

“No third world war! Billions for health and jobs instead of armaments and war!”

Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei holds powerful online rally against war

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On Tuesday, over 100 workers participated in an anti-war event organized by the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP). Under the title “No third world war! Billions for health and work instead of armaments and war!” they discussed NATO’s proxy war against Russia in Ukraine and the need for an international movement against war.

In his introductory remarks, the secretary of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), Peter Schwarz, made it clear that such a movement must be based on a precise understanding of the causes and drivers of war. The central questions, he said, are “How did this war come about? What social interests do the participants represent? What are their political goals?” as well as “What is the connection between this war and previous wars?”

Schwarz pointed out that the US and its NATO allies have waged numerous wars over the past 30 years, bombing entire societies to rubble—Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, etc. In Ukraine, too, they were pursuing clear goals of their own. He showed how in 2016, the ICFI had already conceived of the NATO wars as a “chain of interrelated events” and had written: “The ongoing regional wars are interrelated elements of a rapidly escalating U.S. confrontation with Russia and China.” This, he said, was confirmed in the Ukraine war.

Schwarz called the military attack on Ukraine “a decision by Russia that was as short-sighted as it was reactionary, and played directly into NATO’s hands.” He said it had provided the US, Germany and their NATO partners with a welcome pretext to move one step closer to their goal of crushing Russia. In doing so, they wanted both to remove an obstacle to a war against China and to gain access to Russia’s vast resources. Since then, Ukraine had been flooded with weapons, as well as military experts, trainers and intelligence informants, and NATO was waging a proxy

war against Russia on the backs of the Ukrainian population.

Since Russia was one of the two largest nuclear powers in the world, such direct intervention by NATO also brought the danger of a third world war ever closer, Schwarz warned. He called this an “escalation policy bordering on madness,” but one that had its root in the insoluble contradictions of capitalism: “The capitalist world system is torn apart by social, economic and political contradictions for which there is no peaceful solution.” On the basis of this understanding, he said, an international movement against war and its root, capitalism, must be built.

The chairman of the SGP, Christoph Vandreier, also stressed the need for such a movement, which must be directed against the warmongers in every country. Germany, he said, played a central role in not only preparing for a third world war, but in concretely organizing it.

Germany, he said, had long been a party to the war, supplying Ukraine with thousands of anti-tank weapons, millions of rounds of ammunition and tanks. “Seventy-seven years after the unconditional surrender of the Wehrmacht [Hitler’s army], German tanks are rolling against Russia again,” Vandreier said. Moreover, Germany was using the war to once again become the dominant military power in Europe. The tripling of its arms budget through the 100 billion euros special funds for the Bundeswehr [today’s German armed forces] had long been planned, he said.

With the proxy war against Russia and the massive rearmament, he said, the struggle that the SGP has waged since German reunification and especially since 2014 against the return of German militarism was vindicated. “We had already stated at that time that the announcement of the end of Germany’s military restraint harkens back to the darkest traditions and is accompanied by a relativization of the crimes of the Nazis.”

As early as 2014, he said, professors such as Herfried

Münkler and Jörg Barberowski had downplayed the crimes of German imperialism. “Even then, the SGP was the only party that opposed the falsification of history; today it is official government policy,” Vandreier explained. He referred to Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s downplaying of Nazi crimes in his Liberation Day speech and the claim that Hitler waged a preemptive war against the Soviet Union by the *taz* newspaper, which is close to the Green Party.

Vandreier stressed that this right-wing trend was by no means an expression of political strength. “The same contradictions that drive the ruling class to war also create the objective conditions for overcoming them.” As in Sri Lanka and in many other countries, he said, a movement was developing in the working class that was converging with resistance to the war. In view of the historical experiences of the working class, this was deeply rooted, especially in Germany.

The gulf between the ruling class and the broad mass of the population is enormous, he said. “All parties, up to and including the Left Party, support the government’s war course, its profits-before-lives policy in the pandemic, and an economic policy that goes hand in hand with mass layoffs and cuts in real wages,” Vandreier said. This was creating a situation of open class struggle. “What is crucial now is to equip these struggles with a Marxist perspective.”

In the discussion that followed, several participants stressed their concern with how close the world already was to a third world war, and expressed support for the ICFI’s perspective of mobilizing the international working class against it. Many concluded that it was now necessary to become members of the Socialist Equality Party and to build the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

When a participant raised the question of how to mobilise the working class, Peter Schwarz responded that the question of perspective was central. “Everywhere, working class struggles are breaking out. This is an objective process, it’s a matter of orienting to it and giving it leadership and perspective.” He cited as examples the mass protests and general strikes in Sri Lanka, where the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) was fighting for a socialist perspective.

One participant pointed out that many pseudo-left organizations called Russia “imperialist” in order to glorify NATO’s war against Russia as a defensive war. Christoph Vandreier then explained that calling Russia imperialist only served to justify the subjugation of the country by the imperialist powers. It did not explain the real relationship between the corrupt and nationalist bureaucracy in Russia and the imperialist powers, he said. “We reject Russia’s reactionary invasion of Ukraine and seek to mobilize Ukrainian and Russian workers against the war and NATO

aggression,” declared Vandreier.

In conclusion, Johannes Stern, editor-in-chief of the German-language WSW, who moderated the event, stressed that the revolutionary party must follow not the map of war but the map of the class struggle. Building an international working-class anti-war movement, he said, was now the crucial task, to prevent a relapse into world war and barbarism. The basis for this, he said, were the principles that the ICFI had already formulated in its declaration “Socialism and the Struggle Against War” in 2016.

- The struggle against war must be based on the working class, the great revolutionary force in society, uniting behind it all progressive elements in the population.

- The new anti-war movement must be anti-capitalist and socialist, since there can be no serious struggle against war except in the fight to end the dictatorship of finance capital and the economic system that is the fundamental cause of militarism and war.

- The new anti-war movement must therefore, of necessity, be completely and unequivocally independent of, and hostile to, all political parties and organizations of the capitalist class.

- The new anti-war movement must, above all, be international, mobilizing the vast power of the working class in a unified global struggle against imperialism. The permanent war of the bourgeoisie must be answered with the perspective of permanent revolution by the working class, the strategic goal of which is the abolition of the nation-state system and the establishment of a world socialist federation. This will make possible the rational, planned development of global resources and, on this basis, the eradication of poverty and the raising of human culture to new heights.

Following the discussion, many participants expressed their gratitude for the event and registered as active supporters and to join the SGP.



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