

German participants respond to International May Day Online Rally

Our correspondents

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Workers and young people who took part in the International May Day Online Rally in Germany responded enthusiastically. Groups gathered in Berlin, Leipzig, Frankfurt and Bochum to follow the event collectively, paying close attention to the comprehensive analysis and clear perspective advanced in the speeches. The WSWS spoke to participants in the meetings.

Leipzig

In Leipzig, supporters of the *World Socialist Web Site* came together in the sociocultural centre to participate in the rally and discuss it afterwards. All were in agreement that it was an historic event.

“The internationalism was the most important thing for me,” said Matthias, who works as a technician in a hospital. “A third world war will affect everyone around the world. In Japan, they are still struggling with deformations from two relatively small atomic bombs. It would be an illusion to think that a third world war would not be conducted with nuclear weapons. Such a war can only be prevented by the international working class.”

“That’s why the American working class is so crucial,” added Jürgen. “I thought it was great to hear about the work of the SEP in the US, the workers inquiry they organised in Detroit. It is an important development that the SEP is finding a growing response in the American working class. I was even more interested by the social relations in China.”

Tino, a paramedic, also thought the report from the US was impressive. “The fact that socialist perspectives are once again finding a hearing in the US shows that bourgeois rule is breaking down in the US,” he said. “The SEP is the only party that sticks to the working class.”

“I find the correctness of the analyses on the WSWS, which was expressed today, especially remarkable. It makes an analysis and two months later, one can say, that’s exactly what happened. That shows that Marxism is not an empty idea from the past, but is alive. That was seen very clearly with Syriza. The WSWS predicted that they were a corrupt, petty-bourgeois movement which would surrender shortly after the elections,

and that’s exactly what occurred.”

“I found the report on South America significant. It showed how nationalism had led to a dead end. How today, social inequality is greater than ever before,” said Martin, who is currently working as a volunteer in a kindergarten for a year for his civil service.

Frankfurt

In Frankfurt, workers from the region met in the Saalbau Gutleut meeting room. Among them was Vangelis, a Greek teacher. He was very impressed with the online May Day event and said: “The speeches provided a powerful perspective. Although each individual speaker described the situation from different viewpoints, it became clear that all the problems have a common cause in the crisis of capitalism.”

“The threat of world war is very advanced,” he said. “Above all, the United States is resorting to military means because its economic power is collapsing. Meanwhile, China and Russia have nothing progressive to offer in opposition. It is very disturbing to see how China is being encircled, from Afghanistan to South Korea and from Japan to Australia.”

“The meeting communicated important lessons for all workers, for example, about the situation in Greece: the election of Syriza has not improved the situation for the Greek population because Alexis Tsipras has failed to keep a single campaign promise. They were all just lies. Once he was in power he turned for help to the EU and the German government led by Angela Merkel and Schäuble, not to the international working class.”

Maria from Heidelberg also took part in the meeting in Frankfurt. She said: “The contributions from all regions of the world made it clear how the crisis of capitalism affects everything, and that there is a single global crisis. The insanity is clearly visible. The capitalist economic system brings only war, poverty and oppression. It is leading humanity into the abyss.”

Werner Siepmann, a member of the Partei für Soziale

Gleichheit (PSG), German section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, is 84 years old. He followed the rally from home due to his age. He was excited by the perspectives advanced by the speakers. At the same time he was shocked by the report given by PSG Chairman Ulrich Rippert, who in his contribution, noted that the German army was planning to begin an advertising campaign for the armed forces in schools.

“I only luckily avoided active involvement in the Second World War,” he said. “In 1944-45 I was evacuated to Czechoslovakia as part of a programme to send children to the rural areas. My birthday is on April 21. Two days prior to that, I was brought along with 2,000 other children and young people together by the SS in a park. There, we were shown how we were allegedly to deal with the enemy.” It was terrifying.

“The following day, I began travelling back to Germany along with several friends the same age as me. On 20 April, Hitler’s birthday, our train was in Prague,” he said. “Everyone over 14 had to get out and go to war. Many died, including two brothers who I knew well. They died at 14. It was lucky for me that the train left a few hours before midnight. A few hours later and I would have had to go to the front. It is doubtful I would be alive today.” He emphasised that everything had to be done to prevent another war. The next war would be the last.

Berlin

In Berlin, members and supporters of the PSG met in Centre Francaise and followed the May Day rally.

Andre, who works as a software developer, said he had learned a lot. He was impressed by the contribution by Julie Hyland on the issue of refugees. “Julie Hyland summarised the refugee issue very well. She showed that it is the capitalist crisis that is leading to the agitation against—and brutal treatment of—refugees, and that the scurrilous argument that there is no room for refugees has historical precedents, such as in the way Jewish refugees were dealt with in the 1930s.”

In addition, it had become clear that the imperialist policies in the Middle East led to the flood of refugees. “That was another important part of the May Day,” said Andre. “I knew that the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East could become direct triggers for a third world war. But that the situation is so far advanced in Asia, between India and Pakistan or China and Japan, was not as clear to me.”

This underscored that the only solution was an international movement of the working class, he said. “In that context it is interesting that the pseudo-left groups in the region are attempting to divide the workers along ethnic and linguistic lines.”

Bochum

About a dozen members and sympathisers of the PSG gathered in Bochum. They closely followed the speeches by the international leaders of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Denis, a student from Dortmund, remarked that “every spoken sentence, transmitted electronically across six continents, (were) both objective and passionate at the same time.”

“The first speech of the second May Day rally from David North provided the quintessence of this global online rally,” he said. “The International May Day Rally gave the anti-war sentiments of the world’s population a conscious voice.”

Faced with the danger of war, the ICFI was supplying an analysis of the geopolitical, economic and social conditions under which millions of people are suffering. “The most important and urgent task is to unite the international working class under a revolutionary programme to join the fight against war with the fight for socialism,” said Denis. “The online rally was an important step in this task.”

Cologne

In Cologne, Katherina followed the online rally with her friends. She was convinced that the unification of the international working class against war and imperialism was the only perspective to combat the threat of a third world war. “No-one else is even attempting to stand up against war and imperialism,” she said. “The ICFI is the only organisation that assumes responsibility and is capable of sorting out this mess. The survival of humanity is at stake.”

After the speeches, she and her friends asked questions about the significance of the fight for the programme of international socialism and how to join the ICFI. “I will read the book by Alexander Rabinowitch, *The Bolsheviks in Power*,” she said. In this work, the American historian details the policies of the Bolshevik regime in the first year after the Russian revolution.



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