

Speech at the SGP anti-war rally in Berlin

Gregor Link: “We fight for a united international movement of the working class against the war and against capitalism”

Gregor Link
9 February 2023

The following speech was delivered by Gregor Link on February 4 at Potsdamer Platz in Berlin at the election rally of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP) in opposition to the war in Ukraine. Link is a spokesman for the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), the youth and student movement of the SGP and the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI).

The IYSSE supports the election campaign of the Socialist Equality Party (SGP) with all their might.

Previous speakers have already stated that the advent of a third world war puts the socialist revolution on the agenda and makes the building of the revolutionary party the most important political task.

There have already been several mentions of the malevolent policies and reactionary record of the Red-Red-Green Senate [the coalition of Social Democrats (SPD), Left Party and Greens], which has created a social catastrophe here in Berlin.

I have said multiple times in this election campaign that the experience of young people is that capitalism has nothing more to offer them than war, terrible social inequality and permanent attacks on the democratic and social rights of the working class.

What then are the experiences of young people who grew up after the Stalinist dissolution of the Soviet Union?

Throughout the entirety of our conscious lives, not a single day has passed when the United States has not been at war.

To forestall its historic decline, US imperialism has waged neocolonial wars in Iraq, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq again, Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, Libya, and Syria. In the 20 years since the September 11 attacks, the US military has dropped an average of 46 bombs every day.

German imperialism has played an indispensable role in these wars and has enriched itself from them.

In Germany, it was a Red-Green [SPD-Green coalition]

federal government that sent troops into Kosovo and played a leading role in the bombing of Serbia.

The same government sent the Bundeswehr [the German armed forces] into Afghanistan and waged a war there that cost hundreds of thousands of lives and turned millions into refugees.

Then came the financial crisis of 2007-2008. The crisis of capitalism came irrevocably into full view, but instead of the expropriation of the super-rich and putting those responsible behind bars, billions of euros of taxpayers' money were thrown down the throats of the banks to further prop up the speculative bubble. This was accompanied by social regression, an increase in poverty and precariousness in the countries of the European Union on a scale unprecedented in peacetime.

Youth unemployment in countries like Spain, Portugal and Greece rose to 20, 30, 40 percent. People died of treatable diseases because social and health care systems were smashed.

As a result of this orgy of enrichment, social inequality has risen to unprecedented, astronomical heights—a few dozen billionaires now own more wealth than the bottom 90 percent of the world's population.

The Wikileaks whistle-blower platform, founded by Julian Assange, has documented how, around the world, democratic rights have been systematically attacked in the wake of war and social inequality. Assange remains in a British maximum security prison as a journalist and opponent of war.

We have seen how the destruction of the environment coincides ever more directly with imperialist interests and the intensified exploitation of the working class, and how climate change has become a geopolitical factor in the game of the great powers.

Ultimately the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that the

ruling elite is not willing, even for a moment, to put profits on the back burner and save lives. On the contrary, more than 20 million people were avoidably sacrificed to a virus in order to protect corporate and banking interests and maintain the orgy of enrichment in the financial markets.

The proxy war that the NATO powers are now waging against Russia in Ukraine, which has already cost some 300,000 lives, immediately conjures up the spectre of nuclear war.

Here, too, the ruling elites have unrestrainedly enriched themselves from the murderous consequences of war. As the latest Oxfam report notes, food and energy corporations more than doubled their profits in 2022, distributing \$257 billion to their shareholders.

German imperialism has used all these crises to prepare its renewed bid for world power. In the midst of the pandemic and just one day after the Russian military invasion, the largest rearmament since Hitler was launched. Falsification of history, which we in the IYSSE at Humboldt University have opposed, has now become the basis of political and media propaganda.

Previous speakers have already touched on just what military escalation is signaled if battle tanks are now sent to Ukraine. A discussion about fighter jets—and implicitly about nuclear weapons—has been driven forward for days.

Already, the war has triggered famines and government crises around the world. Massive working class struggles are developing—including in Britain and France.

The IYSSE held an international online rally in December in which we called for the building of a mass movement of youth against the war. The events of the last days underline how significant this initiative is.

As the youth movement of the International Committee, we outlined in it a socialist perspective and strategy to end the current war in Ukraine against Russia before it leads to a nuclear exchange.

We warned of the death agony of capitalism and the growing rivalry between the great powers, which are heading toward a world war. We explained the causes of the ruling elite's war policies and outlined a global strategy for a working class counteroffensive that youth around the world must join.

Based on Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution, we rejected any accommodation to the Putin regime and denounced its criminal complicity in this war. Our Russian comrade who spoke at the rally declared that the Putin regime is acting on behalf of the post-Stalinist elites who have plundered the resources of the Soviet Union and are now openly pursuing the capitalist interests of Russian nationalism.

All of our pseudo-left opponents either side with NATO

imperialism (which is the majority) or openly defend the Putin government's actions. We do not do either, but fight for a united international movement of the working class against the war and against capitalism.

The rally was enormously important and reflected the necessities of the current political situation. The young generation cannot and must not stand idly by while their future is destroyed by the capitalist elites. They must turn to the working class and build a movement with it to abolish capitalist evils once and for all.

The central task of the IYSSE is to lead this struggle in theoretical and practical terms.

But this requires that we be clear about the central political role of pseudo-left organizations that shield the nationalist and corporatist trade-union apparatus, foment illusions in bourgeois demagogues, scorn the lessons of history and reject the building of a revolutionary party in the working class.

We as IYSSE declare:

- We must do everything possible to appropriate the lessons of history. Especially here in this country, where the greatest crimes in human history were planned and committed.

- We must expose the political demagogues—Klaus Lederer, Sahra Wagenknecht or whatever their names might be—who want to divide and sell out the working class with lies and populist phrases.

- And we must build among workers a revolutionary party of struggle that consciously draws on the legacy of the Bolshevik Party, the revolutionary socialists and communists, and on the legacy of the Left Opposition, which courageously opposed counterrevolutionary Stalinist degeneration.

- This party is the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei and its sister parties in the ICFI, and this is the party we are building. There is no time to lose and no one should underestimate his or her own role in this.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact