

London's Foyles Bookshop: Attendees discuss UK launch of *Why Are They Back?*

Our reporters
20 March 2019

World Socialist Web Site reporters spoke to attendees at the launch of the English-language edition of *Why Are They Back? Historical Falsification, Political Conspiracy and the Return of Fascism in Germany* at London's Foyles bookshop.

Jude from Leicester said, "I thought David North's report and Q&A session were a master class in 20th century history and Marxist analysis. Christoph Vandreier has produced a vital work in carrying forward the fight against fascism and historical falsification. We cannot afford for history to repeat itself, as in the betrayals by social democracy and Stalinism after the First World War."

North had noted that the fascist gunman who killed 50 in Christchurch, New Zealand stated that the historical figure he most identified with was the pre-war fascist leader and anti-Semite, Sir Oswald Mosley. Jude said, "I think it is vital to seize back the initiative on defining anti-Semitism from the likes of right-wing Blairites such as Margaret Hodge, whose witch-hunt against socialist workers I find truly offensive. Historical accuracy needs to be reclaimed by the working class and fought for. A stand must be taken against those that tell lies. [Labour leader Jeremy] Corbyn and his ilk are not going to do this."

Kristen is a university student at Oxford. She said, "The launch of *Why Are They Back?* was eye-opening, engaging, and, most of all, terrifying. ... This demonstrates to me why we must seek to educate and unite ourselves in an independent political movement of the working class. This responsibility, I feel, lies particularly with students. As a student myself, Christoph's detailing of the actions taken by Humboldt University against the students criticising the far-right academic, Jörg Baberowski, was pertinent. It is easy to forget how dangerous it can be for students to speak out against academic opinion, and how necessary it is to support these international struggles if we are to truly prevent the return of fascism."

Luke is a 6th form student in Bradford. He said, "The book launch was thoroughly engaging, presenting to a large audience how important it is, now more than ever, to oppose

the development of fascism.

"The speeches by David North and Christoph Vandreier highlighted how simple the choice between socialism or barbarism is. Both made it clear that the only way to oppose these horrid developments is through education, which was provided at the event by explaining how the state and academia facilitate the fascists' return. Secondly, it explained how only an international socialist struggle can end this plague.

"That is why it is so important to support the International Committee of the Fourth International and due to the amazing number of people who made the effort to travel to London, it is clear that Trotskyism still remains popular. I hope that we can all spread the news of the fight by the ICFI [International Committee of the Fourth International] and hopefully attract people to Christoph's American tour."

Firdevs, a PhD student at University College London, said, "I stumbled upon this book at the London Book Fair two days ago. It is really important that we talk about the far right and fascism. These are the evil ideologies behind so much of what is going wrong in the world today, regardless of the identities, ethnicities, religions and everything else involved. Fascism, the far right and the alt-right are the evils we are facing in the world today.

"There is huge hypocrisy in the world's media and governments when talking about fascism and the far right. It is wrong to think we live in genuinely free societies. There are powerful conspiracies in action to bring fascism back into the world and I think we should be talking about it. Bringing this and other facts to light in *Why Are They Back?* is extremely important.

"I've never considered myself ideologically close to socialism, but listening to David North's presentation I realise that there are problems which we can't solve with whatever we have in our hands right now. I'm studying Diplomacy and International Relations and I know the levels of conspiracy and the lies that have to be told to keep states going as they are. There has to be a way out and socialism might be an answer. I'm not knowledgeable enough about

socialism yet, but it does seem like a serious alternative way forward.”

Brendan, who has worked in the legal profession, said, “I’ve been coming to [WSWS] readers’ meetings locally in Yorkshire for quite some time. I’m certainly interested in what’s happening in Germany, the rise of the far right. I’m glad we came, we learned a lot.

“The speeches give you a framework. They bring precision to how you think about these things, give you clarity. There is a lot of fog out there in the general media. You’re not getting proper reports of what’s going on in the world. It’s deliberately obscured. The Alternative for Germany is the principal opposition party in Germany! And, as the speaker said, whereas in the 1960s a small percentage vote for a neo-Nazi party was considered a crisis, today it’s not deemed worthy of comment. That sort of thing is disturbing and unsettling.

“But it is reassuring to know that there is another, socialist, perspective, and that the socialist movement has the tools to resist the advance of far-right ideology.”

Nasrullah, a doctor and microbiologist, said “I heard from one of my colleagues that there was a book launch about fascism and Zionism and I’m very interested in these topics, mainly because of the current situation. I am myself a Muslim, and when I heard that 50 Muslims had been killed [in the fascist terror attack in New Zealand] I became very interested in this movement [the Socialist Equality Party].

“I found the speeches very useful. They broadened my horizons and I’ve learnt many things that I didn’t know before—why there is increased conflict, why there is injustice in Europe, the USA and the world. I’ll start to think more about these issues and I would like to be part of this movement in order to bring justice to humanity.”

Michael said, “I thought it was really informative as I have been perplexed at why there was such a rise of fascism.” He had been at a “yellow vest” protest in France and “was stuck in a tear gas attack. I was with a journalist. I have lots of questions still and am thinking of joining the SEP.”

Sofia said, “I think it’s clear that the growth of the far right is a response to huge and growing social inequality. People are aware that there’s something to fight, but there’s a lack of knowledge of the root causes, which leaves a big gap that the far right fills.

“People do notice and feel frustrated when their so-called leaders don’t speak out against the far right. People are starting to wake up to the duplicity of the political leadership. There’s nobody out there taking a serious look at it. David North was saying that in the 1960s when the far right achieved a small gain in votes there was huge outrage and panic around the world. Now it’s not taken seriously.

It’s mentioned but it’s not ever picked apart by anybody in the media or political establishment.”

Joe said, “Both speakers were very good, it was very powerful. The reason why I came was because two-and-a-half years ago I came to the lecture on Trump by David North. It was interesting because my lecturer the day before had stated he was a mere aberration and in 2020 all will be well with a Democrat candidate elected.

“I thought it was very clarifying, especially from a British perspective with the explanation of Zionism and the deliberate confusion being created against Jeremy Corbyn.”

Sam came from Gosport on the south coast. “I thought the meeting was fascinating and as we see the implications of the growth of the far right are international.

“I was able to understand more the connection between anti-Semitism and fascism.

“My sister lives just two blocks away from where the massacre in Christchurch happened. Countries like New Zealand were formed through immigration and now you have people who will kill people for being immigrants.”

Tim had read David North’s book, *The Frankfurt School, Postmodernism and the Politics of the Pseudo-Left: A Marxist Critique*. “It was a great meeting and I thought that the most important thing was when Christoph spoke about post-modernism, and how in order to fully understand it you have to look at history and the Frankfurt School and how it evolved in the post-war period.

“The meeting explained how not fighting the far right fits in with academia and modern historians’ own social interests. It explained how they fail to fight back and how to an extent they can accommodate to it, as do the top 10 percent of the population who are promoting identity politics.”

Alan said, “I decided to come to meeting about the rise of the far-right because I studied politics at university. I’ve always been politically left-wing and come from a left-wing family.

“I think populist rhetoric provides an easy win because it plays into people’s fears. But we’re not given any alternatives because all the news says that Corbyn is an anti-Semite and the Labour Party is a disaster and will never get into power.”



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact