

Stop the war against Iran! Against imperialist war! Against conscription in Germany!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality
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This statement was distributed March 5 at the nationwide school strikes against conscription in Germany.

While we are demonstrating today against conscription, the US, Israel and their imperialist allies are unleashing a brutal war of aggression against Iran. Since February 28, American and Israeli armed forces have been systematically bombarding a country of 93 million people, with the open aim of turning it into a colony. In the first 48 hours, they destroyed around 1,200 targets, including among them the political leadership, air defence and the country's communication networks. The Middle East is ablaze.

The struggle against conscription in Germany cannot be separated from this war madness, which is openly supported by Chancellor Merz and his government. That would be a naive and dangerous illusion. Conscription is not a stupid idea; it serves to use us as cannon fodder in such wars.

The US itself admits the imperialist character of the war. President Trump boasts: "We haven't even really started yet. The big attacks are coming soon." He stated that the war could last "four to five weeks," perhaps "much longer." The US's weapons would last "forever."

Secretary of War Pete Hegseth has declared total war—just as Hitler's propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels once did—without regard for international law or civilian casualties. The war would be waged "entirely on our terms, with maximum authorities, without stupid rules of engagement, without the morass of nation-building, without politically correct wars," he declared at the Pentagon. "We fight to win." In 1945, the Nazi criminals in Nuremberg were convicted and executed for precisely this reason: for "crimes against peace," the "supreme international crime."

The Iran war is not an accident. It follows the logic of US imperialism, which seeks to compensate for its

economic decline through military superiority. With the subjugation of Iran, the US is not only striving to establish its hegemony over the entire Middle East, but it also serves as a lever for war against China, Russia and other rivals. Whoever controls the oil and gas of the Middle East can cut off their opponents from energy supplies.

The genocide in Gaza, the war against Russia in Ukraine and the assault on Iran are different fronts in a war for the redivision of the world among the imperialist powers, which will inevitably lead to a third world war and the annihilation of humanity if it is not stopped by a powerful movement from below.

In this war, we are supposed to die. That is the naked truth behind the introduction of conscription here. When the Merz government registers young people for military service, it is not to defend "democracy and freedom," but to participate in this global predatory expedition for the violent redivision of the world.

Chancellor Merz visited the White House in Washington three days after the outbreak of the war to kiss the ring of the supreme warlord and assure him of his unreserved loyalty. The chancellor aligned himself with Trump's war aims and joined him in condemning the Spanish government, which has forbidden the US from using Spanish military bases for attacks on Iran. No such restrictions apply to Ramstein and other German bases.

Even before his visit to Washington, Merz had declared that international legal norms were worth "relatively little" when fundamental interests were at stake. Eighty years after the crimes of the Nazi regime, the German government is thereby bidding farewell to international law, much of which was created to prevent a repetition of Nazi crimes. Berlin is once again preparing for war and new crimes. That is precisely why it is introducing conscription and rearming to a degree not seen since Hitler.

This policy is supported by the Greens and the Left Party. At a press conference, Left Party leader Jan van Aken welcomed the assassination of Iranian leaders by American and Israeli bombs, saying it was “good that they are gone.” The slain head of state, Khamenei, should “rot in hell.”

The leader of a party that calls itself left-wing cheers the results of a war of aggression that he himself describes as contrary to international law! This is not peace policy, but the justification of war crimes.

Last year, the Left Party had approved a €500 billion rearmament package in the upper house of parliament, the Bundesrat, which forms the basis for conscription, and then helped Merz into the Chancellery. It is not an ally in the struggle against conscription and war, but an opponent.

Our strike against conscription must therefore be independent of all parties in the Bundestag (parliament) and directed against the pro-war policy of the government. However, some political groups are deliberately trying to prevent this. They do not want us to take a position on current wars, but to limit the movement to slogans “against war” in general, without naming the warmongers.

At the nationwide conference against conscription on February 14, the IYSSE moved to amend the resolution with the following points: “Stop the genocide in Gaza! No weapons deliveries to Ukraine! No war against Iran! Socialism instead of war!”

The Stalinist youth movement SDAJ rejected this on the grounds that one must not take a specific position on wars. They rejected the demand for socialism on the grounds that it was not “suitable for the masses.”

This is a political declaration of bankruptcy. Anyone who claims that it is possible to fight against conscription without fighting against the wars into which we are to be conscripted is leading the movement into a dead end. Conscription does not exist in a political vacuum—it provides cannon fodder for the escalation of war that is currently taking place in real time. US imperialism is bombarding Iran. Berlin declares its solidarity. The arms budget is being massively increased so that Germany will soon be able to wage such wars itself.

The SDAJ argues that the inclusion of the Iran war and the demand for socialism would weaken the movement. The opposite is true: A movement that excludes the most burning political question of the day does not preserve its unity—it protects the pro-war policy of the ruling class from criticism.

It turns protest into a toothless gesture and prevents young people from understanding the true dimension of what they are fighting against. Anyone who fights against conscription today and remains silent tomorrow when Germany marches into the next imperialist war has already lost the fight.

The struggle against conscription and the struggle against imperialist war are one and the same. Both must be directed against capitalist rule, which in its crisis is grasping ever more aggressively for markets, raw materials and geopolitical spheres of influence—and using our lives as cannon fodder to do so.

This struggle cannot be waged by parties that are themselves part of the imperialist apparatus of rule—neither by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) nor the Greens, neither by the Social Democratic Party (SPD) nor the Left Party. It must be organised completely independently of all capitalist parties and base itself on the international working class, which has to bear the entire burden of war and crisis.

We in the IYSSE demand:

- Stop the war against Iran!
- Withdrawal of all Western troops from the Middle East! No to conscription!
- We are not cannon fodder for the rich! Billions for education and social provisions instead of rearmament and war!
- For the building of an international socialist anti-war movement in the working class and the youth!

In order to enforce these demands, independent rank-and-file strike and action committees must be built in schools, universities and workplaces, which network internationally. The only social force that can put an end to the imperialist war madness is the international working class—united across all national borders. To do this, it needs a political party and a socialist programme.

We call on all young people who agree with this perspective: sign up using the form below today to get in touch with the IYSSE and wage this struggle. Register now to participate in our event “Stop the war against Iran” this coming Sunday at 2:00 p.m.!



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