

“‘Proletarians of all countries unite’—this is exactly what we need today”

## Workers and youth in Germany support the May Day call of the ICFI

Our reporters  
24 April 2022

Over the past few days, reporters from the *World Socialist Web Site* have been talking to workers, youth, and pensioners across Germany about the escalating proxy war in Ukraine and the massive price hikes. Both the social catastrophe and the growing threat of a nuclear third world war are the result of the deepening crisis of capitalism.

Under these conditions, the reporters explained, the coming May Day meeting of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) gains the utmost significance in the fight to unite workers' struggles against capitalism worldwide.

Especially in the auto industry—for example, at the BMW motorbike plant in Berlin-Spandau and at Opel's main plant in Rüsselsheim, Hesse—there is a strong conviction among workers that the war in Ukraine must be stopped “immediately” and “at all costs” before it turns into a world war. Some raise the question whether the third world war has already begun. During the shift change in Rüsselsheim, **Osman**, who comes from Sudan, spoke directly to us about this danger:

“I am afraid that it will come to a third world war. Everything is globally connected, and each warring side has its own allies. Russia itself has the nuclear bomb, and behind it is China. Nobody wants it, but it could develop into a third world war. Besides, prices are now extremely high. Arab and African countries are suffering from the price increases.” Osman, who is one of hundreds of temporary workers newly employed at the factory, says he is “himself an Arab from Sudan” and therefore knows what war means.

**Daniel** has been working at Opel in Rüsselsheim for five years. As a Kanban driver, he transports parts directly to the production lines. He tells us, “War is never good, so much hatred builds up on both sides. People are turned against each other.” He says he himself is Russian. “In Germany, there is now a lot of hatred towards the Russians, who have nothing to do with the war. There are many Russians working here in Germany, and suddenly they are officially hated, even prominent personalities. Fortunately, it's not like that at the factory. My colleagues come from all kinds of countries, there are no problems because of their origin.”

**Habib** is employed at Opel as a temporary worker in quality assurance, and is originally from Afghanistan. “Wherever the USA

interferes, there is war. That was already the case in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other countries. There are fierce wars that go on and on, like now in Ukraine. I know this from Afghanistan. Not long ago, Putin was an invited guest everywhere, both in Germany and in France. And when the situation came to a head, he told the West quite clearly: don't interfere in Ukraine. In any case, it's not all Putin's fault.”

Several auto workers at the Opel plant in Rüsselsheim are interested to hear that the ICFI is fighting as an international workers' party to unite workers in the US with workers in Germany, Russia, and the Middle East. Others condemn the aggressive war policies of the establishment parties. One says, “The worst are the Greens, who are now in government. They are ruthlessly enforcing war.” A colleague adds, “I don't believe in the government, they are all criminals.”

**Raman** tells us in passing that he totally rejects war. “War is not good for the majority at all. I have experienced it all myself. I come from Kosovo; I know what war means. I have lost family members and friends myself. We have to stop all wars: That is not a solution. Only a very few benefit from it and want war. That is the reason why there are wars: Those at the top benefit from it.”

**Hamdi**, whom WSWs reporters spoke to in **Munich**, says, “The NATO countries are pursuing imperialist interests. The US and Germany should stay out of Ukraine. What is really bad is the arms deliveries, they will only make things worse.” Hamdi does not support Russia's actions or the aggression of the NATO powers and wants to take part in the online May Day rally.

Also, in a residential area of **Cologne** city centre, WSWs reporters spoke to people at a grocery shop about the effects of the social crisis and about the war.

**Adian**, who has been trying to find a two-room flat with a colleague for more than half a year, says, “The housing market is hopeless. You just can't get anything, even if you work. We live in a profit economy where everyone tries to scoop up as much capital as they can. There is no consideration for the small earners, you have to beg. Every day I see people who have slaved all their lives still having to collect empty bottles to claim back the deposit so that they can somehow finance themselves on their small pensions.”

“It is a structural problem,” says Adian's colleague **Andreas**. you look at the figures, in terms of homelessness, it's quite frightening. The fundamental problem is capitalism. I think everyone is aware that it is an inherently destructive system. Therefore, it doesn't help at all to just work on all these small things; we have to introduce a completely new system that is much more social. We also know that such a system can exist. But the people who make [millions] from it are of course not interested in it running differently.”

“Today's politics are a farce to me,” Andreas adds. “Parties are not bound by their election promises in any form, it's ridiculous. They aren't close to the people at all, and it is no longer about representing the citizen. They pursue their own interests, also using politics as a springboard for free enterprise. I am very moved by the war. There too, at the highest political level, there are quite different interests behind it than we might suspect--economic interests, for example. We know that Germany is very involved in arms deals. I also think that the war did not start with the invasion of Russian troops.”

“I have worked all my life, most recently for a company offering boat tours on the Rhine,” says **Michael**.

“For about a year and a half, I have been unemployed and live on welfare payments. The bureaucratic hurdles until I get my hands on the money are big and it is quite a torture. This structure forces the poorest of the poor, who can't fight back well, further down. I think that's bad. When I was still in the company, I got together with other colleagues and we socialised a lot, but because of my situation, I myself am very affected psychologically and suffer a lot from it. The price increases are not only for fuel, but also basic foodstuffs like apples and potatoes, some of which have become more than 20 percent more expensive.”

The warmongering, Michael said, was coming from the wealthy classes who have nothing to do with these problems.

“Anyone who stands up against militarism, as I do, is now socially branded and seen as a lunatic by the journalists in Berlin. These people in the capital with their high-paying jobs don't want to see the relationship that exists between bad wages and bad living and spending big money on weapons. From the private channels to [public broadcasters] ZDF and ARD, this pack clearly has a vested interest in it: you can really hear that these people enjoy living better than the rest of us. [Ukrainian Ambassador Andriy] Melnyk, for example, is a Nazi, and that's how he acts. He is known to have supported Nazi structures in Ukraine.”

In **Berlin's working-class district of Wedding**, reporters from the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to passers-by outside a supermarket about the effects of inflation. **Oana**, who works as an administrator for a school board, reports, “My landlord has recently increased the amount of my utility bill by 50 percent. They say electricity prices will go up by 20 percent again in June. It's really difficult and I think it's a cheek. I used to be precariously employed for many years. In the meantime, I had to get health insurance on my own.”

**Sotirios** says, 'NATO is a terrorist organisation. It used to be that it was Gaddafi's fault when prices went up or anything else went wrong in Europe. Before that it was Saddam Hussein. Today, Putin is supposed to be to blame for everything? It's not that simple. I

support your event.”

“If

“The price increases are enormous,” says **Heidi**, who works in health counselling. “As a family, we pay almost €1,200 a month for a 73-square-metre flat. And that's a rental contract that was signed three years ago—today, the rents are much higher. I find it terrible that there are now suddenly €100 billion to be spent on weapons. I almost feel ashamed that I voted for the Greens. They have downright deceived the voters; they have turned all the promises in their election programme into the opposite.”

“You are right to want to unite people internationally,” Heidi adds, referring to the ICFI's online May Day rally. ‘I have a young man from Sri Lanka living with me who fled the war zone ten years ago and came to Germany. He will also be interested in the May Day event. I will certainly attend.’”

**Dominique** is studying social work and is a single parent. She says, ‘Everything has become more expensive. As a mother of three young children who only gets a student grant, I totally notice that. This war is about a lot of money--money and weapons. The capitalists sit on top and wage the war on the backs of the ‘little ones.’ I think your statement is good. We may be at the bottom, but we are not small. Power to the people!’”

**Gökhan** (18), works in a supermarket in Wedding. He reports that ‘the prices in the food market are rising noticeably. I can still make ends meet because I live with my parents. But I notice with our customers that some are now paying a lot of attention to prices.’ Gökhan also supports the ICFI's May Day statement for working class unity.

“I am a socialist and have long been looking for an organisation that unites workers internationally. Karl Marx already wrote in the Communist Manifesto: ‘Proletarians of all countries unite!’ And that is exactly what we need today. Trotsky also fought for this. He lived in Turkey for several years. I definitely want to take part in the May Day rally.”

*We urge all our readers to attend the ICFI's International May Day Rally on 1 May at 3 p.m. EST and to spread the word about this important event among colleagues, friends, and family.*



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