers and activists” would be welcome.

The history and political program of different movements and tendencies are indeed important if socialists and the workers and youth who are coming into politics are to understand how to take forward the fight for socialism today.

The SEP/IYSSE panel included Christoph Vandreier, a leader of the SGP in Germany and author of *Why are they back? Historical Falsification, Political Conspiracy and the Return of Fascism in Germany*. His presentation was entitled, “Back to the 1930s: Trotskyist policy in the fight against war and neo-fascism.”

Surely, the lessons from the rise of fascism and ultra-nationalism in Germany have a particular resonance today, when the crimes of the Nazis are being downplayed in Germany, and xenophobia and anti-immigrant sentiments are being whipped up by ruling elites everywhere?

Nearer home, other panellists were to speak on Bosonaro’s election victory in Brazil and the rise of the far-right in the US itself.

For academics and socialists, your decision beggars belief. You did not even bother to give a reason for excluding the SEP/IYSSE panel.

It indicates that far from fighting fascism and promoting socialism, your objective is to exclude those political and intellectual currents that take the history of the international working class seriously. In so doing, like your counterparts in the 1920s and 1930s, you are doing the ruling class a valuable service.

If you have any commitment to intellectual integrity, the international working class and socialism, you would reverse your decision and include the SEP/IYSSE panel in your conference. The failure to do so clarifies whose side you are on, and workers, intellectuals and students will take note.

I look forward to your reply,

Jean Shaoul

Professor Emerita

University of Manchester

UK

Comrades,

I have attended a number of Historical Materialism Conferences and was a presenter at one. In all my experience HM has always been open to different ideas and different interpretations of Marxism. HM has not to my knowledge ever acted as if they were the sole guardian of truth or of what constitutes a legitimate interpretation of history. In the past, the only litmus test that I was aware of was whether the panel proposal was relevant to the topic of the Conference and whether it met certain scholarly standards.

The Socialist Equality Party has its own understanding of socialism and the crisis of capitalism, the proposed topic of this Conference. The SEP’s views are of course one among many others that are in contention in current scholarly debates as well as among Left political groups. It should be given an opportunity to present those views, however much we may disagree with them. Allowing for a debate among diverse views, of course within the framework of a shared commitment to overcome capitalism, is

the only way in which to advance our understanding of the contemporary world. I therefore urge you to reconsider your decision to reject the SEP’s panel proposal.

Alex Steiner, Permanent Revolution web site

To the Organizers,

I wish to lodge a strong protest against the exclusion of the SEP from your conference.

This group is the most articulate and politically conscious today protesting against the threats we now face in everyday life.

To exclude, one of the most relevant oppositional voices from this conference reveals that you are little better than the academic Downton Abbey wannabees and proto-fascists contaminating higher education today.

I hope you will change this decision and open the conference to the relevant few and open debate necessary for its very existence.

Tony Williams

English

Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

To the organizers of *Socialism in Our Time*,

I am writing to protest the decision to bar the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) panel from presentation at the upcoming conference. Without so much as an explanation to why the SEP panel was rejected, this is a blatant act of political censorship and a major disservice to the attendees of the conference.

The SEP of Germany has been leading the fight against right-wing professors in the country who are actively rewriting German history to whitewash the crimes of the Nazis, calling out the SEP and their meetings to have right-wing agitators disrupt and assault attendees, and are having their arguments repeated by fascist politicians in the German parliament without any significant opposition.

According to your own website, the purpose of the conference is that in order “to prepare for the fights ahead, we have to study the struggles that came before us.” Is the political fight being waged by the SEP not a major struggle in today’s political climate that should be studied from?

More could be said, but this example should be more than enough reason to accept leading socialists to speak to a socialist-minded audience on the danger of the far-right today. Considering no other political movement is taking up a fight such as the SEP’s, their rejection from the conference is clearly politically motivated and must be overturned.

Anthony del Olmo

I protest most strongly against the decision of the political groups DSA and ISO not to let Comrade Christoph Vandreier participate in the conference on historical materialism. He plays a crucial role in clarifying the question of why right-wing extremist and fascist movements are gaining influence in Germany again. The clarification of this question is extremely important in order to prevent the future return of the fascist past in Germany and the entire world. If you do not allow this clarification, it convinces me that you do not want to be seriously interested in solving these issues, or seriously want to fight for socialism.

Hanne Levien

To the conference organizers and the editorial board of Historical Materialism,

The decision by organizers of the “Socialism in Our Time” conference to reject the panel on “The Fight Against Fascism and the Lessons of History” proposed by members of the Socialist Equality Party is disturbing. It is clearly an act of political censorship. There is no other

way to make sense of it. The panel proposal clearly fits with the conference theme of History including 'History of Social Struggles and Movements'. Surely, the resurgence of fascism and the lessons of its historical manifestations, are of crucial importance for any discussion of 'socialism in our time'. Surely, the conference would benefit from the perspective of Christopher Vandreier, author of *Why are They Back?: Historical Falsification, Political Conspiracy and the Return of Fascism in Europe*. His proposed presentation on "Back to the 1930s: Trotskyist Policy in the Fight Against War and Neo-Fascism," drawing on the lessons of history for today's struggles, is centrally relevant to the concerns of the conference. It is likewise hard to see any justification for the exclusion of veteran socialist activist Bill Van Auken's presentation on Bolsonaro's victory in Brazil or that of veteran Trotskyist organizer on the Trump administration and the rise of the far-right in the US. To prevent the conference attendees from gaining the benefit of the theoretical analysis and political experience of such significant socialist activists and intellectuals is a huge disservice to the socialist movement.

There is one way in which the panel proposal differed from the conference theme. That is the narrow nationalism of the conference description: "How can a new generation turn this moment... into a permanent feature of the North American social landscape?" The SEP panel proposal rightly situates North American events in their international context. This internationalist orientation is one that would considerably enrich and deepen the analytical content of your conference.

Historical Materialism is the sponsor of the conference, and the journal's website states: "In our selection of materials, we do not favour any one tendency, tradition or variant." It is impossible to square that with the exclusion of the SEP contributors.

I call on you to reverse the previous decision and to include the SEP Panel in the conference program.

I request a reply dealing with the concerns and questions that I have raised.

Yours sincerely,
Charles Thorpe
Professor
Department of Sociology
University of California, San Diego

I strongly condemn your action of politically censoring the SEP's panel without any proper explanation.

This blatantly exposes your political cowardice and fear of the principled Trotskyist movement in spite of you plagiarizing the title of "Marxism in Our Time," written by Trotsky.

Without references to objective history, we can't talk about present or future of our time, and hence your titles are hypocritical and you removing the SEP from a common platform is an act of cynicism.

Without class politics, all you can discuss is pseudo-left politics of race, gender, and sexuality.

So, I strongly urge you to reverse your decision or give a proper explanation for removing the panel from your conference.

Regards,
Sathish
India

To the organisers,

I am very angry at having found out that you have barred the Socialist Equality Party speakers from being able to put forward a Trotskyist (i.e. genuine socialist and Marxist revolutionary) perspective at this event.

Your decision is both a blatant act of political suppression and an undermining of the very title of your event as you have now removed the genuine socialists from your panel!

As Marxists, the speakers from the International Committee of the

Fourth International would have objectively laid the basis for a fight against fascism—one based in the international working class. In doing so, the ICFI would have to demarcate itself (real socialist revolutionary politics) from the pseudo-left. Thus, the ICFI would expose the DSA, ISO and every other pseudo-left organisation for their nationalist, pro-union, pro-capitalist and fundamentally anti-working class politics through the denunciation of "popular frontism", "the party of the 99%", identity politics, and formulations such as Chantal Mouffe's "people", which are all aimed at removing from the equation the independent revolutionary role of the international working class.

What you did not consider is that this political censorship is in itself an exposure of the politics of the pseudo-left. The ICFI will turn this negative into a positive to clarify the difference between genuine socialist politics and that of the pseudo-left.

Yours,
Eric
Melbourne, Australia

Dear organisers,

I was taken aback by your decision to exclude the SEP Panel from participating in the Socialism in Our Time conference. Moreover, excluding the panel with the throwaway line that "....The fight against fascism and the lessons of history was not selected for presentation at this year's Socialism in Our Time Conference."

The planned presentation would have dealt with the most crucial and pressing political (and existential) issues facing not only the working class, but society as a whole. By excluding the panel of the SEP, you deny participants and the fractured working class movement, currently surging leftward in the US and worldwide, of the tools to deal with challenges it desperately needs.

It is uncomradely, to say the least, to be so flippant about the proposal of the SEP Panel. Moreover, it is politically shortsighted and plainly anti-working class in political orientation to censor an important voice like the SEP's at a conference professing to deal with socialism in our time.

I condemn your actions in the strongest terms possible and move that you rescind it and invite the SEP Panel to present their perspectives at the Socialism in our Time Conference.

Yours,
Steven P Lamienie

Let this email serve as my official protest of your unjustified decision to exclude SEP's panel from your upcoming "Socialism In Our Time" conference.

The main speaker proposed for the SEP panel, Christoph Vandreier, is an important voice in the ongoing fight against fascism. The other proposed speakers also bring valuable perspectives.

A conference aspiring to address themes such as "Capitalism in Crisis" cannot be taken seriously if it excludes these important voices.

Please reconsider your decision.

Respectfully,
Dierk Groeneman

The political climate of today, unequivocally, is an international phenomena. In this global unrest, the exponentially hostile growth amongst the working class toward opposition to deteriorating working conditions and the suppression of democratic rights, has sparked a class-consciousness not only limited to the national arena, but the international one as well.

Education is a human right, a democratic right. To reject the Socialist Equality Party's (SEP) panel is not only an attack of intentionally leaving all other adherents and attendants bereft of history, science, and the principle-constant of the International Committee of the Fourth

International, but is akin to censorship, for no reason was given as to why the SEP was rejected.

The malleable nature of the Democratic Socialists of America and of the International Socialist Organization have made it clear that there is no seat for truth, nor fact, nor revolution.

Suppression of the SEP's voice to challenge these matters can only be seen as censorship. I demand a reason as to why. I demand the truth for why the Socialist Equality Party is suppressed from so many platforms to hold free speech and education as pillars to a more enlightened world.

Sincerely,
Cordell Allen

Could you provide an explanation for why the SEP panel was refused a platform at your "Socialism in Our Time" event? As you may know, the panel submitted would have included a representative from the German SGP, a Trotskyist organisation that over the past year has been subject to increasing right-wing attacks and media denunciations. In line with these smears against the SGP, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV), a German state intelligence agency, has recently added the SGP to its official list of "left-wing extremist" organizations.

Specifically, was your decision to exclude the SEP taken in line with requests from any similar intelligence agencies in the USA that the ISO has been in contact with while supporting the regime-change operations in Libya and Syria?

Michael Burke

To the organizers of the *Socialism in Our Time* conference:

As a lifelong socialist, I was surprised to learn that you have rejected a submission from the Socialist Equality Party in the US to field an international panel at your conference, on the subject "The fight against fascism and the lessons of history." The panel would have had as its main speaker a leading German Trotskyist who, together with his party, the SGP, has played a prominent role in the struggle against the resurgence of fascism in Europe.

While you have every right to disagree with the politics of the SEP and its sister parties in the ICFI, I must ask why you are denying attendees at your conference the right to hear an alternative point of view. Surely this flies in the face of your stated aim to "welcome contributions that address History of Social Struggles and Movements; History of the Labor Movement; History of Organizations and Parties; Legacies of Particular Thinkers and Activists." Does this not include the history, legacy and struggles of Trotskyism?

It goes without saying that speakers from the ICFI sections would stress the need to build an international working class movement to oppose fascism and war, call for the formation of rank-and-file workers' committees in opposition to the trade unions, and strongly oppose identity politics. They would also, no doubt, speak against illusions in the Bernie Sanders of the world, as well as the building of "broad left" parties and coalitions—positions with which you would almost certainly disagree. However, I must ask: Do you have no confidence in your ability, and that of your approved panelists, to counter those arguments? I tend to think that is the case.

If I am mistaken, please explain to me exactly why you have rejected the SEP's submission. I await your reply.

Yours sincerely,
Damien Remwick

wsws.org/contact



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit: