

Speeches at the SGP anti-war rally in Berlin

Christoph Vandreier: “We unite workers across all borders in the fight against war”

Christoph Vandreier
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The following speech was delivered by Christoph Vandreier, the lead candidate and chairman of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP, Socialist Equality Party), at the party’s rally against the war in Ukraine on February 4 at Potsdamer Platz in Berlin.

We declared at the beginning of our election campaign that we would use the election to give voice and a socialist perspective to the widespread opposition to the war and to austerity.

And the fact that so many of you have attended today shows that we have taken a big step together in this election campaign.

We stand here today and we say loudly: Stop the war in Ukraine! Stop the rearmament! Stop the nuclear war!

Because the danger of nuclear war, which could wipe out all humanity, is growing day by day.

The German government and all of NATO are deliberately escalating the war. And the first victims of this are the people of Ukraine.

It is estimated that well over 100,000 Ukrainians have already died. The decision to send battle tanks does not diminish this number, but will drive it higher.

And now NATO has officially declared that its goal is to recapture Crimea! That means a much more drastic escalation, because that means defeating Russia completely militarily. This can only be achieved with ground troops, this can only be achieved with a direct war by NATO against Russia. And that means nuclear war!

[German Foreign Minister Analena] Baerbock, [Chancellor Olaf] Scholz and [Defence Minister Boris] Pistorius should explain how many lives they are willing to sacrifice for the reconquest of Crimea, how many European cities they are willing to raze to the ground!

The SPD, the Greens and the FDP have no democratic legitimacy for this insane policy.

The people did not vote for German tanks to roll against Russia once again 78 years after the Second World War and for the military budget to be tripled. Nor did they vote to pass the cost of this madness onto the working people.

Food price inflation of over 20 percent and even higher energy prices are decimating workers’ wages. And while the DAX [German stock exchange] corporations make record profits and the number of millionaires continues to rise, tens of thousands of workers are being thrown out of a job. Cuts are being made to kindergartens, schools and hospitals to finance the horrendous rearmament.

With the €10 billion to purchase the new F35 atomic bombers alone, 34,000 additional teachers could be hired for five years, or over 50,000 new nurses. Instead, the money will be spent on the capability to drop nuclear bombs on Russia.

Have government officials thought for even a second about what Berlin, Germany or Europe will look like just five minutes after the bombers dropped their deadly cargo?

And all the talk of democracy and freedom that is supposedly being defended in Ukraine is nothing but hypocrisy.

As if something would change for the people of Ukraine if they were exploited by the Russian oligarchs or the Ukrainian oligarchs!

No, as in Iraq, Syria, Libya, Afghanistan and many other countries, NATO is all about geostrategy and power politics. Entire countries were bombed to ashes, societies destroyed and over a million people killed in Iraq alone. And the same NATO powers that committed these crimes are now talking about international law.

A fight against war must also be directed against the Putin regime, which exclusively represents the interests of the capitalist oligarchs and conducts this inhuman and

reactionary war.

That is why I am particularly pleased that today we have received greetings not only from our comrades in the US, France and the UK, but also from our comrades from Russia, who are fighting against the Putin regime in Russia.

We are an international party, the Fourth International, uniting workers around the world across ethnic and religious borders in the fight against militarism and war!

The need for a new revolutionary party based on the traditions of international socialism is most evident in the fact that the other parties agree on all essential questions.

All parties in the Bundestag [federal parliament] support German militarism and outdo each other with their war-mongering.

The SPD has become the most important party of German militarism and is driving the escalation with technocratic cold-bloodedness.

The Greens, who once acted as pacifists, have become the worst warmongers. Baerbock has even openly stated that Germany is waging war against Russia.

And the Left Party is also part of the war conspiracy. Their lead candidate in these elections, Klaus Lederer, strongly supports arms shipments to Ukraine, accusing anyone who criticizes them of “open complicity with Putin.”

This is the old argument of the militarists against opponents of war. Liebknecht, who lit a beacon against the world war in this square 107 years ago, was also accused of working together with the Russian tsar, who had to be fought in the name of European progress.

Like Liebknecht then, we say today: The main enemy is at home! German imperialism, the German war party, German secret diplomacy.

The war can only be stopped if workers all over the world fight together against the warmongers in their own countries!

And we also direct this against Sarah Wagenknecht. She does not reject war from this internationalist standpoint, but from the German national standpoint of German imperialism. She is not bothered by militarism, but merely wants to develop it in a different direction.

Just like her intolerable incitement against refugees and her COVID denial, this is the line of the AfD (Alternative for Germany), a fascist and militarist party which once again talks about a thousand-year Reich.

Exactly 90 years ago, Hitler was brought to power by the ruling class to smash the workers’ movement and wipe out any resistance to militarism. Only in this way

could the elites force the workers, after the horror of the First World War, into a second world war, which was to eclipse everything the world had previously witnessed.

This is also the function of the fascists today. That is why they are built up and integrated into parliamentary work by all parties. That is why the right-wing terrorist groups in the state apparatus are covered up and promoted by the highest state authorities. With militarism, the fascist filth of the past is also returning!

As in the 1930s, the struggle against fascism and war requires a struggle against its root, capitalism. Only an international movement of workers can stop the madness and prevent a catastrophe.

This socialist perspective, which the Trotskyist movement has defended against Stalinism and Social Democracy, is now gaining in importance.

And it is not a beautiful utopia, but is based on powerful objective developments. Today, the international working class is more numerous and interconnected than ever before. And it is moving into struggle all over the world.

This week alone, three million workers demonstrated in France against the Macron government’s pension plans. In the UK, 500,000 teachers, railway workers and many other workers are on strike. And here in Berlin too, teachers, nurses, refuse collectors and other public employees will strike against the real wage cuts next week.

This is a powerful social movement. This is the social force that can end the war. It is important to unite them internationally and to arm them with a socialist perspective. The war cannot be ended, the social devastation cannot be stopped, without breaking the power of the banks and corporations and placing them under democratic control.

It’s time to become active! Today's rally is an important step, but it can only be a beginning. Get acquainted with our perspectives at the information table. Fill out a contact form and become an active supporter of our election campaign. Become part of the international socialist movement and a member of the Socialist Equality Party. And vote SGP on February 12! Thank you very much.



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