

Christoph Vandreier kicks off US speaking tour with well-attended meeting at UC Berkeley

By Gabriel Black
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Christoph Vandreier, deputy national secretary of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP), began his United States speaking tour Monday night at the University of California, Berkeley. The lecture, entitled, “The Threat of Fascism and How to Fight it,” was attended by 70 people, principally college-aged students from UC Berkeley and workers from the surrounding San Francisco Bay Area.

Vandreier’s presentation was met with intense interest by those who attended. More than a quarter of those present purchased Vandreier’s new book, *Why Are They Back?: Historical Falsification, Political Conspiracy and the Return of Fascism in Germany*, published by Mehring Books. Altogether over \$700 of literature sales and donations were made—with one attendee, who had not previously heard of the book, rising during the question-and-answer section urging everyone in the audience to buy it.

Vandreier’s lecture detailed how, seventy years after the fall of the Third Reich, big business, right-wing academics and sections of the German state are conspiring to rehabilitate the Nazis. Vandreier explained that what is taking place in Germany is not unique, but rather a part of a global resurgence of the extreme-right, fostered and promoted by sections of the ruling class around the world.

“Why is the far-right on the rise?” Vandreier asked, “because of capitalism.” Pointing to the immense social and political crisis in nearly every country around the world, Vandreier explained that, “Capitalism is once again breaking down.” “The decisive question,” he continued, “is the independent mobilization of the working class against capitalism, and that’s what we, the Socialist Equality Party, are

doing.”

Vandreier’s presentation was followed by remarks from Joseph Kishore, national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party of the United States, who placed Vandreier’s presentation within the political context of the United States, and the fascistic character of the Trump regime. Following Kishore’s remarks a lively question-and-answer session ensued.

One attendee asked for additional historical information on Hitler’s rise to power and Trotsky’s call for a united front, to which Christoph Vandreier responded with a detailed outline of the role of the SPD and KPD leadership in dividing the German working class in the face of the threat of fascism.

Another questioner asked about the role of post-modernism and historical falsification, and Vandreier explained that postmodernism’s rejection of any notion of objective historical truth served as the ideological foundation for right-wing German academic Jorg Baberowski and others in their project to rehabilitate German militarism and excuse the crimes of the Nazis.

Jonah, a history student, told *World Socialist Web Site* reporters at the event that he “had no idea of the level of promotion by the media, politicians and academics” prior to the lecture. Jonah said, “Fascism is the paramount threat to humanity today.” He continued, “If socialism is a viable threat to fascism then it is our greatest protection.”

Reporters also spoke to a young student named Poorvi who signed up to join the IYSSE. She said, “I came to tonight’s meeting because I saw the poster and was already aware of the rise of the far-right around the world, so I wanted to hear your perspective. My family

is from India and they have the rise of the far-right there. I think the rise of the far-right is a huge problem, and I see it mirrored in India with the Hindu nationalists who are extremely Islamophobic. It's kind of the same everywhere, just different flavors of it."

While the audience was principally composed of students, professors on and off campus also expressed support for the event. Jo, a sociologist from the Philippines, stopped to buy Vandreier's book at the IYSSE literature table but could not attend the lecture. She said, "The challenge for us is to fight the global resurgence of the extreme right." She continued, "The problem is that the traditional left-wing parties do not represent workers in any way."

Vandreier's lecture series will continue this week and next at major universities throughout the United States.

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