

UK attendees speak on WSWS webinar “Fight Covid! Save lives! Stop the drive to World War III!”

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!”, have spoken to the WSWS about their thoughts on the important event. We publish further responses below.

Dianne Kirby, a historian in Belfast, explained, “I watched the WSWS ‘Stop the War’ meeting because I want to see a war that ought never to have started stopped. I was impressed by the levels of analysis provided by the speakers who addressed the historical, political and economic factors influencing all parties.

“The site has become a source of public education in a period of misinformation and disinformation and the sort of propaganda manipulation that occurs in all wars.

“As the mainstream media were increasingly conveying a one sided and clearly controlled narrative that failed to consider either the politico-historical context or the contributions of the West to the crisis, I began looking for alternative sources that would help me better grasp what was happening and why.

“I was all too conscious that designating Putin a madman was simply a strategy for shutting down debate and preventing people seeking the reasons for such drastic action. The articles published on the WSWS provided logical and persuasive explanations supported by compelling evidence. Above all, I was drawn to the WSWS stance of not taking one side or another but of taking the side of ordinary working people, those that will pay the true costs of the war rather than those driving it. Indeed, that those driving it stand to profit immensely from a war in terms of more accumulated wealth and preserving their power.

“As a Cold War historian who also witnessed that conflict, I am all too well aware of how each side used the sins of the other to justify their own, whilst the global south was ravished by proxy wars that killed millions. Watching the same scenario unfold again today is tragic. It can only add to the 21st century’s already appalling war related death toll, disrupted lives and displaced peoples. The WSWS reminds us of that terrible history. It also offers a way forward.”

Belay Hagos, a retired teacher, said, “I completely oppose the Russian attack on Ukraine. It’s true they were provoked by

NATO and the US in particular. There are NATO forces everywhere. But that doesn’t justify the bombing of Ukraine.

“I don’t think there is a danger of Russia or the US using nuclear weapons because that would be the stupidest thing they could do. To embark on nuclear war would be sentencing themselves to death. But I don’t deny the danger of accidents because it’s like having a loaded gun in your hand. Anything could trigger it.

“I think Biden’s intention is to weaken Russia in every aspect so that they wipe out the competition. That is also their policy against China, Europe and Africa. In Africa they force governments to follow neo-liberal economic policies. Governments are not allowed to subsidise their own farmers or small industries. All government assets have to be privatised. If they refuse the policy of regime change is unleashed. The US finances the military of most African countries, so if the government refuses to play ball, the military takes over. We saw this in Egypt, for example.

“The working class has to see their enemies clearly. The trade unions are working for the establishment. They are actively preventing their members from taking strike action against their employers. This applies everywhere, in Europe, the US, Latin America, Africa, everywhere.

“I think that class consciousness is the most important question that faces the working class today. How clearly does the Chinese working class understand that they have the same interests as workers in Europe and the US? Something has to be done to close that gap. The webinar on Saturday, watched by workers in many countries in the world, made an important contribution to that.”

Kate, a retired teacher, said, “The webinar was a real eye opener. It clearly showed that today humanity faces the threat of nuclear war.

“The expansion of American interests around the world, and especially in Eastern Europe post-1991 is incredible. When you look at the map of Europe you can see the deployment of NATO troops, aircraft, ships and ammunition from the Black Sea right up to the Baltic States. This clearly demonstrates NATO’s war preparations. To use the ‘Russia struck first’

mantra is totally misleading. Without a doubt America wants to get its hands on Ukraine. But to understand Putin's motivations is not to excuse them.

"The world has seen enough human tragedy. There have been continuous wars for the past 30 years. Since the year 2000 the wars in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya and elsewhere, all of which have involved the USA, have killed at least three million people. Nine million people have been displaced from these conflicts. These wars have cost the American people \$6.4 trillion in taxes. And millions of American workers and their families are living in poverty.

"In 2014, the so-called 'democratic revolution' in Ukraine which overthrew the pro-Russian president, was led by the fascist Azov Militia. And they are still a significant force, parading with their Nazi insignia and painted as the face of democracy by the whole of NATO.

"I personally learned so much from the webinar this weekend. It was a brilliant piece of political and historical analysis. The very nature of the webinar itself, with people contributing from all over the world, was an inspiration to workers everywhere to unite in a common struggle to get rid of this rotten system."

Connell, a student, wrote, 'As the eyes of the world are drawn to Europe, maintaining knowledge and keeping up today on information is important. With the digital age comes the problems of censorship and misinformation. That's what make websites like WSWs so important. Not only do they share the truth but they do so in an unbiased way. WSWs is run by the Socialist Equality Party, themselves helping to spread knowledge to the working class.

"After watching the online meeting of the WSWs, I came away with some hard truths but also an understanding of events and a party directly opposed to this European war and its aim to brainwash the public and drive attention away from the COVID crisis.

"Fascism and imperialism are major problems in Europe. Germany is still very much an imperialist nation, with sights set on inciting fascist uprisings in Ukraine. Happening simultaneously is the use of Ukraine as bait to goad Russia into open conflict, which is being used to further divide the working class in the affected counties. Those behind this are NATO and by extension the USA. NATO have spent years acting as a military force in Europe who have slowly spread East, despite the fact that they signed peace treaties with Russia, promising to halt their advance. The Russian buffer states are gone—Ukraine being the most recent application of pressure on Russia by NATO. Don't fall for the blatant propaganda, think and learn for yourselves.

"The arrival of COVID has accelerated the already fast approaching economic collapse. The Western leaders decided rather than move to control the spread of the virus, to save lives, to prioritise Wall Street so they could continue to make money.

"With the Omicron variant spreading like wildfire, governments needed a way to distract people, which is partly why the Ukrainian conflict is happening. Democratic government in the US is also in danger, with Trump inspiring fascist uprisings and Biden saying that democracy will not last 10 years.

"I haven't done those complex topics justice, but those at WSWs such as David North, are spreading the information the working class need to come together as a movement to oppose what our leaders are doing. The socialist movement is the only way forward but we have to act before it's too late."

Calum, a postal packing worker from Inverness, said, 'On the verge of a possible nuclear war it becomes essential to fight for the peace process, to insist upon de-escalation, and not to accept the jingoistic propaganda coming out of the West. Nor to give Putin a pass, but to genuinely understand the war and its risks, to understand the nature of the war, of the power conflicts and events that have led to this point.

"We must fight not for NATO and American domination of the planet, which is the reality of this war, but for peace.

"In this respect the International Committee of the Fourth International appears to me the one of the few sane voices in a sea of bloodthirsty commentators. Even liberal and socialist parties appear to have swallowed the bait and now regurgitate imperialist soundbites with no regard for a possible nuclear war.

"Strangely more than even during the Cold War, the West seems united and ready to plunge the planet into Armageddon. The reality of a nuclear war needs to be in the forefront of our minds, the Nato drive to war needs to be exposed, for the Russian and Ukrainian people, and for all the people of the world.

"The webinar gave an excellent wider perspective. It is always important when looking at the present to recognise its place in history. The webinar rightly places much of the violence in the modern world in the hands and the power of the United States. Over the past 70 years, has the USA worked for power or peace? Sadly, it has worked for power. Which has been the most bombed country in the world during that time? Laos, a country bombed by the US, a country it had never declared war on."



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