

“There is no other writer today who has understood so clearly and precisely the significance of the events that are now unfolding”

## Introduction to David North at the Leipzig Book Fair

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*On Saturday, March 29 at the Leipzig Book Fair in Germany, David North, chairman of the World Socialist Web Site Editorial Board and national chairman of the Socialist Equality Party (US), introduced the newly released German translation of his book *Sounding the Alarm: Socialism Against War*. His remarks are published here. Below we are publishing the introduction to North by Johannes Stern, editor of the German language edition of the WSWS.*

*Due to an accident on the train line between Berlin and Leipzig, North and Stern were unable to attend in person. The remarks by North and Stern were read aloud.*

*The German edition, Ein Warnruf: Sozialismus gegen Krieg, can be ordered here. The English edition can be ordered here.*

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On behalf of Mehring Verlag, I would like to welcome you all to this year's event at the Leipzig Book Fair. I am Johannes Stern and I am delighted that we once again have our most important author, David North, as our guest.

For those who are not yet familiar with David, he has been active as a revolutionary journalist, historian and political leader of the Fourth International, founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938, for what I believe is now almost exactly 55 years. He the chairman of the International Editorial Board of the *World Socialist Web Site* and current national chairman of the Socialist Equality Party (US). This is the sister party of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei here in Germany.

David is the author of numerous important Marxist writings and books, of which I can only mention a few of the most prominent: including *The Heritage We Defend: A Contribution to the History of the Fourth International*; *The Crisis of American Democracy*; *In Defense of Leon Trotsky*; *The Russian Revolution and the Unfinished Twentieth Century*; *The Frankfurt School, Postmodernism and the Politics of the Pseudo-Left*; *A Quarter Century of War: The US Drive for Global Hegemony 1990–2016*; *The Logic of Zionism: From nationalist myth to the Gaza genocide* and *Leon Trotsky and the Struggle for Socialism in the 21st Century*, the book we

presented here last year.

All of these books are absolutely essential and they can all be purchased at our stand K111 here in Hall 5.

David's latest book, *Sounding the Alarm: Socialism Against War*, is of particular importance.

This book is a collection of May Day speeches given by David North at the International Online May Day Rallies of the Fourth International and the *World Socialist Web Site* from 2014 to 2024.

In preparing these introductory remarks, I re-read Dave's book, and I must say that one is struck by the almost prophetic nature of each speech.

They were all held against the backdrop of the key events of the last decade. I can only mention the most important ones here: the constant escalation of war and militarism, which is currently reaching new heights; the first election of Donald Trump and his rise to become the central figure in US political life; the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic five years ago; Trump's first attempt to overturn the constitution on January 6, 2021; the outbreak of war in Ukraine in spring 2022; and finally, the start of the Israeli genocide in Gaza in fall 2023.

Sometimes it is embarrassing for authors to be confronted with their earlier speeches and predictions. History and politics are full of surprises, and often those who dare to make predictions are confronted with the fact that they are contradicted by events. This is not the case with these speeches by David North. And indeed, everything David writes is remarkably historical, but also prescient. I would even go so far as to say that there is no other active writer today who has understood so clearly and precisely the significance of the events that are now unfolding.

I want to give you a few quotes from the book to give you an impression:

When the ICFI and the *World Socialist Web Site* called for their first International Online May Day Rally in 2014—100 years after the start of the First World War—David warned:

Those who believe that war with China and Russia is an impossibility—that the major imperialist powers would not “risk war” with nuclear powers—are deluding themselves. The history of the 20th century, with its two devastating world wars and its innumerable and very bloody “localized” conflicts, has provided sufficient evidence of the risks the imperialist ruling classes are prepared to take. Indeed, they are prepared to risk the fate of all of humanity and the planet itself.

In contrast to the official propaganda of Putin’s allegedly unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, North analyzes the actual historical, economic, social and political background of the war in his speeches. As early as 2014, when Washington and Berlin organized a far-right coup in Ukraine to install a pro-Western regime in Kiev, he explained:

The plotters in Washington and Berlin understood that this coup would lead to a confrontation with Russia. Indeed, far from seeking to avoid a confrontation, both Germany and the United States believe that a clash with Russia is required for the realization of their far-reaching geopolitical interests.

And specifically on Germany’s role, he said:

[T]he confrontation with Russia is welcomed as a pretext for the repudiation of the constraints on militarism imposed in the wake of the unspeakable crimes committed during the years of Hitler’s Third Reich. ... Definite economic and geopolitical interests are at stake. As in the 20th century, Germany is once again gazing longingly upon the Black Sea region, the Caucasus, the Middle East, Central Asia and the vast land mass of Russia.

Also in relation to the genocide in Gaza, Dave rejected the official narrative that Israel was simply defending itself against the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023. In his May Day 2024 speech, he said:

The genocidal violence unleashed by the Israeli state against the Palestinians has aroused the anger of workers and youth all over the world. But it must be recognized that the genocide in Gaza and the war against Russia are interconnected fronts in the global war unleashed by imperialism.

I could quote the entire book here because every speech is as impressive as it is politically relevant. Of course, this is not possible due to time constraints. And we definitely want to let the author himself have his say. But perhaps one last example that I think particularly underlines the analytical strength of the book. His assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has now cost more than 30 million lives worldwide.

In his speech on May 1, 2020, Dave explained:

The pandemic is a historic event that is exposing the economic, political, social and moral bankruptcy of capitalist society. It is laying bare the unbridgeable chasm that exists between the corporate-financial oligarchs who control and determine the policies of capitalist governments and the needs and interests of the working class.

He referred to the pandemic as a “trigger event” and compared it to the assassination of the Austrian Archduke Ferdinand on June 28, 1914, the event that led to the outbreak of the First World War. He said:

The assassination accelerated the historical process, but it acted upon preexisting and highly inflammable socioeconomic and political conditions. The same can be said of the pandemic.

And he emphasized that the fight against the pandemic is not just a medical issue, but—just like the fight against social inequality, war, fascism and dictatorship—a class issue and a revolutionary issue.

With that, I would like to hand over to our author, but already recommend that everyone here buy the book, study it carefully and then become politically active. North’s collected May Day speeches are not simply the observations and warnings of a passive analyst. They are the concentrated expression of the active struggle of the world Trotskyist movement against imperialism and war over the last decade, which must now be developed with all its might to prevent catastrophe.

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*Read David North’s remarks [here](#). And purchase *Sounding the Alarm: Socialism Against War* on [Mehring Books](#).*



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