

Youth and students speak in support of upcoming meetings series: “The Threat of Fascism and How to Fight It”

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality - US
5 April 2019

The Socialist Equality Party (US) and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) are holding a major meeting series across the US, “The Threat of Fascism and How to Fight It.” The meetings will feature special guest speaker Christoph Vandreier, deputy national secretary of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) and author of the newly released book *Why are They Back? Historical Falsification, Political Conspiracy and the Return of Fascism in Germany*.

David North, chairman of the International Editorial Board of the *World Socialist Web Site* and national chairman of the Socialist Equality Party (US), will be speaking alongside Vandreier in Detroit and Ann Arbor, Michigan; Cambridge, Massachusetts and New York City. SEP (US) National Secretary Joseph Kishore will speak with Vandreier at the meetings in California at San Diego and Berkeley.

This speaking tour is a significant political event for workers and youth in the US. It is taking place against the backdrop of a global promotion of far-right politics by bourgeois parties around the world, from Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil and President Donald Trump in the United States, to the fascistic Alternative for Germany (AfD) party in Germany.

IYSSE clubs throughout the country spoke to students and young people this week about the importance of the upcoming meetings series and received a strong response.

While campaigning at Wayne State University in Detroit Michigan, IYSSE members spoke to Christine, an 18-year-old freshman. Christine said she was looking forward to attending the meeting because she thinks the issues involved are important for workers

and youth. “I don’t consider myself especially political. I study fine arts. But I think everyone has something to contribute. Art can play an important role in reaching people.” The IYSSE spoke to Christine about the cover of Vandreier’s book, which features an anti-fascist photomontage by John Heartfield. Christine had not heard of Heartfield but thought the work was powerful.

Christine told us that she is very concerned about state of life for masses of people: “In the US, the Trump administration is doing some things that are hard to believe, the attacks on immigrants especially and just the stuff he says every day. It seems to me that everything that the political parties do, on both sides, is meant to divide us. But I think it’s important people remember that we aren’t that different from each other.”

Another student, Lydia, who studies Digital Art at Wayne State University, told IYSSE members, “All of these issues are connected—the rise of the Nazis, inequality, democratic rights and other things.”

Lydia said she doesn’t think either party is capable of fighting the rise of the far right in the US. “The Republicans and Democrats only address things on the surface level. They don’t really do anything in the interests of ordinary people. They really just want the same thing: a strong imperial America with a big military. It’s important that we go way beyond the surface level. It sounds like this meeting will do that, and so it will be important.”

Pablo, a sophomore at UC Berkeley, took great interest in the IYSSE’s table which featured material on the Russian Revolution. “It’s surreal,” he told members, “that the same social forces behind the Nazis

are on the rise today. And this is not confined to Germany but is happening in the US and in South America too.”

Like many students who spoke with the IYSSE across the country, Pablo said he was very interested in learning about the history of revolutionary struggles, “It’s necessary to learn from the past for the struggles today.”

Eliseo, a political science major at UC Berkeley, also expressed enthusiasm about the upcoming lecture. “These far-right organizations are able to grow because everyone hates the political establishment,” he said. “The extreme right and Trump blame immigrants as a scapegoat to the real social problems going on.”

Eliseo and the IYSSE spoke about the breakdown of capitalism, and the anti-working class role of the unions in the era of globalization. “Nonprofits and unions used to be interested in helping and defending workers, but now they are all about making money.” He expressed disgust about Norwood Jewell, the UAW executive charged for bribery. “These people don’t defend the working class.”

Before heading to class, Eliseo added: “I’m excited for this meeting, this is an extremely important topic that needs to be discussed.”

The IYSSE in New York City has been campaigning at schools across the city for the New York University meeting, the final stop in the tour. Antonio, a liberal arts student at NYU, said that he felt that the far-right shift in global politics has many expressions: “There is a danger of fascism now and you, can see that in so many examples. The use of emergency powers by Trump to build a wall is one instance.

“You can make the case that the reemergence of fascism is capital sensing a threat and attempting to reassert its powers. You could also say it is a misguided attempt by some to assert control. I say misguided because you can see that some of the people supporting these moves are those most affected by globalization. It is like their entire lives were just swept away by the economic changes.”

The IYSSEs around the country have found overwhelming support among students for the meeting series. There is no shortage of outrage over the policies of the Trump administration and concern over the rise of far-right movements around the world. What is lacking most among students and young people is an

understanding of the political, theoretical and historical lessons needed to fight back.

Jayshawn, a student at the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC) in New York City, explained, “People are sitting around feeling stuck in these parties. The Republicans have failed us, and the Democrats in many ways have failed us too. It is hard to push your own agenda when the politicians in office just do whatever they want.”

Another NYU student, Gabriel, said, “I am looking at the rise of fascist leaders in the history books now. There is such a focus on how it could be prevented in what we are all reading, but then you don’t see anyone doing anything. It is like people just feel powerless, but we need to teach them what to do in order to fight.”

The IYSSE and SEP urge all students, youth, and workers who are looking for a way to build a mass working class movement capable of preventing the disaster of Nazism from taking place on an even greater scale today to attend a meeting in your area and join the IYSSE. If there is not a meeting close by, contact us to get involved in your area.



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