

# *Where is America Going?* Lively interest in book presentations with David North in Leipzig, Berlin and Nuremberg

Katerina Selin  
3 April 2026

At this year's Leipzig Book Fair March 19-22, concerns and horror over the global political situation were palpable. The escalation of war in the Middle East and the danger of fascism in America have shaken the cultural world. While tens of thousands of readers, authors and publishers gathered in Leipzig, bombs fell on Iran and ICE agents patrolled American cities.

Against this background, it was of great significance that the new book by Mehring Verlag was published just in time for the fair, raising the key question that is moving millions of people: *Where is America Going? Fascism or Socialism*.

## Book presentation in Leipzig

The turnout at the book presentation at the fair with editor David North was enormous. The non-fiction forum in Hall 5 did not offer enough space for the over 150 participants, some of whom had to sit on the floor or stand in the aisle to follow the event.

In the week following the fair, International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) university groups organised further book presentations at universities in Berlin and Nuremberg, which attracted a considerable audience despite the semester break. At all three events, the lecture was followed by a lively discussion.

David North, chairman of the international editorial board of the *World Socialist Web Site* and national chairman of the Socialist Equality Party, began the book presentation in Leipzig with a quote from Leon Trotsky about the situation in Germany in 1934: "Not every exasperated petty bourgeois could have become a Hitler, but a part of Hitler is lodged in every exasperated petty bourgeois." Applied to today, one could say: not every CEO is a Trump, but more than a little of Trump is lodged in every corporate boss. Trump is the expression of the deep disease of capitalist society.

## Book presentation at the Leipzig Book Fair with David North, 21 March 2026

"But why is it possible that Trump is in power?" asked North. "To carry out its policies, American imperialism must use the methods of

criminality and fascism—and you can see that very clearly now in the war against Iran."

Today, he said, it was necessary to build a new worldwide anti-war movement based on the working class. "The German working class must revive its old traditions. People here know what it means to fight against war and fascism," North said. He concluded the book presentation with an urgent appeal to study the book and draw the conclusion to become politically active themselves.

Many visitors subsequently bought the book and thanked North for his clear and courageous words. The great interest in *Where is America Going?* was also evident at the Mehring Verlag stand. The mood was concerned and thoughtful. Numerous discussions dealt with the causes of Trump's rise, the role of the American working class and the policies of the Democratic Party, which paved the way for Trump.

It became clear that the danger of a fascist dictatorship is not an "American question." Many visitors looked with dismay at the electoral successes of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) and the Merz government, which supports the war of aggression against Iran in violation of international law, is rapidly rearming militarily and implementing a comprehensive decimation of social spending. In total, Mehring Verlag sold over 50 copies of *Where is America Going?* at the fair and during the campaign.

## Book presentation in Berlin

On 24 March, about 80 students and workers attended the second book presentation Humboldt University in Berlin. In his lecture on the historical roots of the Iran war, North traced almost a century of American interventions against Iran—from the CIA coup in 1953 to the instrumentalization of Iraq under Saddam Hussein and the current war of aggression.

In doing so, he refuted in detail the thesis that the war is simply a result of Israeli influence on US politics and explained the material interests of American capitalism in the energy-rich Persian Gulf region. The WSWS has published his lecture here as a video and text.

In his introduction, Johannes Stern, editor-in-chief of the German edition of the WSWS, highlighted the role of the European powers, and in particular Germany, in the Iran war. The government was lining up behind the US while simultaneously pursuing its own

imperialist interests, Stern said.

In the discussion, a student who supported the IYSSE campaign raised the question of why Trump had not started a war against Iran in his first term. North pointed out that even then, Trump had increased the military budget and cancelled the nuclear agreement with Iran. At the same time, there was widespread rejection of the “forever wars” of the US, which exerted a certain pressure. But Trump had never pursued any kind of pacifist policy. Regardless of the tactical differences between Republicans and Democrats, the fundamental goal of American imperialism was to offset the economic decline of the United States through the use of military force, North said.

“What we are witnessing is an attempt to restore the world as it was before the great revolutions of the 20th century,” said North. “The betrayals of Stalinism, social democracy, the complete capitulation of so-called labor organizations to imperialism has cleared the path for the policies we’re now seeing.”

He further explained: “The workers are now finding out once again, why there was a mass socialist movement in the first half of the 20th century, and why they must have one.” He confronted the audience directly with the decisive question: “What are you going to do? Our movement can provide strategy. We can provide analysis. But the determination to fight must come from the masses themselves, and it must come from those who understand.”

The significance of a revolutionary party arose precisely from the necessity to bring thinking into line with objective reality, North said. “The objective conditions provide the impulse for social revolution. But there has to be within that movement a substantial layer of the working class that understands the famous question: What is to be done?”

Another participant expressed an extremely pessimistic attitude in view of the rising votes for right-wing parties among workers. He doubted that the working class could really make a revolution.

In his reply, David North explained that the optimism of the revolutionary movement was based on the understanding of the contradictions in capitalism, which would lead to struggles. “I think that a profoundly revolutionary situation is developing within the United States,” he said, stressing that the US emerged from the American Revolution, which marks its 250th anniversary this year and lives on in the consciousness of the masses. Millions of people had taken part in demonstrations against Trump.

“The problem is not a lack of anger, not a lack of opposition, but a lack of perspective,” he explained. There were many reasons for this: decades of anti-communist propaganda, the cowardice of academics, the suppression of the class struggle, the trade union bureaucracies. But a feeling of resistance was emerging.

“Our challenge is to prepare a cadre, a party of sufficient strength, not necessarily at first a mass party. But when masses are driven into struggle, and they are looking for an orientation, those who can provide an analysis, the party that can explain events, acquires immense authority and power.” Therefore, the task now was to develop political understanding and orientation within the working class.

## Book presentation in Nuremberg

A lively discussion also emerged at the event at the Friedrich-

Alexander University Erlangen-Nuremberg on March 27, which was also well attended with about 80 participants, including many students, and took place on the eve of the large “No Kings” protests in the US.

In his lecture, North went into greater detail about the Nuremberg trials of the Nazi leaders in 1945-1946 and demonstrated that the US war on Iran was a “crime against peace.” Those responsible, above all Trump and his ministers, must be put on trial as criminals. In a video in front of the Palace of Justice, where the Nuremberg trials took place, he drew a direct parallel to today’s war of aggression.

The subsequent discussion revolved primarily around a correct assessment of the Iran war, the causes of Trump’s votes from the ranks of workers, Latinos and black people, and the question of why building a Marxist party in America, Germany and worldwide today, based on the historical lessons of the 20th century, is so urgent.

The pro-imperialist stance of the supposedly “democratic” opposition of exiled Iranians was epitomised by a student from Iran, who revealed himself to be an ardent supporter of the Shah’s son Reza Pahlavi. He repeated the atrocity propaganda of the Trump administration to justify the war, speaking first of 30,000 killed Iranian demonstrators, then even of over 100,000, although there is hardly any verifiable information regarding these figures. Then he bluntly claimed: “All Iranians 100 percent support this war and have loudly said: Trump, we need help!”

North emphasised in his reply that the Trotskyist movement is a political opponent of the Iranian regime and opposes the repression of the protests. But he made clear that Iran, historically speaking, is an oppressed nation. For decades, imperialism had tried to subjugate this country to the geopolitical interests of the US. The demonstrations against the Iranian regime were dominated by bourgeois layers, align themselves behind Pahlavi’s reactionary programme, and receive support from the American and European bourgeoisie.

In a strong speech, another student of Iranian origin rebuked the pro-imperialist Pahlavi supporter. He drew particular attention to the girls’ school that was bombed by the US right at the beginning of the war: “While the parents of the children are suffering there, you exiled Iranians take to the streets here, dance, celebrate, shout the name of Trump, who bears full responsibility for the over 160 children who were brutally murdered.”

At the close of the discussion, North returned once again to the traditions of the American Revolution and quoted the Declaration of Independence, which gives the American population the right to alter or to abolish a government if it no longer represents the people. He appealed to all the students and workers present to assimilate the lessons of history, to read Marxist literature and thus to prepare themselves for the coming struggles of the working class.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**