

# “Stop the massacre in Gaza!”—Socialist Equality Party holds anti-war meetings in Berlin and Stuttgart

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The Socialist Equality Party (SGP, Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei) took an important stand against Israel’s genocide of the population of the Gaza Strip with two public meetings over recent days. A total of 150 workers and young people took part in the meetings in Stuttgart (November 11) and Berlin (November 14), many of whom gave their own speeches and participated in the lively discussion. The lecture by Peter Schwarz, Secretary of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and member of the International Editorial Board of the *World Socialist Web Site*, won a powerful response.

“What is currently taking place in the Gaza Strip is not a war but a massacre,” Peter Schwarz stated at the very beginning of his lecture. “In an area that is significantly smaller than Berlin and where 2.3 million people live, the Israeli army dropped bombs with an explosive force of 25,000 tons of TNT in one month. That’s the equivalent of two Hiroshima bombs.” The whole area is cut off from food, water and electricity. “The killing, starvation and expulsion of civilians has nothing to do with Israel’s self-defense and security!” declared Schwarz.

In the course of his lecture, Schwarz rejected the omnipresent war propaganda, which has been trivializing the crimes of the Nazi dictatorship and slandering any opposition to Israel’s bombing terror as “antisemitic.” While the German government is carrying out unprecedented rearmament, doubling the military budget and rejecting even the demand for a “ceasefire,” the police are acting arbitrarily and aggressively against anyone who opposes the massacre in Gaza. At the same time, Schwarz placed the events in the context of the NATO war campaign against Russia, China and Iran.

The meetings in Stuttgart and Berlin took place in the midst of worldwide mass protests and demonstrations against the murderous policies of the Netanyahu government and the active political and military support it receives from the leading NATO powers. In the days before, members of

the SGP and its youth organisation, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), campaigned for the meetings in neighbourhoods and at demonstrations, producing a strong response. Many students and workers participated in the campaign and even distributed leaflets to friends, colleagues and neighbours.

“We welcome and support this mass movement,” emphasized Schwarz in his lecture. “The demonstrations must be expanded and politically developed. The movement in defense of the Palestinians must be brought together with the movement of the working class against war, the fight against wage cuts and social cuts, and the opposition to the ever-increasing attacks on democratic rights. You cannot subordinate the fight against war to the political manoeuvres of the ruling class.

“The callous killing of over 10,000 people in Gaza in a few weeks is also aimed at preparing the public for even greater crimes, such as the use of atomic bombs,” Schwarz explained. “There is not a single wing of the ruling elites—be it in America, in Europe or even in the Arab countries—that seriously opposes mass murder.”

Schwarz’s lecture in Berlin was repeatedly interrupted by spontaneous applause. The biggest applause came when he called for “worldwide strikes by dockworkers, airport workers and transport workers” against Israel’s war policies and spoke of “mobilizing the entire international working class to defend the people of Gaza.” He explained that this is the only policy and strategy capable of stopping the massacre. And the construction of the SGP and its international sister parties is necessary to fight for this socialist perspective.

The aim of the movement cannot be to put pressure on the rulers, said Schwarz. “The aim must be to disempower them. Workers’ governments must be formed—governments that rely on the workers and represent their interests. This requires the overturning of capitalist private property, the expropriation and disempowerment of the billionaires, banks

and large corporations. And this also requires overcoming the nation-states and national borders, which today only serve to divide and incite workers against each other.”

SGP Chairman Christoph Vandreier stressed in introducing the lecture that the SGP was the only party that opposed the massacre in Gaza and German militarism. “The Gaza massacre is preparing a war across the region, which is the second front in the developing Third World War. The only way to prevent such a catastrophe is to mobilize the international working class on the basis of a socialist program,” he said.

In the ensuing discussion, numerous participants took the floor. Meryem, who supported the SGP and IYSSE campaign in Neukölln, said, “Stop the killing. We must fight back, as soon as possible. I stand behind Mr. Schwarz and Mr. Vandreier. I wish from the bottom of my heart that our community participates and that my fellow human beings here in Berlin also participate. I can no longer bear racism with the best of intentions. It does not matter what religion a person comes from. Everyone has the right to live in peace and quiet. It cannot be that you kill people because of racism or because of money. This policy is sick and criminal.”

Mohammed said, “I am Palestinian and have been living in Germany for 27 years. Our people have been suffering for 75 years when we were exiled. In childhood, I experienced racism in Germany. We have always been seen differently or demonized and are not people for many. It’s not just about Palestinians or faith. Capitalism is becoming a beast of prey, whether today in Gaza or tomorrow elsewhere. At some point, it will be your turn, as you can see here. You’re not going to have it as good as it is now.”

He added, “The people at the top are driving the world to ruin because they always want more and more. It’s all about capital. It’s only a matter of time before this Ponzi scheme crashes into the abyss if we don’t all stick together. On the other hand, you have to tackle this effectively, you have to organize a revolution and meetings like this. We have to respond together and pull together.”

When a speaker stated that he was “only interested in Gaza, not capitalism” and that it was inadmissible to promote the establishment of a new party, several other participants disagreed. A young female speaker noted that the Left Party, most recently with its support for Israel’s war campaign, had betrayed all of its previous claims to support the Palestinians. A party is needed to give the struggle a voice, she added.

Wolfgang Weber, a longtime member of the SGP executive committee, recalled that the First World War could only be ended by the October Revolution under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party. The absence of such a party in Germany ultimately made Hitler’s rise possible.

Other speakers strongly condemned the media propaganda, the incessant war policies of the US and other imperialist powers, and announced further demonstrations and protests. Other contributions, which called for the boycott of Israeli and American goods in favour of German products or trivialised the German government as a “vassal of the US,” were critically taken up and rejected by Schwarz and Vandreier.

Vandreier stated, “We believe that workers in Germany, as well as workers in the United States and around the world, can only defend their own interests if they now side with the Palestinians and defend the rights of the Palestinians. One cannot defend the rights of the workers in a single country without fighting against the development of war, without fighting against imperialism, which worsens the situation of the workers in every single country or which again incites the workers against each other and sends them to war.”

In Stuttgart, one participant suggested going to the Zionists and countering them with better arguments. There was “no time” for a socialist solution to the crisis. Instead, it had to be a matter of “penetrating into the pro-Zionist bubble, not leaving room for it and destroying it by argument.” Another asked, “Why is it all of a sudden that all politicians and media, without exception, stand in solidarity with Israel?”

Schwarz replied, “The issue is not convincing the warmongers with better arguments, but the issue is social interests. All parties in the Bundestag (German parliament) defend the interests of the capitalist elites, without exception. They have sided with Israel because they want to benefit from the imperialist redivision of the world.”

The Trotskyist movement alone is oriented towards the working class with a long history in this regard. Schwarz explained, “One hundred years ago, the Left Opposition was founded to defend Marxism against the emergence of Stalinism. Over the past 25 years, we have built the WSWS to create a ‘counter public opinion.’ Today, we are calling for protests and demonstrations also in Israel itself,” he continued.

After the lectures, many participants signed up to support the SGP’s participation in the European elections and left their contact information to participate in the fight for the construction of the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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