

# WSWS emergency webinar articulates socialist strategy to stop US-Israeli war against Iran

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On March 8, the *World Socialist Web Site* held an emergency global webinar on the US-Israeli war against Iran, drawing thousands of participants from around the world. The event advanced a revolutionary perspective found nowhere else: a socialist, anti-imperialist analysis oriented to the international working class as the only social force capable of putting an end to this war and all imperialist wars. It broke sharply from every framework on offer from bourgeois commentators and pseudo-left organizations alike, none of which offer any path forward for the billions of workers who oppose the war against Iran.

The webinar brought together an international panel of leaders of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), the world Trotskyist movement: David North, chairman of the International Editorial Board of the *World Socialist Web Site*; Keith Jones, national secretary of the SEP (Canada); Christoph Vandreier, chairman of the SEP (Germany); Tom Scripps, assistant national secretary of the SEP (UK); Ula? Sevinç, chairman of the SEP (Türkiye); and Will Lehman, an autoworker at Mack Trucks and candidate for president of the United Auto Workers. The event was moderated by Joseph Kishore, national secretary of the SEP (US), and Tom Peters of the Socialist Equality Group (New Zealand).

The meeting convened as US and Israeli warplanes pounded Tehran for a ninth consecutive day on Sunday, causing thick black smoke to hang over the Iranian capital after strikes on oil storage facilities. The death toll has surpassed 1,300, with thousands more wounded, and the Trump administration is openly planning the deployment of ground troops.

Opening the webinar, Kishore summarized the imperialist character of the war: “In just over a week, we have witnessed a rapid escalation of imperialist violence that threatens to set the entire Middle East, and indeed the world, on fire,” he said. The strike on a girls’ school in Minab that killed 150 children, the bombing of cities and the torpedoing of an unarmed Iranian vessel in international waters—these pointed, Kishore said, to “a war of extermination.” The Trump administration “declares that it is not beholden to international law or indeed any constraints on the actions of American imperialism. It is demanding unconditional surrender and pledging complete destruction and certain death to a country of over 90 million people.”

Situating these crimes historically, David North placed the war in the framework of the Nuremberg trials. “The principal charge brought against the defendants in Nuremberg—Göring, Keitel, Jodl—was ‘crimes against peace,’ that is, the launching of a war without any legal justification,” he said. “There was no imminent threat to the

United States. Every claim, including the absurd claim that Iran was about to launch a nuclear strike—no one believes that. Everyone knows it’s a lie.” North stated that the leadership of the United States “is absolutely implicated in crimes which formed the basis of the prosecution and ultimately the execution of the leaders of the Nazi regime.”

North located the war within 35 years of US efforts to achieve unchallenged global hegemony following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a strategy that “didn’t begin with Trump.” The methods, he said, “become increasingly violent and uncontrolled, because the entire project is not realizable except through basically a policy of global mass murder.” The war’s underlying aim is “to abolish the 20th century—to wipe out all the consequences of the national democratic and socialist struggles of the 20th century, to act as if it was all somehow a big mistake, that colonial domination can be restored and imperialism can rule.” It amounts, North said, to the old declaration of the ruling elites: “Slaves you were and slaves you will be.”

He warned that what is taking place in Tehran “is a continuation of what we saw during the past two years in Gaza. And what we will see. If this is not stopped by the working class, in future wars will be pictures not of Tehran—it will be pictures of Moscow, it will be pictures of Beijing.”

The webinar played a clip of US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth declaring that in the war against Iran, there will be “no stupid rules of engagement, no nation-building quagmire, no democracy-building exercise, no politically correct wars. We fight to win, and we don’t waste time or lives.”

Keith Jones then detailed the war’s catastrophic impact on Iran’s civilian population, citing the president of the Iranian Red Crescent, who reported more than 6,000 civilian structures damaged—including 5,535 residential units, 64 schools and 14 medical centers. Jones noted that tens if not hundreds of thousands of Iranians have died over the past two decades as a result of Western sanctions, and that Trump himself pulled the United States out of the Iran nuclear accord in 2018, imposing sanctions “with the express aim of crashing Iran’s economy and bringing about regime change”—sanctions “continued seamlessly under the Democratic administration of Joe Biden.”

Christoph Vandreier reported that last week German Chancellor Friedrich Merz had traveled to Washington and told Trump, “We are on the same page in terms of getting this terrible regime in Tehran away.” Vandreier drew a direct parallel between Hegseth’s language and that of the Nazis: “When he says that there are no rules but we are

fighting to win, that's pretty much what Hitler said in his speech to the officers of his army shortly before the attack on Poland, when he said, "The victor will not be asked later whether he told the truth or not. When starting and waging a war, it is not justice that matters, but victory." Vandreier added that Germany had announced plans "to build the most powerful military force on the continent and to rearm on a scale not seen since Hitler."

Vandreier also exposed the role of Germany's Left Party, whose chairman Jan van Aken celebrated the assassinations of Iranian leaders, saying, "It's good that they are gone and may they rot in hell." Van Aken calls the war criminal and illegal, Vandreier noted, "but at the same time he's legitimizing its outcome and supporting its aims."

Tom Scripps addressed Britain's complicity. "Once again, a Labour government is involving the UK in a criminal war in the Middle East against the overwhelming opposition of the population," he said. Leaked reports from Britain's National Security Council showed that the government had been told of the initial strikes more than two weeks in advance. Senior British army officials spoke "with their American counterparts about how to craft a request that would allow the UK government to claim some sort of justification for its involvement."

Ula? Sevinç highlighted the wildcat strike by more than 1,200 miners at the Polyak Eyzek mine in Zmir, Türkiye, which had erupted before the war and continued during its first days. "During this wildcat strike, it was openly discussed among workers that if workers seized control of the mine now, they could seize control of the country," he said. "They objectively demonstrated that there is the social force, the social power that must be mobilized against the imperialist war."

Will Lehman reported on the massive unpopularity of the war among American workers. "Only 20 percent approval among US citizens for the war in Iran—that seems actually kind of high to me from talking to workers," he said. He reported on the police attack on high school students protesting Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Quakertown, Pennsylvania, noting the area's revolutionary traditions of defying the Fugitive Slave Act prior to the Civil War. "There is broad opposition. There's definite sentiment for revolution brewing again in Pennsylvania," Lehman said.

North took up the narrative promoted by *Jacobin* and the Democratic Socialists of America that the US is "fighting Israel's war." He rejected this categorically, stating, "The tail may wag very, very vigorously, but it's the dog that's running the show. Israel does not drive American policy." He noted that the 1953 coup in Iran was organized entirely by the United States, and that the Shah had functioned as "the gendarme of the Persian Gulf"—a role far more significant at the time than Israel's. "To present this as simply an Israeli war is to provide an alibi for American imperialism and to extract this war from the entire global strategy of the United States."

North predicted that "the United States will lose this war," not only because of the resistance of the Iranian masses, "but more fundamentally, the very character of the war and the very contradictions that gave rise to it are also intensifying social contradictions in every capitalist country." He cited Trotsky's 1934 essay "War and the Fourth International," which emphasized the need "to follow not the war map but the map of the class struggle."

In his concluding remarks, North addressed the younger generation directly, citing Lenin's observation that governments are "never so weak" as when wars begin. "Of all the false propaganda, perhaps the

most misleading is the conception that this government is all-powerful. They're not," he said. "Trump, this government, is risking everything on this war." Invoking the Declaration of Independence's call for "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind," he asked: "Does this government show a decent respect for anyone's opinions? Other than that of that idiot, scoundrel, felon Donald Trump and his coterie of political nutcases? They have no respect for anyone. They have no respect for the American people. They have no respect for the opinion of the world."

Kishore drew the political lessons of the Gaza protests, noting the WSWS had warned from the outset that the US-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza was one front in a broader war targeting Iran. Massive demonstrations had been channeled by various organizations "behind the perspective of pressuring the political establishment, when what is actually required is the development of a movement in the working class, mobilizing the social power of the working class. Arms manufacturing, transport, logistics—the working class has enormous power to intervene into this situation." He cited the fact that the Democratic Socialists of America mayor of New York City, Zohran Mamdani, had visited the White House and shaken hands with Trump "on the very eve of the bombing of Iran," exposing the "absolute political bankruptcy" of the DSA.

Peters, drawing on the contributions of the speakers, emphasized at the conclusion that "the working class is not powerless, and it will move in response in opposition to the war, the economic crisis, and the attacks on its living standards, as well as the against the development of fascism and authoritarianism in the United States, Europe and elsewhere. But this movement, which will develop and is developing on a global scale, requires political leadership, which must be international, must be grounded in the lessons of revolutionary struggles throughout history."

Sunday's webinar stands alone as the only serious political analysis of the war against Iran, which identifies the international working class as the social force that can and must stop it. We urge all our readers to watch the webinar, share it as widely as possible and discuss its lessons and the way forward with coworkers, family and friends. Above all, make the decision today to join the Socialist Equality Party if there is a section in your country, or to take the initiative to build one where there is not.



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