

Speeches at the SGP anti-war rally in Berlin

Johannes Stern: “The SGP’s anti-war rally is in the tradition of Karl Liebknecht”

Johannes Stern
7 February 2023

On February 4, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP, Socialist Equality Party) held a rally against the war in Ukraine and the return of German militarism as part of its election campaign for the Berlin state election at Potsdamer Platz in Berlin. More than 300 people took part. We publish here the opening remarks of Johannes Stern, who moderated the rally. Stern is a member of the SGP’s executive committee and editor-in-chief of the German-language edition of the World Socialist Web Site.

Dear comrades, dear friends, dear opponents of war:

I would like to warmly welcome you to the Socialist Equality Party’s rally against war. We meet in a historic place. Here, almost exactly 107 years ago on May 1, 1916, in the midst of the mass slaughter of the First World War, an historic anti-war demonstration took place. Karl Liebknecht, the great socialist and revolutionary, was the main speaker. Many of you are probably familiar with the words he shouted at the time: “Down with the war! Down with the government!”

Liebknecht was arrested shortly thereafter. But the demonstration was an important step in the construction of a powerful anti-war movement, which culminated in the October Revolution in Russia in 1917 and a year later in the November Revolution here in Germany, which finally put an end to the war.

Our rally is in this tradition. We are here today to once again take a stand against war and militarism. We are here to confront the warmongers who are once again plunging the world into the abyss. The NATO powers continue to escalate the war in Ukraine against the nuclear-armed power of Russia. And above all, German imperialism is rearming and building on its

darkest traditions. Ninety years after Hitler’s seizure of power, German battle tanks are once again rolling against Russia.

This madness, which as in the First and Second World Wars can only lead to disaster, must be stopped. As we declare on our posters: “Two world wars are enough!” That’s why today we don’t just want to protest loudly, but above all we want to use the rally to clarify what needs to be done. It is necessary to build an international mass movement of workers and youth against war and its root, capitalism.

This perspective is also at the heart of our election campaign. The SGP is participating in the Berlin elections in order to give a voice and a socialist perspective to the enormous opposition in the population to militarism and war. I want to urge you to vote for us on February 12th and to become active. Let’s make the rally a prelude to the building of a powerful anti-war movement. Come after the speeches to our book tables, purchase our materials, register as an election supporter and become a member of the SGP.

Before I welcome our first speaker, I would like to emphasise one point. This is a demonstration against war from the standpoint of the international working class. Nationalist symbols, flags or slogans are therefore completely out of place here. They do not serve the fight against war, but the war policy and the warmongers.

Anyone who wants to fight against war must be absolutely clear on this question. The struggle against war requires the unity of workers: workers in Ukraine, in Russia, in Germany, in Europe, in the US and worldwide, against governments and warmongers in

their own countries. The fight against war is a class issue. This is the perspective of this rally. I am pleased that in the course of the rally we will hear greetings from a whole range of countries, including Russia.

To begin, I would like to welcome our first speaker. Christoph Vandreier, the chairman of the SGP and our lead candidate in the Berlin elections.



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