

Oppose political censorship and fascist threats against the ISO and DSA in Portland!

By the International Youth and Students for Social Equality at PSU
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Two political meetings on college campuses in Portland were shut down by campus police after provocations from the far-right last week. The first, on January 24, was a meeting organized by the International Socialist Organization (ISO) at Portland State University (PSU). The second, the following night, was organized by the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) at Portland Community College (PCC).

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) condemns this blatant attack on free speech and the right to assembly on campus. Despite our political differences with the ISO and the DSA, we defend their right to hold meetings, carry out political work and exercise free speech, without repression by the state or attacks from the far-right.

The incidents in question began when Joey Gibson, the leading spokesperson for Patriot Prayer, a far-right group based in the Pacific Northwest, announced on social media that members of his organization would attend the meetings.

Shortly before the PSU meeting, Patriot Prayer members, including Gibson, began livestreaming fascist and right-wing tirades. In one of these videos, Gibson compared the ISO to Al-Qaeda and stated that his group would target every “socialist” and “left-wing” meeting until they “disavow Antifa.”

At the January 24 meeting, the ISO prevented a well-known Patriot Prayer member and fascist provocateur named Gregory Isaacson from attending. According to an article in *Socialist Worker*, “Isaacson carried a cane with a large metal head shaped like a hammer—raising concerns that it could be used as a weapon.”

Isaacson appealed to the Portland State campus police, who proceeded to shut down the event on the

pretext of ensuring safety. According to the ISO, “PSU administration and [Campus Public Safety Officer Chief Donnell] Tanksley stepped in to inform Isaacson that the meeting was canceled—but that he *did have the right to attend if it had occurred.*” This dismissal of the right of the ISO to stop fascistic organizations from attending their meetings—under conditions of growing right-wing violence in the US and internationally—has grave implications.

The Portland Community College Campus Security Department shut down the DSA meeting set to take place Friday, citing the same concerns. Both meetings were on the topic of “eco-socialism.”

PSU and PCC, by capitulating to the far-right and using the police to shut-down the meetings, are setting a dangerous precedent. Their actions follow the moves by the administration of the University of California, Berkeley, to implement a new “major events policy” in 2017 giving enormous powers to the police to cancel club activities based on vague and unaccountable “security concerns.”

The far-right provocations in Portland are part of an escalating campaign of threats and intimidation internationally. In the past year, the IYSSE at Humboldt University in Germany has been threatened and had its meetings disrupted by fascist groups on campus. On December 11, close to twenty members of the youth wing of Alternative for Germany (AfD) disrupted an IYSSE meeting addressing the rise of fascism. They shouted to disrupt speakers, harassed attendees and took photos.

Far-right organizations have been encouraged and cultivated by the ruling class, which is resorting to ever more overtly authoritarian forms of rule under conditions of growing class struggle.

The IYSSE denounces the attacks on the democratic

rights of student groups and demands that PSU and PCC guarantee the right of all organizations to hold public meetings on campus free from fascistic threats and provocations.

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>