

Stop the campaign of smears and censorship targeting anti-war meetings on Canadian university campuses!

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Are you a student at a Canadian university? Help defeat the attempts to censor anti-war actions on university campuses by contacting the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) and joining its struggle to build an international anti-war movement led by the working class. Email iyssecanada@gmail.com and register today for the IYSSE's online meeting this Saturday at 1pm Eastern time—"The war in Ukraine and how to stop it: an online discussion of socialist anti-war strategy."

Canada's state-owned national broadcaster is trumpeting a foul right-wing smear campaign aimed at silencing any voices critical of the US-NATO instigated war with Russia over Ukraine—a war in which Canadian imperialism is playing an extremely belligerent and provocative role.

The witch-hunt is being spearheaded by the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC). The UCC has extensive ties going back decades with the Canadian state and, with Ottawa's help, whitewashed the role that Ukrainian nationalists played as Nazi collaborators during World War II. It has long promoted a far-right, virulently anti-communist and anti-Russian form of Ukrainian nationalism.

The CBC campaign was initiated with a Feb. 3 report "Anti-Ukrainian vandalism, harassment rising at Canadian Universities," which provided no evidence whatsoever to justify its lurid headline. Based on statements from the far-right UCC, the article portrayed any opponents of the US-led imperialist war against Russia as violent pro-Russian racists.

UCC senior policy advisor Orest Zakydalsky claimed that Ukrainians "have seen rising physical attacks and violence," without substantiating a single violent incident. The UCC called on the Canadian government to create a McCarthyite "task force" to investigate these attacks—that is to smear, intimidate and silence anyone who exposes the predatory war aims of Canadian imperialism and its NATO allies or the fascist politics of their Ukrainian nationalist proxies.

If the UCC feels so emboldened as to demand state censorship of anti-war voices on university campuses this is due above all to its decades-long intimate ties to the Canadian state. Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, the granddaughter of a Ukrainian fascist and Nazi collaborator, has enjoyed close ties with the UCC since childhood. She embodies the alliance between Ukrainian far-right nationalism and Canadian imperialism. Taras Zalusky, who was CEO and executive director of the UCC from 2010 until 2016, was recently appointed as Defence Minister Anita Anand's chief of staff at the

initiative of the Prime Minister's Office.

The UCC seized upon a January 26 meeting organized by the Ottawa Peace Council at Ottawa's Carleton University to initiate its campaign to smear and censor anti-war actions and agitation. Entitled "The War in Ukraine: What is the Path to Peace?", the event featured activist and prominent independent journalist Yves Engler and former Green Party leadership candidate and self-avowed "eco-socialist" Dimitri Lascaris. The meeting's participants made certain correct criticisms of the provocative role of the Western powers in instigating the war, but wound up with a pathetic appeal to the Canadian government to reconsider its support for the war against Russia and broker peace talks.

In a separate incident at the University of Victoria in British Columbia, the Ukrainian Students Society succeeded in triggering a university investigation into the Young Communist League, after the youth movement of the Stalinist Communist Party criticized a banner bearing the fascist slogan "Slava ukraini!" This slogan was popularized by Stepan Bandera's Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, which collaborated with the Nazis during World War II and bore responsibility for the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Jews and Poles. The university stated of the YCL's criticism, "This behaviour is not—and will not be—tolerated ..."

The UCC encouraged its Ukrainian Students affiliate at Carleton to attempt to stop the Jan. 26 meeting ever taking place. Appealing to Campus Security and the "Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities," Ukrainian Students members complained that the appropriate forms had not been submitted. They also brazenly smeared Engler, making the absurd but deeply sinister accusation that he "could initiate harassment or violence towards students at the event." Campus Security "promised us that constables would be placed at the doors... to ensure the event was stopped before it began," the student club later claimed. However, Carleton University administration, citing the importance of free speech, intervened and the meeting went ahead.

After the meeting, the UCC students deliberately misrepresented everything the speakers actually said. The student club accused the panelists of "promoting hate" and serving as "a mouthpiece for Russian propaganda." The CBC uncritically parroted these allegations, which were circulated in an open letter on Facebook.

The group accused the Peace Alliance of spreading "Russian propaganda and disinformation," adding without any proof whatsoever that they "appear to be funded by Russian interests."

The letter accuses Engler of "promoting disinformation" merely

because of his past appearances on RT, the Kremlin-sponsored broadcaster which was banned by the CRTC at the war's outset. Ukrainian Students failed to cite a single statement by Engler.

Further, the group attempted to link the speakers' appeal for peace talks with support for the Russian state and violent "hate" of Ukrainians. It published two photos of crude pro-Russia graffiti, with the words "Rossiya" and the capital letter "Z" scrawled in pen on a wall, implying that this was the work of anti-war organizers.

There is absolutely no evidence linking this graffiti to any participants in the meeting, let alone its organizers. The pathetic doodles are far more likely to be a provocation by the right-wing UCC members themselves. Ottawa Police investigated their allegations and found no evidence to support them.

Declaring that the speakers had "encouraged genocide against the Ukrainian people" — another filthy lie—the group continued that the "lack of security within the room and the parking lot following the event led to students feeling incredibly unsafe in vocalizing their opinions and in walking home."

World Socialist Web Site reporters attended the January 26 event online. The only "intimidation and harassment" during the meeting came from Ukrainian nationalist students, who attempted to shout down the speakers.

Engler gave a factual account of NATO's eastward expansion towards Russia's borders following the Stalinist bureaucracy's dissolution of the Soviet Union, and Washington and Ottawa's use of fascist forces to spearhead the 2014 Maidan coup that overthrew the country's elected pro-Russian president. Lascaris, for his part, cited his family's experience on the divided island of Cyprus to denounce the role of American imperialism in the region. Engler's main appeal was for the Canadian ruling class to reconsider its policy: "If you look at the context, in which Canada has been an active participant in intervening in Ukrainian affairs... this is all important to end this war and push for negotiations."

This political disorientation flows from the politics of the Canadian Peace Alliance, in which leaders of the Stalinist Communist Party (CPC) of Canada have for decades rubbed shoulders with Christian and other pacifists. The January 26 meeting was chaired by Miguel Figueroa, who headed the Stalinist CPC for over two decades. Its perspective of pressuring the ruling class is a rehash of the Stalinists' Cold War-era campaign for "peaceful co-existence" between the USSR and imperialism and for Canadian capitalism to adopt a so-called "independent foreign policy." As they dissolved the Soviet Union and transformed themselves into a new capitalist class, leading Stalinist bureaucrats imagined they could reintegrate Russia peacefully into the imperialist-dominated world economy on the basis of restored capitalist social relations. The imperialists' systematic encirclement of Russia and instigation of the current war and Putin's reactionary response—based on war and Great Russian chauvinism—underscored how disastrously misguided they were.

The fact that the CBC is championing calls for censoring such timid proposals for peace talks as those advanced at the January 26 meeting shows how terrified Canada's ruling elite is of the potential emergence of a mass anti-war movement in the working class. They recognize millions of workers across the country are struggling to make ends meet as prices skyrocket, and public services and wages are cut to the bone to fund the billions of dollars required to wage war on Russia. They correctly fear that open political discussion of the war's origins, as well as the bloody records of Canada and the other imperialist powers and their far-right Ukrainian proxies, will

encourage students and young people to take up a struggle against the war and the capitalist profit system that has given rise to it.

The Liberal government has given no indication whether it will take up the UCC's proposal for a "task force" to vet and censor events on campuses. But the Canadian state has a long history of collaborating with far-right Ukrainian nationalists to target left-wing opposition in the working class. As the WSWs exposed in the series "Canadian imperialism's fascist friends," the UCC was itself created by the Canadian government in 1941 in order to support Canadian imperialism's aims in World War II. After the war, the Canadian state used newly-arrived fascist collaborators from the Waffen SS Galizien Division, the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists and Bandera's Ukrainian Insurgent Army as instruments of its Cold War foreign and domestic policies. Backed by the Canadian state, these far-right forces were used to violently break up workers' meetings and picket lines, and shift the politics of the Ukrainian diaspora, hitherto largely associated with socialism, far to the right.

The UCC today is led by the political and familial descendants of those fascist collaborators. The Carleton Ukrainian club is affiliated to SUSK or C??? ??????????o?o ?????????? ??????, the Ukrainian Canadian Students Union founded in 1953 as a political training camp for UCC student activists. Their filthy smear campaign against the Canadian Peace Alliance stands firmly in the UCC's tradition. All students and workers must demand an immediate halt to such intimidation and defend the right of students and young people to organize public events in opposition to the Ukraine war and imperialism without fear of retaliation or political smear campaigns.

The growing political influence of the UCC within the Canadian state arises from the confluence of its fascist politics with the imperialist war against Russia, which is the ruling elite's attempt to "resolve" the escalating crisis of world capitalism through military conquest. NATO's war in Ukraine, as the ever-escalating campaign painting China as an imminent threat underlines, is merely the opening shot in a Third World War for the imperialist redivision of the world.

The same objective conditions driving the ruling elite to war are propelling millions of workers around the world into struggle against it. The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) fights to arm young people with the socialist and internationalist perspective that is necessary to build a mass anti-war movement in the working class to put a stop to the imperialist war.

In a statement ahead of a global anti-war rally held December 10, 2022, the IYSSE wrote: "Just as it was the Russian Revolution, the greatest intervention of the working class in world history, that brought an end to the first global carnage of World War I, it will be the intervention of the international working class that will today stop the escalation toward World War III."



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