

Oppose University of Washington's censorship of Code Pink's Medea Benjamin!

Bryan Dyne
16 March 2023

The University of Washington in Seattle has taken up the role of political censor against opponents of the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine.

On March 13, Code Pink, an antiwar activist group known for opposing US wars abroad, published an article noting that a scheduled talk for March 15 at the University Book Store by one of the group's cofounders, Medea Benjamin, had been canceled at the behest of a "pro-Ukrainian student group" at the university.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) unequivocally denounces this blatant act of censorship. The cancellation of the event with Benjamin is an attempt to suppress antiwar sentiments among workers and young people and an attack on the democratic rights of the entire working class.

According to a press release from the Seattle Antiwar Coalition on the cancellation, "The University Book Store had received complaints about the event from some UW faculty members, a Ukrainian student group on campus, and members of the broader Seattle Ukrainian community."

Benjamin's talk was a part of a nationwide book tour at more than 100 locations, including many universities, promoting her book *War in Ukraine: Making Sense of a Senseless Conflict*. To date, this is the only event that has been canceled by a host venue.

The censorship of Benjamin and Code Pink can only be understood as a political manifestation of the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine. The administration has so far spent more than \$110 billion arming Ukraine with increasingly sophisticated weapons to use as a proxy against Russia. And just last week, Biden revealed the proposed 2024 budget, which includes \$1 trillion for war with Russia, China and ultimately with all the US ruling elite's geopolitical

rivals.

Neither the location nor the timing of Benjamin's censorship are coincidental.

A principal social basis for the war against Russia are layers of the privileged upper middle class, especially in academia. During the first year of the war, leading universities had hosted one pro-war event after another, providing a platform for NATO officials, the US military and figures associated with the Zelensky regime in Ukraine and the right-wing anti-Putin opposition in Russia.

The University of Washington itself has numerous ties to the Department of Defense, including collaboration that stretches back to 1943 and an active ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) program. It hosts the Navy-sponsored Applied Physics Laboratory and has an Institute for National Security Education and Research sponsored by the Defense Intelligence Agency. The university works with the NSA, FBI, Homeland Security and numerous other state agencies and is one of the most militarized campuses in the United States.

The university also has stated its open support for Ukraine. A statement issued by the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures declares its faculty members are "outraged" by the "brutal invasion of Putin's forces into a sovereign country." No mention was made of the instigation of the war by the US and NATO, nor of the openly fascist and neo-Nazi forces operating inside the Ukrainian military and government.

The act of censorship of Medea Benjamin comes just days before the March 18 antiwar demonstrations called by Code Pink and affiliated organizations, including a demonstration in Seattle. It is a clear act of intimidation against those holding and attending the

protest.

Workers and youth must oppose these acts of censorship and intimidation by the University of Washington and, by extension, the American state.

Despite our well documented political differences with the organizers of the March 18 demonstration, including Code Pink, the IYSSE encourages the broadest possible participation in the rallies in Seattle and other cities. The IYSSE will be intervening in these demonstrations to fight to orient the developing antiwar movement toward an open struggle against capitalism. This requires the political mobilization of the working class, independent of both the Democratic and Republican parties, on a socialist and internationalist basis.

Those interested in joining this fight to build a global socialist antiwar movement of workers and young people should contact the International Youth and Students for Social Equality and the Socialist Equality Party today.



To contact the WSWWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact