

The Gaza genocide and the danger of a third world war

Mehring Verlag at the Left Literature Fair in Nuremberg: Strong turnout for book launch in face of attempt at censorship

Mehring Verlag
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Around 120 people packed into the far too small cinema auditorium at the Left Literature Fair in Nuremberg on Sunday, where Mehring Verlag presented two books by the American socialist David North, chairman of the *World Socialist Web Site: The Logic of Zionism* and *Socialism Against War*.

The room was filled right up to the door, with many participants sitting on the floor because there were not enough seats. This made the event one of the largest at the entire fair. In the weeks beforehand, supporters of Mehring Verlag promoted the book launch at vocational schools, universities, among nursing staff and in working class neighbourhoods.

It was the only event at the fair to focus on the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the danger of a third world war. The Left Party and other pseudo-left groups support Trump's "peace plan" for Gaza, declare the genocide to be over and play down the danger of a third world war.

The Mehring Verlag event stood in complete contrast; it analysed both theatres of war in Gaza and Ukraine as part of the worldwide development towards war, explained their causes in the deep crisis of capitalism and outlined a socialist perspective in opposition to them.

The City of Nuremberg responded by politically censoring the event: only 30 hours before the fair began, it demanded that the fair management change the event description and threatened to exercise its rights as the owner of the venue to "exclude the book launch from the programme of the Left Literature Fair" if this did not happen. Even the posters with the event text, which had been put up in the building as all publishers at the fair do, had to be removed under threat of the event being banned.

The city objected to the description because it accused the German government of "bloody war crimes" and referred to the genocide in Gaza as such. In the city's view, this was unlawful. This argument amounts to the suppression of any criticism of the government's war policy.

Supporters of Mehring Verlag responded to the censorship

with a political offensive: hundreds of leaflets condemning the censorship were distributed to the fair's visitors, so that in the end everyone knew about it. Some even extended their stay in Nuremberg by a day in order to be able to attend the event.

On the morning of the event, all the publishers exhibiting at the fair adopted a resolution sharply protesting against the censorship of Mehring Verlag's event text and calling on the City of Nuremberg to refrain from any future attempts at censorship against book launches at the Left Literature Fair.

Numerous fair visitors reacted with outrage to the censorship, supported Mehring Verlag and took several leaflets to distribute among friends and colleagues. Many placed the attack on freedom of expression at the book fair in the context of the general dismantling of democratic rights in Germany as well as the establishment of a dictatorship in the US.

Several comments on social media also referred to Nuremberg's history: "Has the City of Nuremberg forgotten where the Nazi trials took place in 1945? For that reason, the City of Nuremberg has a special responsibility to fight war crimes," wrote one user on TikTok. Another post recalled that Nuremberg was not only the venue for the war crimes trials, but also the site of the Nazi Party rallies and the Nuremberg Race Laws. Another user wrote: "The war crimes condemned by the ICJ [International Court of Justice] are the responsibility of the Bundestag [parliament]. The citizens were against it from the beginning."

Against this background the event was of central significance. The speaker, Peter Schwarz, a member of the WSWS international editorial board, began by explaining that the event was taking place 80 years after the Nuremberg Trials, at which the chief Nazi war criminals were convicted.

That the City of Nuremberg now declared that one may not call the crimes of capitalist governments by their name because this would relativise the Holocaust, Schwarz said,

turns the significance of the Nuremberg Trials on its head. They were meant to ensure that genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes would never be committed again—or that those responsible for such crimes would have to reckon with severe punishment.

Schwarz made clear what the city administration's argument amounts to: "From being a weapon against war crimes, it transforms the Nuremberg Trials into a general amnesty for them. One may no longer call a crime a crime because in doing so one would relativise another crime."

In this context, Schwarz presented David North's first book, *The Logic of Zionism: From Nationalist Myth to the Gaza Genocide*, which explains the background to the current genocide and demonstrates that the Zionist project has from the outset been based on a reactionary ideology.

Up to the German catastrophe of 1933, a large number of Jewish workers and intellectuals had linked their own emancipation to the overcoming of capitalist class society and oriented themselves towards the Marxist movement, Schwarz explained "Zionism, developed by Theodor Herzl in the 1890s, was directed squarely against this socialist perspective. In opposition to the internationalism of the socialist workers' movement, it counterposed the founding of a Jewish state in Palestine."

Schwarz quoted David North:

The maintenance of a Jewish apartheid state that violently oppresses the Palestinian people while simultaneously moving domestically in the direction of fascism is inseparable from Israel's role as the linchpin of imperialism in the Middle East.

American support for Israel, Schwarz went on, has nothing to do with sympathy for the Jews or reparations for the Holocaust. "The US arms Israel—Republicans and Democrats are at one on this—because they need and use it to dominate the Middle East." The same applies to Germany.

David North's May Day speeches, published in the second book presented, *Sounding the Alarm: Socialism Against War*, trace the escalation of imperialism and the growing danger of a third world war. Schwarz explained:

They show that the very contradictions to which the ruling class responds with war and dictatorship also create the objective preconditions for the intensification of the class struggle and for socialist revolution. ...

The cause of this escalating war is—just as in the First and Second World Wars—the incompatibility of the

bourgeois nation-state with the international character of the world economy. The imperialist powers no longer satisfy their hunger for raw materials, markets and cheap labour through peaceful competition, but through a violent redivision of the world.

In conclusion Schwarz stressed that a socialist perspective is needed for a successful fight against war. He quoted from North's May Day 2023 speech:

The dangers confronting humanity should not be minimized. The first responsibility of a genuine revolutionary is to state *what is*. But this requires the recognition that objective reality presents not only the danger of World War III and the annihilation of humanity but also the potential for world socialist revolution and a stupendous advance in human civilization.

The program of the Fourth International, the World Party of Socialist Revolution led by the International Committee, is to realize this potential by building a mass movement against imperialist war and fighting for the transfer of power to the working class to build socialism throughout the world. This is the perspective that animates, despite all difficulties and dangers, today's celebration of May Day.

The lecture met with a great response from the audience, with listeners repeatedly applauding at key points in the speech. Afterwards, many visitors came to the Mehring Verlag stand to continue the political discussion and to purchase the two books and other Marxist literature.

The *World Socialist Web Site* will publish a video recording of the lecture in the coming days. The author of the two books presented, David North, will speak in Berlin on November 18 and in London on November 22 on the topic "Where is America heading? Socialism or barbarism."



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