

Swiss workers support ICFI May Day rally

Our correspondents
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Supporters of the *World Socialist Web Site* in Zurich received an enthusiastic response on May 1 when they campaigned for the International May Day Online Rally of the International Committee of the Fourth International. The leaflet announcing the May Day rally, which will take place on Sunday, May 4, was met with interest, discussion, and comments of agreement.

The WSWs campaigners distributed the leaflet to workers and youth attending the official May Day demonstration in Zurich called by the trade unions. The official rally said nothing about the danger of war in Eastern Europe or the military buildup aimed at Russia. In recent years, there have been fewer and fewer workers present at their May Day rallies. Workers view the union bureaucrats—above all the bureaucrats of UNIA, the largest union—as close partners of the Social Democrats who share power with four other bourgeois parties in government, including the extreme right SVP. Together with business associations, they have carried out privatisations, dismantled retirement programs, social security and health insurance, and attacked workers' basic social rights.

Switzerland, one of the richest countries in the world, has become extremely polarized. While over a million people are threatened with poverty and 600,000 live below the poverty line (in a country of 8 million), 400,000 households each command a private wealth of more than a million dollars. At the same time, the cost of living for the working population is rising at a precipitous rate.

This May 1, the unions invited Christian Levrat, president of the Social Democratic Party, to be the main speaker at the event which took place under the motto “Strong Nation. Fair Wages.” This disgusted many workers and young people who came by the table of the *World Socialist Web Site*. They were pleased to have found a table where political questions were discussed in a serious way and where the danger of war

was the central topic of discussion.

Margrit, a young clerk, said, “I am angry that we have not been informed correctly this whole time. Our journalists are also putting out this friend-foe propaganda. Obviously the conflict in Ukraine was stoked consciously. I will definitely visit your web site. I have been looking for something like it.”

Adrian, a young man from Zurich, said, “in my opinion, this conflict, like most other conflicts, is first and foremost about economic interests. The big powers have never really emerged from the crisis of 2008. In Ukraine, they obviously now see a chance to re-divide the world. All of the countries, including Germany, which stayed out of Libya, wanted to be in on the action. This was a big boost to the fascists in Kiev.

Antonio said: “I am strictly against war. We learn little of this issue here in Switzerland. The impression is produced that we are completely protected and sealed off. But if one seriously thinks about it, it is gruesome and almost surreal that war preparations are being made that could lead to a third world war. Now it's getting to the point where it is penetrating consciousness. I find your international Online May Day interesting. This is the first time I have heard about it.”

Ismail stayed with his whole family at the table of the *World Socialist Web Site*. He brought attention to the fact that the Swiss army is being built up and is buying new, extremely expensive warplanes of the Saab “Gripen” variety.

“It is perverse how much money our society pays for weapons, while there are people who go hungry and need our protection,” said Ismail. “Especially in the US, more money is provided for weapons than for everything else, while the workers become impoverished. They have already waged war in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya.

“No rational person actually wants war, only someone who has a material interest in it, and who is

far away from it along with his family wants such a war. The cause is capitalism. Material interests lead to war. And then an enemy is artificially invented in order to obscure what is going on—the Muslims for example. Marx was right: in reality it is about social interests, it is about class issues.”

A young man named Markus agreed: “It is about economic interests, but it is presented to us as an ideological conflict about democracy. The politicians and the media are harnessed for this purpose. People are manipulated. And then they are supposed to be sacrificed for the economic interests of a small few, although most people do not at all understand what it is really about. If they knew, they would certainly not participate!”

Markus found it “really great” that there is a web site that explains and analyses the real motives. “I will definitely participate in your international May Day rally against the war. It’s a good thing,” he said.



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