

No to World War III! Against the Ukraine war, NATO aggression and German rearmament!

Socialist Equality Party holds successful event against imperialism and war

Our reporter
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An online discussion event held Tuesday by the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) laid an important foundation for the construction of an independent anti-war movement in the international working class. The discussion, in which around 100 people took part, was based on a video that explains in detail the historical and political background of the war in Ukraine.

“The war is the reactionary response of Russian nationalism to NATO’s decades of aggression,” said Christoph Vandreier, chairman of the SGP, at the beginning of the discussion. He added that the questions dealt with in the video have been intensified and proved true with extraordinary rapidity since its publication. More and more openly, the war in Ukraine is developing into a murderous proxy war between the imperialist NATO powers and Russia, in which all sides pursue the interests of capital.

Underlining the importance of the meeting, Vandreier noted that the danger of a third world war fought with nuclear weapons was greater than ever before. But outside the socialist movement, the widespread opposition to war finds no principled political expression. Following these remarks, a lively discussion developed on important questions of the struggle against war and the revolutionary perspective.

While several participants expressed concern about the immense German arms exports and the unprecedented rearmament of the German army, the question also arose as to when a given war should be characterized as progressive or reactionary from the point of view of socialists. Another participant asked whether the rearmament of the European militaries could be a “chance” or a first step to become “independent” from

the United States and to pursue a “neutral” defensive policy.

Johannes Stern, editor-in-chief of the German edition of the *World Socialist Web Site*, clearly rejected this and described it as a “dangerous illusion” to assume that European militarism could be an opportunity for the world. The perspective presented by the participant is in fact the programme with which the major European powers are preparing for the Third World War. Stern stated:

“In the wars in Yugoslavia, the European powers played a central role in crushing the country. They pursued an extremely aggressive and bloody policy. At that time, Germany was the first country to recognise Croatia. Immediately after [German] reunification, a policy began that is now culminating: a militarist foreign policy and the pursuit of a greater role in the competition of the imperialist powers. In 1998, with the entry of the Greens into government and the bombing of Serbia, a further change took place.

“The European powers have been part of the occupation of Afghanistan from the outset and have also joined the war in Iraq. Their foreign policy is in no way more progressive than that of the United States. The imperialist contradictions are intensifying. When Europeans talk about wanting to become ‘independent’ from the US, they are talking about preparing for a third world war. If you follow the conflict in Ukraine, you have to realize that the great war has already begun. And the only social force that can stop it is the international working class.”

Gregor Link, a writer for the *World Socialist Web Site*, recalled the imperialist crimes committed by the European powers after the Second World War. Germany—but also other imperialist countries such as France, the

Netherlands and Belgium—had played a central role for decades in suppressing anti-colonial uprisings and fuelling ethnic violence in order to pursue their economic interests.

Link stressed: “Europe is home to the oldest imperialist powers. Can it be assumed that Germany of all countries, which is already working together with the heirs of the Ukrainian Nazi collaborators against Russia, would pursue a more moderate policy as soon as the United States had left Europe? The battle cry of every socialist and every worker must be that the main enemy is in his own country.”

When asked what attitude the working class in Russia and Ukraine should adopt towards the war, Christoph Vandreier, referring to anti-war protests in Russia, stated that workers in Russia must fight for an immediate end to the war. From the point of view of Ukrainian workers, a fight against NATO’s plans to turn Ukraine into the scene of a catastrophic proxy war is necessary. Weapons supplies from the NATO powers should therefore be strictly rejected.

Participant Petra expressed concern that the years of disinformation from the bourgeois media could create conditions for war euphoria and a strong right-wing mobilization. WSWs author Tamino Dreisam replied that, in contrast to the first months of the First World War, the mood of the population was overwhelmingly against war. While the COVID-19 pandemic enormously exacerbated the contradictions of capitalism, the present war is now intensifying the global class struggle immensely.

In the course of the discussion, Peter Schwarz, secretary of the International Committee of the Fourth International, highlighted the historical and class aspects involved in the war in Ukraine and the question of German imperialism. In contrast to the progressive wars of the bourgeois era and the national liberation struggles of the post-war period, according to Schwarz, the First and Second World Wars were imperialist wars:

“The major participants in these wars—with the exception of the Soviet Union—were imperialist powers, countries that had long since developed capitalistically, in which the banks and financial monopolies dominated the economy. They were wars for the redivision of the world. The Second World War gave rise to the dominance of the United States, but this did not change the fact that Germany and the other countries remained imperialist countries.

“The present war is portrayed as a ‘just war’ between Ukraine and Russia. We don’t see it that way. Russia is a

country with an extremely reactionary social structure, but it emerged from a country in which a socialist revolution took place. What is actually happening is a proxy war systematically prepared by NATO. Fascists played a central role in the so-called Maidan and the expulsion of Yanukovich. Since then, the country has been flooded with Western weapons worth billions of dollars.

“What distinguishes the imperialist epoch is the struggle for the redivision of the world. Germany as an imperialist power, the fourth largest economy in the world and the second to third largest trading power in the world. The economic interests of Germany and the US are incompatible. We completely reject the idea that Germany could be armed against the US.

“What drives this war development are objective factors—the contradictions between the nation-state and the world economy and between socialized production and private appropriation. Lenin and Trotsky declared that wars are inevitable as long as capitalism exists. Our goal is the formation of a world socialist republic. This is the only way to prevent such wars and catastrophes. We oppose the imperialist war with the international unity of the working class.”

The objective conditions for this perspective developed together with the war, added Vandreier. “The class contradictions will become extremely acute as a result of the war around the world: rising food and energy prices, unemployment as a result of the economic crisis and broken supply chains will lead to mass opposition. Our aim is to make this opposition politically aware and to arm it with a socialist perspective.”

Vandreier concluded the event with a call to financially support the work of the SGP and immediately register as an active supporter to discuss the issues further, and finally to become a member of the SGP to participate in the construction of the World Party of Socialist Revolution.



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