

Greetings from the ICFI to the SEP (US) 2022 Congress

The revival of German militarism and the fight for socialism

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These remarks were delivered by Christoph Vandreier to the Seventh National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (US), held from July 31 to August 5, 2022.

Vandreier is the national secretary of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP), the German section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Read the full report on the Congress and the resolutions adopted at it.

I am very pleased to bring to this Congress the revolutionary greetings of the Socialist Equality Party in Germany. The Congress is a truly international event. Not only because we have large delegations from all sections and groups, but above all because this Congress is based on an internationalist perspective that arms the working class around the world and guides the work of all sections.

That the Congress is dedicated to our unforgettable comrade Wije Dias is a testament to this perspective. As Comrade David North noted, Wije's life represents the historical depth of our world party. Starting from the struggle against the betrayal of the LSSP, the RCL/SEP based its work on the historical and political principles of the International Committee. This can be seen in the extremely strong statement of the Sri Lankan comrades intervening in the explosive situation and giving leadership to the working class based on these principles.

This is the essence of what we have called the fifth phase of the development of the Trotskyist movement. Our historical principles intersect with the growing class struggle internationally. And as Comrade David North put it, the more intensive the class struggles break out, the more significant is it to base our party on our historical heritage.

Every single report on the extremely strong resolutions showed how we are basing our analysis on exactly this heritage, a very fundamental understanding of our epoch and a decades' long analysis. All the central issues we were discussing over the last days are fundamental features of the development in every country in the world.

As far as the pandemic is concerned, Germany is a hotspot of the BA.5 wave. Infection rates, hospitalization and death rates are rising rapidly, clinics are at their absolute limit as thousands of doctors and nurses are down due to infection. Even the Minister of Health, Karl Lauterbach, is warning of a collapse and catastrophic development, but at the same time has thrown all protective measures overboard. The government is pursuing a deliberate policy of mass social murder and destruction of the public health system.

While millions of workers are threatened with death and illness in order to increase the profits of the banks and corporations, radical real wage cuts are being organized with inflation. The same nurses that fought two and a half years at the forefront against the pandemic are getting now wage cuts by 10 to 20 percent!

All social spheres are now subordinated to the war against Russia. In Germany, natural gas prices have tripled. And now the government has also passed a law introducing an additional levy to protect the profits of the energy companies. Workers are to be forced to freeze in order to be able to wage the war against Russia.

Under these conditions, Comrade Will Lehman's campaign is also arousing great interest among German workers. This is because the trade unions have completely backed the war policy and are enforcing the wage cuts and price increases against the workers. With the war against Russia, the "German Labor Front" is also coming back.

In point 15 of the resolution against imperialist war we declare, "The conflict with Ukraine has provided German imperialism with an opportunity to implement the largest rearmament campaign since the collapse of the Nazi regime."

This is very true. Seventy-seven years after the unconditional surrender of the *Wehrmacht*, German tanks are rolling again against Russia. By tripling the military budget, the ruling class in Germany is pursuing the declared goal of once again building the largest military power in

Europe. All restrictions imposed on Germany after the greatest crimes in human history are being stripped away and the whole society is being militarized.

The same arms companies that supplied the total war and earned their profits with forced labor and in the concentration camps are now again multiplying their production and mass-producing weapons for the war against Russia. After the German government has already delivered weapons worth 600 million euros to Ukraine so far, an additional 100 self-propelled howitzers worth 1.7 billion euros are now to be sent.

We had already shown in 2014 how this return of German militarism goes hand in hand with the trivialization and ultimately the justification of the crimes of German imperialism. This has been more than confirmed. The falsifications of history by Professors Münkler and Baberowski, which we pointed out and fought against, are today the official government line.

For example, the Social Democratic Chancellor Olaf Scholz has called the Russian invasion of Ukraine a war of extermination and a breach of civilization, terms that were so far in Germany exclusively used for the Eastern Campaign and the Holocaust. Using these terms for the war in Ukraine is an incredible trivialization of the Nazi crimes. The daily newspaper *taz* even claimed in an article that Stalin had planned the Second World War before Hitler had even come to power. The old Nazi lie of a preventive war and thus the justification of the war of extermination is now being revived in the house paper of the Greens.

With our struggle against this falsification of history, we have linked ourselves to the historically deeply rooted opposition to war in the German working class. This was only possible on the basis of the decades-long struggle of the International Committee for the Defense of Historical Truth and the struggle against subjective-idealist ideology. Based on this, the SGP is the only party in Germany today that opposes militarism and arms the working class with a socialist perspective. As Johannes pointed out yesterday, the Greens are the most aggressive pro war party today and also the left party and its pseudo-left satellites are supporting the war against Russia.

As comrades have already explained, the same applies to all central questions of political development. Our World Party is the only political tendency that has a progressive answer to war, mass social murder in the pandemic and to the danger of fascism.

This is also the reason why the German state is waging its furious campaign against us under the banner of anti-communism. “The *Verfassungsschutz*, the German secret service, makes it clear that it views the SGP and ICFI as the standard bearers of contemporary Marxian socialism,” as

comrade David North put it in his opening report to the SEP (US) Summer School in 2019. They put us on the list of extremist organizations because they understood that our program has the greatest objective significance.

The government justified naming the SGP explicitly because we agitated against nationalism and militarism and argued for an egalitarian, democratic and socialist society. It developed an argumentation that declared any criticism of the state organs, and especially of the army and the secret service, to be anti-constitutional and illegal. Two courts have since blessed this scandalous revival of the Nazis’ *Gesinnungsjustiz*, which is why we have now filed a constitutional complaint.

Our complaint is not a defensive act and is certainly not based on illusions in the Federal Constitutional Court. Rather, with our complaint, we are going on the offensive and putting the *Verfassungsschutz* on trial. We put ourselves at the forefront of the struggle against the radical right-wing conspiracy in the state apparatus and the return of fascist methods.

The ruling class is turning to authoritarian and fascist forms of rule all over the world because its policies of war and social attacks are met by enormous opposition in the working class. The fight against fascism is therefore inseparably linked to the fight against war, the pandemic and the social attacks. The only way to defend democratic rights is to mobilize the international working class on the basis of a socialist program.

This perspective is now very concrete. The class struggle is developing rapidly, and the interventions of our party are of the greatest objective importance. These interventions must be based on our living historical principles and experiences in order to actually bring to bear the objective power of the working class. This congress is without any question an essential step in this direction.



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