

# The return of fascism and war in Germany and the fight for socialism

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*The following speech was given by Christoph Vandreier, the national secretary of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Germany), at the International May Day 2024 Online Rally, held Saturday, May 4.*

I am very pleased to be able to speak at today's May Day and bring the revolutionary greetings of the Socialist Equality Party in Germany.

This May Day is of the utmost importance and urgency. We oppose the rapid development of war and poisonous nationalism with the perspective of the international unity of the working class and the world socialist revolution. This is at the heart of our campaign for the presidential elections in the US and also here in Germany in our campaign for the European elections.

We oppose the growing danger of a nuclear world war! We do not accept that 80 years after the Nazi war of extermination and the Holocaust, German tanks are rolling against Russia again and the German ruling class in Gaza is returning to the methods of genocide.

Germany is now by far the second largest supplier of weapons to Ukraine and continues to escalate the war against Russia. In doing so, the ruling class is seamlessly continuing its old world war policy.

There can be absolutely no doubt that the murderous proxy war in Ukraine is only the prelude to an all-out war against Russia, which is being waged not for peace and freedom, but for raw materials.

SPD Defense Minister Pistorius announced back in January that Germany would be preparing for such a confrontation with the nuclear power Russia within five years.

The entire society is being militarized in order to put this madness into practice. The Green Minister for Economic Affairs Habeck has appointed himself "Minister of the Armaments Industry" in the Nazi tradition, and FDP Education Minister Stark-Watzinger

wants to introduce military training and send soldiers to schools.

The cruelty to which the ruling class is once again prepared to resort is demonstrated by its support for the horrific genocide in Gaza. It unreservedly supports the bombing of men, women and children and the starvation of the entire civilian population by the far-right Netanyahu regime. This is not about the protection of Jewish life, but, as in Ukraine, about purely imperialist interests.

It is the height of cynicism when the German government justifies its new great power policy and its support for genocide with the fight against antisemitism, of all things.

It is not the millions of workers and young people who are showing solidarity with the oppressed Palestinians, but the ruling class that is once again taking up the brown traditions of the Nazis when it rolls out German tanks against Russia, declares genocide to be the *raison d'être* of the state and arms the Bundeswehr to an extent not seen since Hitler.

The costs of this madness are being passed on to the workers. In order to finance the horrendous rearmament, funding for health care, education and housing is being slashed. The health care budget alone was cut by over two-thirds in the midst of the pandemic. In close cooperation with the trade unions, real wages in the public sector and the state-owned rail and postal services have also been cut by up to 25 percent, making billions more available for weapons.

At the same time, the orgy of enrichment at the top of society continues unabated. Gifts worth billions to corporations and the rich have increased the total wealth of the five richest Germans by around three-quarters since 2020, from US\$89 billion to US\$155 billion. At the same time, more than 14 million people

in Germany are now living in poverty.

Growing resistance is developing against this policy of war and social devastation. This is because workers in Germany know what war and fascism mean, and the vast majority of them firmly reject both the genocide in Gaza and the preparations for war against Russia. The traffic light coalition is the most hated government in the history of the Federal Republic. The chancellor's party, the SPD, is polling below 15 percent, and the FDP is in danger of failing to meet the 5 percent hurdle.

But the government is not reacting to this by making any concessions to public opinion. It is intensifying its deafening war propaganda and taking dictatorial measures. It is continuing its fascist tradition not only in foreign policy, but also in domestic policy.

The images of the brutal police operations against the Palestine Congress in Berlin and against the protest camp in front of the Bundestag show the real class relations in Germany. Left-wing Jewish opponents of the war are once again being abused and detained by the German police—all in the name of the fight against antisemitism. The aim is to silence anyone who opposes militarism.

The fascist AfD was deliberately built up for this very purpose. It is not a foreign body in an otherwise healthy organism, but the worst symptom of a thoroughly sick system. All other capitalist parties have courted it, are putting its program into practice and have long been preparing to include it in government.

This applies in particular to the nominally left-wing parties. The former pacifists of the Greens have become the most aggressive warmongers. The state party SPD is putting militarism into practice with technocratic cold-bloodedness, and the Left Party has also backed the genocide in Gaza and the war against Russia. As far as Sarah Wagenknecht's nationalist split is concerned, she has no objections to the rearmament, but only wants to push ahead with German militarism independently of the US.

This shows one thing above all: You cannot prevent a Third World War and you cannot defend democratic rights and social achievements by appealing to this capitalist unity party. The interests of the vast majority can simply no longer be reconciled with the greed for profit and the imperialist desires of the ruling class. To end war and inequality, the masses must intervene independently in the political process, break the power

of the banks and corporations and place them under democratic control.

As Rosa Luxemburg emphasized on the eve of the First World War, the working class must “draw the conclusion that one can only fight imperialism, war, the theft of countries, the plundering of nations, violation of the law and violent politics by fighting capitalism, by opposing the global political genocide with social revolution.”

That is why our election campaign is of crucial importance. We oppose the war propaganda and police state measures and fight to raise the consciousness of the working class to the level of its historic tasks. This International May Day is a very important step in doing so.



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