

# How to stop conscription: German IYSSE meeting discusses a socialist perspective against war and militarism

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On February 18, 2026, more than 30 high school and college students and young workers gathered for an important online discussion organized by the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE). Under the title “How can conscription be stopped? For a socialist perspective against the reintroduction of conscription!” the participants discussed the necessary political conclusions arising from the government’s drive to reintroduce compulsory military conscription as part of the impending militarization of society as a whole.

Florian Hasek, a member of the IYSSE, opened the meeting by pointing to the growing movement among young people, which brought tens of thousands of students onto the streets in December with the next major school strike planned for March 5. He emphasized that this movement needs a clear socialist perspective in order to be successful and not be led into a dead end.

## The deception of the SDAJ and the return of German militarism

Joshua Seubert, spokesperson for the IYSSE in Nuremberg, gave the introductory speech and began with a penetrating analysis of the recent conference of the “Alliance Against Conscription,” organized by the Stalinist Socialist German Workers’ Youth (SDAJ). Seubert described the event as a “fraud” because the SDAJ did everything in its power to suppress any real discussion and neutralise any effective opposition to

capitalism. He explained that one cannot seriously fight against conscription while collaborating at the same time with the youth organizations of the parties in the German Bundestag, which all actively support German militarism.

This suppression of socialist ideas serves to channel the explosive potential of youth into mere harmless appeals to politicians, while the ruling class prepares an entire generation for war. Seubert placed conscription in the context of the recent Munich Security Conference, at which Chancellor Friedrich Merz openly spoke of a return to “great power politics.” Merz openly demands that Germany must once again “learn to speak the language of power politics.”

Seubert warned that the ruling class in Germany is striving for world power for a third time. The reintroduction of conscription is not an isolated project, but rather lays the “human foundation” for a comprehensive project of militarization and the establishment of a war economy.

He drew parallels to the world situation, in particular the aggressive course of US imperialism in Venezuela and against Iran, as well as the establishment of a police state within the US, as manifested in the military occupation of Minneapolis in early 2026.

## An international perspective for the working class

The central question of the evening was what force can stop this insanity. Seubert emphasized that only the international working class has the social power to

paralyze the war machine. He pointed to the massive waves of strikes in the US, where nurses and teachers are fighting against profit-oriented policies and for social rights.

“A school strike must not remain symbolic,” Seubert said. It must be the spark that connects with the working class. He called for the establishment of independent action committees in schools and workplaces, which must operate completely independently of the pro-capitalist parties and trade union bureaucracies. He was particularly critical of the role of the Greens as an “ideological battering ram for rearmament” and the Left Party, which provides political cover for militarism.

There then followed a lively discussion on strategy and history. In the ensuing discussion, participants contributed a wide range of experiences. A young worker warned against the EU’s “apparent anti-Trumpism,” which serves only to position its own European imperialism against the US and Russia. Max, a public sector nurse, described the betrayal of the Verdi and IG Metall trade union bureaucrats, who accept real wage cuts while billions are poured into rearmament. He emphasized that the budget for the Bundeswehr exceeds the annual budgets for health and education combined.

An important focus of the debate was political education in schools. One student reported on the systematic suppression of political discussions at his school and the pervasive ignorance about socialism. Maximilian added that this depoliticization is intentional, designed to keep the working class within the capitalist system.

Joshua Seubert responded to these points by saying that engaging with history is crucial. It provides the scientific basis for politics and protects against opportunism. He explained that only from the experiences of the workers’ movement—such as the October Revolution and the struggle against its Stalinist degeneration—can the necessary lessons for today be drawn.

Towards the end of the event, Dietmar Gaisenkersting, deputy chairman of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) emphasized that the rebellion against the trade union apparatus in Germany had already begun, as shown by the resistance of workers at VW and Bosch. He called on young people to educate themselves politically and join the IYSSE: “There is no better school than class struggle.”

Philipp Frisch, also a member of the SGP, underscored the need for an international orientation and warned against “left populism” à la Syriza or Podemos, which only serves to subordinate the working class to parliamentarism once again. Instead, he said, workers must be told “the whole truth” and the causes of war in the capitalist system must be clearly identified. He pointed to the new chatbot “Socialism AI” as an important tool for clarifying political questions on a Marxist basis.

Florian Hasek concluded the meeting with an urgent appeal: Participants should use the insights gained at the meeting to actively intervene in the school strike on March 5 and join the IYSSE. He explained that the decisive question is one of consciousness. The fight against conscription is inseparable from the building of a new, socialist leadership in the working class.



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