

UK workers and youth speak in support of “Fight Covid! Save lives! Stop the drive to World War III !” webinar

Our reporters
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Workers and youth in Britain who attended Saturday’s World Socialist Web Site international online webinar, “Fight Covid! Save lives! Stop the drive to World War III!”, spoke to the WSWS about their thoughts on the important event.

Christopher from Belfast, Northern Ireland said, “I watched the introductions by comrades David North, Nick Beams, Johannes Stern and Evan Blake and it was very educational. The media and the ruling class are using the war to deflect from the pandemic, which is the real war. The way they claim it’s over, is lies. It is nowhere near over.

“I found comrade North’s introduction particularly interesting when he spoke about the US’s long history of imperialism. They have always been at war.

“Also, governments’ lied about the Omicron variant being “mild” when it is much more severe than that. The working class needs to rise up and ignore the propaganda and unite against capitalism. It was a great meeting, very educational and should open a lot of people’s eyes.”

Janaka, an IT worker in Manchester, said, “I remember back in 2014, I attended a public meeting held by the Socialist Equality Party. The meeting was about the Ukraine coup orchestrated by the European Union and its propaganda machine, after the Ukrainian government refused to sign the association agreement with the EU.

“SEP speakers explained the danger of war with Russia, which would eventually lead to World War III. Even though they explained well the situation in the Ukraine, at that time I was not totally convinced and thought war will be a long-distant event. Now it is really happening, and I am grateful for the SEP and WSWS analysts and how they have foreseen these destructive imperialist wars.

“Today, everyone should condemn the war against Ukraine while opposing the NATO contribution to the current war. All the mainstream media are trying to rally people into a bloody war with Russia which could be catastrophic for the entire planet.

“All youth and workers should understand the real reasons and events leading up to the current war and build an independent movement to oppose the war.”

Louisa Campbell from the south east of England campaigns for COVID safety measures in schools. She said, “This war is because of the USA and NATO expanding east. I think war is being used to drop all public health measures against COVID in certain

countries. I do think the war is to distract the public as to what is going on domestically.

“The clinically vulnerable have been abandoned and the only way we can stay safe is to continue shielding. Not all are able to do that as they may have front facing jobs. No free testing, isolation, etc, will continue a two-tier society, and the CEV/CV [clinically extremely vulnerable and clinically vulnerable] will continue to be prisoners in their own homes. This includes children too, now with extra carried risks through the lack of testing and isolation in schools.”

James from West Yorkshire said, “As a key worker from the UK, I can say that the online webinar hosted by the WSWS on the war in Ukraine was essential viewing. The leading members of International Committee of the Fourth International analysed the objective historical and political conditions giving rise to this war, and made clear the ‘method’ in the madness of two nuclear-armed states confronting each other.

“The outstanding features of this war, as described by comrades North and Kishore, among others, are both the longstanding geopolitical ambition of the US to dominate the globe using its superior military power and the need to create a massive diversion from insoluble domestic crises. They are rooted in the contradictions of capitalism and accelerated immensely by the criminal herd immunity response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Understanding this will help us see through the war propaganda relentlessly broadcast by corporate media outlets and identify the proper political basis for an anti-war movement, that can only be in a revolutionary movement based in the international working class for socialism.”

Jordan, a social science student in Scotland said, “I thought the rally was particularly informative and in-depth; especially regards to the origins of the war, and the developments of the war being placed in their broader historical context.

“Despite the mainstream media’s presentation of the crisis erupting overnight, or indeed as a result of the ‘unprovoked’ actions of one ‘evil’ individual, namely Vladimir Putin, it is absolutely necessary to understand the series of events undertaken by the US imperialists and NATO that has led up to this crisis

“Yesterday’s rally provided powerful clarifications of these imperative truths, and additionally did a wonderful job of disputing the militarist Russophobic propaganda that is being

spouted out by Western media.

“Furthermore, as David North stated, the position of the ICFI on this war has, unfortunately, been poorly understood. I have faced a backlash of comments from people claiming that we are sympathetic towards the Russian government. This is, of course, a vast misunderstanding, and I thought that Comrade North’s comments on Vladimir Putin’s nationalistic and xenophobic stance helped to clarify that we do not believe in Putin being an anti-fascistic force.

“The ICFI’s opposition to the US and NATO’s claims to ‘defend democracy’, does not mean that we support the Russian government’s actions. I hope comrade North’s comments on this particular issue helped to further listeners’ understanding of our opposition to both bourgeois factions, or any government for that matter. As was noted in the rally, only a conscious political movement for socialism within the international working class can call for a genuine end to war.”

Steve, a senior healthcare support worker from a hospital in the north west of England, said, “I thought the webinar gave a powerful message to the international working class on how to stop this war between Russia and Ukraine. It’s right what the ICFI states, that workers need their own independent political strategy to fight this war, and should not side with Russian nationalism, Ukrainian nationalism or NATO imperialism.

“The webinar explained the historical roots of this war, debunking the current warmongering myth that this is solely about Putin and ‘Russian imperialist’ aggression. This current war in Ukraine has been, as explained, 30 years in the making.

“I condemn Putin, Zelensky and NATO for pitting the Russian and Ukrainian workers against each other in US imperialism’s geostrategic interests. Workers need to unite with each other to fight COVID-19, which is still raging, and to stop the drive by NATO to World War III. I wholeheartedly support the ICFI in fighting to end war, and it’s root cause in capitalism.”

Two UK medical consultants, **Ben**, a pathologist from the south of England and **Will**, a consultant Judicial Medical Officer, were both impressed by the warnings made over the danger of a third world war and how to oppose it. Ben said, “The capitalist media does not talk about the danger of a third world war. We are totally against Putin’s invasion of Ukraine. We clearly understand NATO’s provocation of the war [against Russia] and the history of invasions by them, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and Libya.

Will said, “I think the Russian and Ukrainian working class should unite to fight against capitalism both locally and internationally. A war against COVID is much more important than this war. The cost of living is increasing day by day and the UK and US want to distract people from that. The videos and pictures during the webinar gave a better understanding of the situation.”

Tony, a gardener and carer from South Yorkshire, said, “I liked how David North pointed out the hypocrisy over the media’s criticism of Putin bombing Ukraine when NATO had already done the same thing to Serbia in 1999. Yet again human rights were used as a pretext to justify certain actions, while being completely ignored when it came to strengthening relations between America and countries like Turkey and Saudi Arabia, which have the worst

human rights records on the planet.

“North showed how important the Caspian Sea is in terms of the movement of trade and how mineral rich the area is. He pointed to how many have died as a result of US bombing since 1999, which at a conservative estimate is around 4 million. All this not just from the bombing but also from all the destruction of the health care systems and other infrastructure in countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and Serbia.

“North also drew attention to the collective amnesia the media is trying to encourage. For the despots in the ruling class to try to hoodwink the population into believing their filth, they have to desperately believe that people have no memory or disgust about the recent actions of governments. All of this is multiplied in a way like never before precisely because of COVID-19.”

John, an advocate for disability rights in South Yorkshire, said, “Thank you to the SEP for hosting this much needed webinar. The speakers were extremely well-informed and presented their points passionately but calmly, without resorting to the divisive rhetoric spewing from the ruling classes and their mouthpieces in the capitalist media.

“I found their historical analyses of the background to the Ukraine/Russia war very revealing as they also jogged memories of news items I had seen about the US-incited Ukrainian coup in 2014 yet had not put into context before now.

“The footage of the 1999 NATO bombing of Kosovo put the hypocrisy of NATO and the US into sharp focus, especially with regard to their imperialist expansion towards Russia. I had not fully realised how aggressively the US had been expanding its footprint within Eastern Europe via NATO since the late 1990s.

“The webinar put the war within the context of the ‘perfect storm’ of capitalism’s crises in the form of a global pandemic and climate breakdown, showing that the ruling class, who are now fearful of the social consequences of their own actions, will stop at nothing to retain power to divert people from the destruction wrought by capitalism. They do this by creating even more destruction in order to control the narrative of people’s lives through fear and divisive propaganda via their media mouthpieces, amid the destruction of the only planet humanity is able to call home. It is so important to show people how these phenomena are interlinked.

“The war in Ukraine shows that rather than using science and technology to improve disabled people’s lives, capitalism is intent on using science and technology to murder and disable people through the injuries sustained by weapons of war and the severe mental trauma wars cause.”



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