

German workers speak out on war in Ukraine: “The only war we need is the war against the Coronavirus!”

Our reporters
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Workers, students, and school pupils across Europe are shocked and concerned by the outbreak of war in Ukraine. While they feel contempt for Russian President Vladimir Putin’s policies, many reject the hysterical war propaganda pouring in through every channel from governments, all official political parties and the mainstream media.

The deafening calls for sanctions, military retaliation and nuclear deterrence do not represent public sentiment. As the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) statement entitled “Oppose the Putin government’s invasion of Ukraine and US-NATO war-mongering: For the unity of Russian and Ukrainian workers!” explains, “Masses of people have gone through the experience of the past three decades of unending war. The overwhelming sentiment of the working class throughout the world is opposed to war.”

Letters to the *World Socialist Web Site* and statements made by workers in Germany to our reporters express this opposition.

A VW worker from Braunschweig wrote, “I view the developments in Ukraine with deep concern. I feared but hoped that Putin would not send troops to Ukraine. I followed Putin’s nationalist speech with horror. The threats against NATO, the EU and all other states are a catastrophe.

“I think the whole situation is extremely dangerous. It can really get out of hand. The biggest powers are now involved, the biggest nuclear-armed powers.

“What Putin is doing is absolutely unacceptable. But at the same time, the promises that NATO, the US and the EU have broken cannot be dismissed out of hand. They went as far as Russia’s borders, and Putin cannot accept that.

“The US is running out of wars, Afghanistan is over, they had to withdraw head over heels from there. But the US economy thrives on war. And with their fracking gas, they are the ones who now benefit because they can sell it to the EU.

“The shutdown of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline was also announced by (German Chancellor Olaf) Scholz at the behest of the US. It’s true that he left a back door open for himself, after all, Germany also has its own interests. But the federal government obviously has no plan B, even though civil war has been raging in Ukraine for eight years.

“Because one thing is certain: the ordinary people will pay. If not directly in the war, then indirectly. After all, the EU is dependent on oil and gas from Russia. And there’s a whole series of things dependent on that. If we have to pay more for energy, the money will flow elsewhere in the economy because we have to retain the money somewhere. Our cars that we build would then also become more expensive. If we sold less, what about our jobs?

“The WSWs online event this Saturday ‘Fight COVID and save lives! Stop the drive to World War 3!’ is important in this situation to make it clear that nobody wants a war here.”

Zafer, a Ford worker from Cologne, stated, “I’m absolutely against war, it’s a total disaster. In this century there should be no more wars. It’s really sad that it has to come to this.

“But the US has always been willing to start wars and stand by and then intervene. In Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Syria, but also in the war between Turkey and the PKK, they were and are still involved. I also witnessed the putsch against Erdogan in 2016, when I happened to be in Istanbul. It was also supported by the US. They interfere everywhere.

“They make money from the conflicts and wars, also because they sell the weapons. Now they have been saying all along that Russia will invade Ukraine. I had the impression that the US practically talked war into being, they wanted it. The US wants to use their weapons, they make money from it.

“If Russia now turns off the gas tap, what will happen then? I hope it doesn’t come to that, but it looks extremely dangerous.

“Again: I am against war. The initiative of the WSWs to build an international anti-war movement must therefore be supported.”

Karin, a former social worker in early retirement, said, “The WSWs provides a detailed and enlightening political analysis of the current Ukraine war. There is no contradiction in unequivocally condemning Russia’s military aggression while pointing out that it is the result of a US geopolitical strategy to secure its military hegemony and that the US-led NATO powers are the main aggressors.

“With the gradual expansion of NATO to include the former Eastern bloc countries right up to the borders of Russia, Putin

has been virtually surrounded. This policy of encirclement, exacerbated by an anti-Russian regime in Ukraine installed by the Western powers in 2014, and against the background of US-led (proxy) acts of war in Serbia, Somalia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria since the end of the 1990s had to provoke Putin into a preemptive strike sooner or later.

“In other words, his current actions can be explained politically as a reaction to a real threat from NATO’s imperialist goals, without justifying or ignoring the fact that the Putin regime also represents capitalist interests and seeks to enforce them through nationalism and militarism.

“It must always be remembered that warmongering and warfare serve as a means to the end of creating an artificial internal unity against a common external enemy and thereby diverting attention from internal crises and conflicts and turning them outwards. At present, the main focus is on trying to distract from the devastating effects of the profits before lives policy (in the COVID-19 pandemic).

“Like war mobilization, a supposedly endemic subsiding pandemic is being proclaimed as a ‘new normal’ to be accepted. According to this, ‘we’ have to learn to live with war and pandemics, just as we have been living with austerity for a long time.

“I welcome that the WWSWS is hosting today the international webinar to lay out a political program to mobilize the working class against war and the pandemic. I look forward to this event with great interest and wish it widespread international attention.”

Harald, a teacher from Duisburg, wrote, “The war between Russia and Ukraine can only be properly assessed if the interests and goals of the NATO powers, which have been growing for a long time, are also taken into account: the strategic interests of large German companies and those of the US, for example, are based on the greatest possible control and economic exploitation of resources (mineral resources, labor and sales markets) throughout Eastern Europe, Russia and even China. This is in the DNA of capitalism...”

“The interest of the Putin regime lies in defending its dreamed-of ‘independent’ political existence as a quasi-neo-tsarist superpower, after the main Russian successor state to the USSR has rapidly opened up to the capitalist world market since the 1990s.

“A solution to this rapidly developing world war scenario can only come through the unification of the international working class in a socialist anti-war movement. The WWSWS plays the decisive role in informing and educating working people worldwide. Attend the online conference of WWSWS tonight at 10 p.m. (Berlin time)!”

Tatjana, a nurse from northern Hesse and a mother of three, commented, “I was really hoping that the war would be prevented, if only because of the children. As if we didn’t already have enough worries about the coronavirus, as well as about inflation and the climate. This war tops it all and makes it

worse, and the threat of a third world war is now becoming very real.

“Nobody should die because the world power America is involved everywhere in the world and wants to control everything geopolitically. For years they have been arming, and NATO has been arming the countries around Russia—Poland, the Baltic States, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Romania. And Putin has no progressive answer to that. The man who worked for years in the Russian secret service is now reacting with Great-Russian nationalism and war.

“Russians and Ukrainians have a common history. The vast majority of people certainly do not want a war, which at most will benefit the gas and oil magnates in West and East, the billionaires, arms dealers and oligarchs who have hijacked the former Soviet Union state property.

“At first I thought it was good that Germany didn’t want to supply weapons, but now the voices calling for exactly that are getting louder.

“At the same time, they are letting the coronavirus pandemic run its course. The only war we need is the war against the corona virus! But no government does that. It will only happen when we workers around the world stand up together and take things into our own hands.”

Michael, a carpenter from Stuttgart, told us, “It does not bode well if the war is started now—which the western imperialists had been preparing and pushing for weeks in the media, through war rhetoric, but also practically through arms deliveries to Ukraine.

“I didn’t really expect the Putin regime to push ahead. Apparently, the decision to attack was made at the top before the Munich Security Conference, because Russia did not send any representatives. It was evident to the Kremlin that neither the European powers nor the US were willing to give a guarantee against NATO expansion onto Ukrainian soil. But what value would such a ‘guarantee of security’ have had?

“The global working class must mobilize now, be armed with an anti-war programme that operates completely independently of political parties, trade unions and pseudo-left groups, and that gets to the root of the evil of war, social inequality and exploitation—the capitalist system.”



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