

## REPORT

# European Conference « Against War ! Against Social War ! »

Visioconference 8 July 2023  
Speeches and messages

**T**he call for this conference comes from nine German activists from various backgrounds who all demonstrated against the war on February, 25th along with Sahra Wagenknecht, at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. They invite participants "to discuss our experiences, to discuss how to network at European level and decide which other actions can be encouraged, one of which is a European Peace Congress that could be held in the fall of 2023 in Berlin."

The pressure from governments and NATO to obtain that all political parties vote for the war and the sending of weapons is enormous. The pressure is equally strong for trade unions to renounce demands and side with war. Resistance is emerging and developing around the world against that.

On July, 8th labour activists and organizations who want to fight warmongering governments will gather on the basis of the following claims :

- Ceasefire and negotiations now!
- Down with weapon deliveries!
- Down with weapon and war budgets!
- Lift sanctions now!
- Neither NATO nor Putin!  
Down with the war!
- Down with social war!
- Down with hundreds of billions' worth war budgets!
- Yes to spending billions on hospitals, schools and local authorities' budgets!
- Yes to the defence of our purchasing power and the general capping of prices!

**8 July 2023 European Conference**

**Against war, against social war**

**8. Juli 2023 Europäische Konferenz**

**Gegen den Krieg, gegen den sozialen Krieg**

**8 juillet 2023 Conférence européenne**

**Contre la guerre, contre la guerre sociale**

**8 de julio de 2023 Conferencia Europea**

**Contra la guerra, contra la guerra social**

The conference brought together 15 European countries. Participants and auditors, followed the speeches, reading of messages and greetings by video messages of Sahra Wagenknecht, by Sevim Dagdelen, a Serbian anarcho-syndicalist activist and an Icelandic anti-war fighter from close to 100 connection points during 4 hours. The meeting was chaired from Berlin by Carla Boule, for the magazine Soziale Politik und Demokratie (SoPoDe) (Social policy and democracy), Marcus Staiger, of the association Heating, Bread and Peace; Evelin Genzel, also of Heating, Bread and Peace and a member of Aufstehen and Andreas Kutsche, of the Peace Alliance, Brandenburg Group, and a member of trade union Ver.di.

# « The governments' warmongering and socially destructive policies are meeting with growing rejection »

Speech by **Gotthard Krupp (member of SoPode)** on behalf of the 9 initiators of the Conference to open the discussion

Dear colleagues,  
Carla has underlined the great resonance of our initiative for a European conference "against war – against social war" in 15 European countries, for today's European videoconference, as well as for a live conference in Winter or early 2024.

I would like to thank all those who have supported this conference with their contributions and messages of support. The ideas you have developed have been incorporated into my following introduction.

They are an expression of the growing resistance movement of workers and peoples while NATO and the governments in Europe, under the US government's command, are pushing for a new level of escalation of war in Europe.

The NATO summit in Vilnius is entirely devoted to fuelling the war against Russia through an ever more massive military re-arming of Ukraine.

For example, the German government's plan under Scholz to further strengthen NATO's eastern flank provides for the permanent stationing of a battle-force unit of 4,000 to 5,000 soldiers in Lithuania.

Our Spanish colleagues are right to warn: "the increase in military spending by all European governments is brutal".

More and more massive sums, running into billions, are being poured into financing arms deliveries to Ukraine and to the Zelensky's system of domination. It has to be said: they are going to a clan of oligarchs who are amassing gigantic private fortunes based on the plundering of the people, and whose management has been entrusted to the BlackRock financial markets group.

And Putin? He is not defending the people, but is also the head of an oligarchy that exploits mining resources and raw materials for their own private enrichment.

It is not the war of the Ukrainian, Russian or any other peoples. It is the warmongering governments under American command that are dragging all the European countries further and further into this war.

The majority of the population says no to the extension of the war. They are speaking out against the governments that are threatening the planet with a third world war.

The demonstrators demand an immediate ceasefire!

Dear Colleagues,  
The dangerous spiral of escalation prompts



us to step up our fight against war and social war in our own countries.

On this subject, NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg said: "If they spend more on defence, there will be fewer resources for health, education and so on".

An assertion that Scholz, as he proudly announces, "makes it 100% his own".

The government's policy involves that the entire economy is subjected to the requirements of war. The German federal budget has to convert into a war budget. Finance Minister Lindner has called on all ministries to cut their spending – with the exception of the War Ministry.

As a result of the economic war that Biden has unleashed against Europe and its leading industrial power, Germany, notably with the policy of sanctions against Russia, Germany has been hit by a wave of de-industrialisation. Nearly one out of six German industrial companies is outsourcing its production and jobs abroad because they cannot afford the high cost of energy.

Inflation and rising prices – among other consequences of the sanctions policy – are requiring the reinforcement of the austerity policy against the welfare state. Wage cuts are being decreed, over 1,000 hospitals are to be closed, and there are clear cuts in schools and local authorities... Child poverty is spreading...

Their policy has provoked resistance, mass demonstrations against the war "for an armistice, negotiations and the end of the sanctions policy", and the biggest strikes in the public services... Demonstrations and struggles in hospitals, schools...

I only mention Germany here as an example of the close link between the military war and the social war against the people.

You all know the images of the mass uprisings against Macron's pension reform in France and now of the youth who are being robbed of their education and future. One person out of six does not have enough to eat, as our French colleagues report.

In Romania, the comrade reports that in response to the inflation caused by the war, major protest movements have shaken the country in the sectors of health, education and railways.

Comrades of Denmark write that their country "is slowly but surely being transformed from a so-called welfare state into a military warfare state".

That, dear colleagues and comrades, is our common experience:

Almost all the parties, even those claiming to represent the interests of the labour movement, are submitting to this war policy. Struggles, demonstrations and growing resistance movements have come up against them.

The governments' warmongering and socially destructive policies are meeting with growing rejection. The anger of the social majority is expressed at the electoral level by protest votes in favour of far-right parties, such as the AfD in Germany, which is now outpacing the SPD in the polls with almost 20% (July 3rd). Because this party is the only one to speak out – demagogically – against the war and arms deliveries to Ukraine, against the established parties.

You probably all know the decision of the steering committee of the Die Linke party to ask Sahra Wagenknecht to resign her seat in the Bundestag.

The decision by the left-wing party leadership is designed to stifle this voice against war. We say: it is not Sahra Wagenknecht or any other MP who are raising their voice against war, who are violating their MP mandate – no, they are fulfilling their mandate, because they are giving voice to the will of the majority of the population: against war, against arms supplies and sanctions.

By referring to the fact that, in a "period of upheaval", far-right parties have also grown in strength in other countries, Scholz is trying to hide the fact that it is his government's policy that is now allowing the AfD, which is fundamentally far-right, to emerge in the East Germany Länder as the strongest force of protest against the government's policy.

Dear colleagues, dear comrades, I thank you, Neither Putin – nor NATO!

We have all experienced in our respective countries that a solution can only be forged through the resistance of workers and peoples against the warmongering and socially destructive policies of each government.

To recall Karl Liebknecht's words: "The main enemy (the imperialist war party) is in our own country!" (May 1915) Or to quote Rosa Luxemburg, as colleagues in France have reminded us: "At this time of the madness of armaments and orgies of war, it is only the determined fighting position of the working masses, their capacity and readiness for powerful mass action, that can still (...) preserve world peace" (30 April 1913).

In a situation where governments want to push peoples and workers ever further into military escalation, it is of the utmost urgency

that the forces of resistance share their experiences and discuss the means to foster their liaison at European level, the means by which they can organise themselves into a network at European level, as proposed on several occasions during the preparation of this conference;

How can the resistance movement organise itself as a counterweight to the governments in office? This is the subject of our discussion today.

How can we help the workers, the peoples, to mobilise for action against the war and against the social war waged by their govern-

ments in every country? In this sense, shouldn't we set ourselves the objective of creating a European liaison committee "against war – against social war"?



## ■ Support message by **Kathrin Otte**, on behalf of the coordination committee "What to do?"

**O**ur warmest greetings to all the participants of this conference! The fact that we are meeting here at European level to inform each other about the resistance movements that are developing against the military, social and economic war in our countries is a very important step. For us, the growing loss of position by the Western imperialist states, in the face of the political and economic power of the countries of the South, is a decisive factor in the war being waged in Ukraine, which is used as a proxy war to attack China.

Our position can only be expressed through the coherence of our demand for "Negotiations now!", in association with the initiatives taken by the countries of the South.

The "What to do?" network is a network that has been reconstituted since 2022 and brings together socialist forces, forces that have been ousted from the DIE LINKE party. All our various groups in the Länder – most of them being Karl-Liebknecht circles, in reference to the latter's resistance to the war credits in 1914 – were initially formed as an internal opposition to the party. The "What to do?" coordination circle is now composed of representatives of the majority of the Länder. Since the last party congress in 2022, we have committed ourselves to oppose the disastrous direction taken by the party's leadership towards a co-management of the government's imperialist war policy.

In our appeal to the Congress of May 6th,

we called on the party leadership to do the following: "The party's steering committee has not yet taken a clear stand against the economic war and sanctions, and it is only now that it is taking a stand against the supply of new weapons to Ukraine". The Party leadership refused to join the largest and most important demonstration against the war organised by Sahra Wagenknecht and Alice Schwarzer, which brought together 30-40,000 citizens at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin on last February 25th, and even denigrated this demonstration. This has taught us unequivocally that we need to find our own ways to build a genuine socialist policy at grassroots level.

Our federal government is dragging the people of our country into a spiral of war-mongering and socio-political madness. Even the backbone of our current prosperity is not being spared. Medium-sized industry is being maintained, in order to continue the mad fight, already lost in advance and leading to self-destruction, all in order to maintain American hegemony over the world. The recession will soon hit our export-oriented country hard, but the long-term consequences are not even considered, nor the fact that the German recession is already having a negative impact on European countries.

In all this warlike hysteria, it is precisely the country responsible for two terrible world wars which is once again being given a "leadership role". This has recently been reflected in the large-scale "Air-Defender 2023" manoeuvre, as well as in the EU's military plans. Violating the founding

agreement between NATO and Russia and deploying 4,000 German soldiers in Lithuania on a long-term basis does not pose a problem for the German government, just to mention a few examples.

The perpetuation and extension of the war are intended by the American government and its accomplices in Europe, against Russia, against China, in particular against the countries of the South that are breaking away from American financial imperialism. The capitalist crisis, which has worsened considerably in recent years, is being resolved by war. This trend leaves no room for financing neither our welfare

**"In all this warlike hysteria, it is precisely the country responsible for two terrible world wars which is once again being given a 'leadership role'"**

state nor decent wages. Only one thing is really clear: the class struggle inherent in all policies bursts into the open. Thus new political tasks and new possibilities fall to us, which, after decades of absence, raise the central question of the political organisation of the masses. "We demand that the basic interests of the population be put at the centre of a left-wing policy through the slogan "Heat, bread and peace". We need a political force to defend democratic freedoms in our country, to ensure the proper functioning of our welfare state and to fight for peace". ("What to do", newsletter 2)

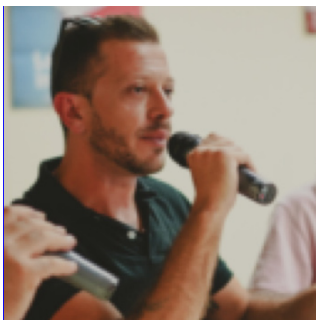
We are a network under construction, and as such we are convinced that we can join many others on this path who share similar ideas to our democratic, left-wing, socialist or communist position, in order to develop a European network if possible. Let's build a counterweight from the bottom up, so that we can once again avoid a "well-known spectre in Europe"!







Members of the podium at the Berlin conference.



I bring you the greetings of the Port of Genoa and I thank the organisers for this initiative, which is very important for us. It is important to create this international network at European level to counter this logic of war and of all wars. The war in Ukraine has highlighted what wars are today in the world: the imperialist war striking down all populations, and also the social war we are witnessing today, which, as said in the introduction, is plundering resources. It is a war against the lowest social classes.

We have had an experience of struggle, we did not want to be complicit in this spiral of war, whether at university level, at

## ■ Speech of **Jose Nivoi**, docker, Unione Sindacale di Base (USB), Independent Committee of Port Workers of Genoa (Italy)

company level with the construction of weapons, or at port level with the delivery of weapons, which are stored there before being shipped to different countries. When we saw this spiral of war, we decided to launch a series of blockades. From 2019 to now, we have set up 6 blockades in the ports. It concerned the war in Yemen, Syria and Gaza.

We also tried to channel this opposition into a demonstration on February 25th 2023 in Genoa, Italy, in relation to the war in Ukraine but also to other wars, a symbolic opposition, a mobilisation linked to Law 85, an Italian law that prohibits the shipment of arms from Italy. We recalled the existence of this law. The government's response was to send us 70 police officers who called us a criminal organisation. This demonstration was a

**"From 2019 to now, we have set up 6 blockades in the ports. It concerned the war in Yemen, Syria and Gaza."**

wake-up call to create a very important popular imprint against the war. We had no political flag, it was building a mobilisation in the streets, with very clear slogans against the war. It was a big demonstration, with 10,000 people, and we succeeded in marching into the port of Genoa during the demonstration, the very port where the ships loading the weapons were. We thus showed that the industrial areas of the port were economically involved in the war.

That's why it's important to build anti-war committees in Italy too, and to move from theory to practice, that is to blockade and to organise demonstrations. I agree with the proposal made at the beginning of the conference to create this network, this international committee against the war. Thank you all. ■





## ■ Speech of **Pablo García Cano**, member of the campaign coordination for a ceasefire and an end to the war in Ukraine (Spanish State)

**H**ello, good afternoon, I am Pablo García Cano from Madrid, I am going to speak on behalf of the coordinating team of the campaign that is being developed in the Spanish state in favor of an immediate ceasefire, a stop to the war in Ukraine.

I am a trade unionist of Comisiones Obreras (CCOO) Industry, member of its federal council and secretary of the works council of the John Deere agricultural machinery factory in Getafe, which has more than 1,100 workers.

In the Spanish state, around 20 events have been held so far in different cities of Madrid, Castilla la Mancha, Andalusia, Catalonia, the Basque Country and Valencia, with a total attendance of more than 1,500 attendees, mostly various activists, union leaders, politicians, or from different social entities with a great plurality. Thousands of signatures have also been collected in the call for an immediate ceasefire, a stop to the war in Ukraine. We started this campaign for a cease-fire to the war from the first moments of 2022.

First of all, I would like to tell you that in my factory on May 5 we had the opportunity to receive the visit of the president of the government, Pedro Sánchez, who came to see a dual training experience. Several members of the works council were able to welcome him and exchange a few words with him. We quickly put two things to him. To support the possibility of maintaining and improving the partial retirement model with a relief contract in the manufacturing industry. This allows a worker with 33 years of contributions to retire at the age of 61 without losing purchasing power in his pension and that in exchange a full-time relief worker is incorporated under the same conditions. Instead of having to wait for the general retirement age, which this year is 66 years and 4 months. This is important for us, we included it in the agreement and now the company does not want to apply it.

Secondly, we told Pedro Sanchez that he should support and follow the orientation for peace that the president of Brazil Lula da Silva, a few days before, had said in Lisbon and in Madrid. We told the Spanish Prime Minister that our country should also listen to and defend these words of Lula for advocating an immediate ceasefire to the war in Ukraine, which is also affecting us so much throughout Europe on a social and economic

level. Sanchez told us that indeed he values and appreciates very much the words and efforts of President Lula for peace and a ceasefire in Ukraine, but that he had also told Lula very clearly that we must also start from the fact that here there is a country that has been, that is being attacked and another country that is the aggressor, the one that has caused the invasion, millions of refugees and destruction.

Well, that is what Sánchez told us in a very brief interview. We wanted to take

advantage of the occasion to bring up two concrete issues that concern us workers and that the occasion was not just a simple greeting, smiles and handshakes for photos. At this moment, the Spanish political news is focused on the early call for general elections for July 23rd by Pedro Sanchez after the electoral defeat in the regional and local elections of May 28th. Undoubtedly, the result will be very close and is not decided in advance. Although at the beginning the media and the polls predicted a clear victory of the right wing, there is now a certain recovery of the left wing. We will see what happens.

But if something strikes us is that in the pre-campaign and now in the election campaign it is really very difficult to follow a debate on concrete proposals. There is much insistence on talking about the possible pacts and electoral calculations of each bloc, rather than on a real exchange of proposals. Especially what we appreciate and what calls our attention the most is an absolute silence on the war in Ukraine and on everything related to the Spanish involvement in it.

No party speaks, inquires, questions or proposes anything about the war. No force explains, nor criticizes anything about the shipment that the Ministry of Defense is making of weapons and equipment to Ukraine, or about the Spanish deployment of 1500 soldiers, fighter planes, tanks, warships and missile systems in the NATO encirclement of Russia both in the Baltic and in the Black Sea. The government has recently decided to expand the utilization and use of American bases in Spain, and Sanchez was a solid supporter of Biden at the last NATO summit with the commitment.

All this without being presented, discussed or approved in Parliament. In the same way that the government has committed to double military defense spending and go from 1% to 2% of GDP, which will mean between now and 2029 to increase defense

spending by 15 billion euros per year. It seems incredible that committing close to 100,000 million euros of public money in 6 years does not deserve any discussion or debate with light and stenographers and it

is disturbing to suppose where this money will come from, from which social items they will want to cut or how the whole society will be held responsible if this expense means increasing the debt.

Our campaign is reaching hundreds of militants and union, political and social leaders, who participate in

public events, thousands of people are signing in favor of an immediate ceasefire to the war.

We consider that, in spite of the information blockade, and the political blockade by which tacitly it seems that there is an agreement not to debate or criticize the war policy, the increase in defense spending and the involvement of Spain in the maneuvers and the NATO encirclement against Russia, in spite of everything, we consider that precisely the great economic powers and the great parties have to do this because they know that the immense majority of the working population in our country is against the war. Against the military war and also against the social war that is being waged here in the form of cuts, inflation and attacks suffered mainly by the workers.

Our campaign connects perfectly and is understood and accepted by broad layers of society. Our country stood up and mobilized 20 years ago against the sending of Spanish troops to Iraq by the Aznar government in support of the Bush and Blair governments. Our country has always fought against war and 36 years ago mobilized against the entry of Spain into NATO. The peoples have not yet said their last word. The social resistance and mobilization against the war we are sure that it will grow in our country and in all Europe, our coordinated activity in each country will be decisive for this to be so.

We are grateful to be able to participate in this anti-war conference and we encourage that we extend in all countries the initiatives and activities for the ceasefire, for the No to war, against the sending of arms to Ukraine, against the sending of troops, planes, tanks and ships to the encirclement of Russia and to demand to all our governments, regardless of their political color, that military expenditures should be allocated to social items and that we do not want to increase expenditures for war.



## ■ Message from **Harri Grünberg**, “Aufstehen” (Stand Up) movement (Germany)

**D**ear friends and comrades, we, the “Aufstehen” (Stand Up) movement – activist association, wish you every success for your European conference against war and social war. For an immediate ceasefire. Neither Putin nor NATO are an alternative for us! Our movement is extra-parliamentary. It was born in 2018 with the decisive support of Sahra Wagenknecht and Oskar Lafontaine. Today, we still feel close to them and support their political views.

This cruel war in Ukraine has been going on for over a year. Russia has attacked Ukraine and must be clearly named and blamed as the aggressor. If we want to help bring the war to an end as quickly as possible through negotiation, we must also talk about the West’s responsibility, the background and the wider geopolitical context. The refusal to recognise Russia’s security interests exacerbated the situation that led to the outbreak of war.

The imperialist ambitions of the united West are obvious. The ruling bureaucracy in Russia and the new capitalists who emerged during and after the implosion of the Soviet Union, however, represent neither the interests of the Russian working class nor those of the Russian people. Even the defence of the nationalised sector of industry and the extraction of raw materials only serves to continue lining their pockets at the expense of the people. That’s why we say no to Putin and no to NATO.

This war is currently fully escalating. It is now a slaughter for Ukrainian and Russian soldiers, who are dying en masse. While Ukraine is failing in its offensive and needlessly sending its soldiers to their deaths, just as thousands of young Russian men are dying every day, the NATO alliance is fuelling the war more and more. In response to NATO’s escalation to bring Russia to its knees, Russia has deployed tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus and is considering using tactical nuclear weapons. We are heading for a high-risk situation.

Instead of negotiating and agreeing on an immediate ceasefire, NATO is betting on the continuation and escalation of a senseless war. The peace efforts of Brazil, China, Indonesia and most recently of the African countries have been brutally rejected by

Ukrainian President Zelensky and NATO. The fact that the war could degenerate into a nuclear war that would destroy humanity leaves Western strategists completely cold. To defeat Russia militarily, they are risking the survival of humanity.

The governments in Paris and Berlin are acting as loyal vassals of the United States. With their warmongering policy, they are endangering the very existence of our countries and of Europe as a whole. This warlike madness must be brought to an immediate halt, in the form of an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and the opening of peace negotiations that take account of the security interests of Ukraine and Russia. The opportunist leaderships of social democracy and certain parties claiming to be on the left in Europe reject this formula and are thus perpetuating the daily deaths of civilians and soldiers.

**“We cannot defend social achievements without linking this issue to that of war. There is no social state in wartime.”**

The crisis of capitalism that is already looming is aggravated by the war, thus justifying the general attack on the achievements of the working class in Europe, achievements won through decades of struggle. Throughout Europe, the war is worsening the living conditions of the working class and

ordinary people. Social services are giving way to war spending. The health system is being dismantled, pensioners are becoming poorer, the education of the working classes is deteriorating and inflation, also due to the unleashing of the war, is eating away at wages. The real wages of Europe’s working classes are plummeting. The population is bearing the brunt of inflation and high food and energy prices. The unions are hardly in a position to halt the fall in real wages. At the same time, the State’s coffers are emptying and it is in the social sphere that savings are being made. There is only enough money to spend on armaments, while education, health and pensions are being cut to the bone. We cannot defend social achievements without linking this issue to that of war. There is no social state in wartime.

That’s why we also need to put an end to the economic war against Russia. It is damaging European industry and therefore the working class in Europe. In their allegiance to the United States, the EU, Germany and France have imposed sanctions that are costing the citizens of these countries dearly. We are already witnessing a wave of deindustrialisation and destruction of industrial capacity. The economic war is also primarily benefiting the United States. US President Biden is pursuing a radical “America first” policy and is luring

European industry to the United States, where energy is cheaper.

We need a vast movement throughout Europe that says: heating, bread and peace are inseparable. If we want affordable bread and heating, we have to end the war. That’s why we need to apply pressure from below. In terms of militancy and commitment, we need to follow the example of the French workers who scared Macron. The whole of Europe needs a French-style situation.

But to stop the madness of war, we also need diplomacy, negotiations for a ceasefire leading to peace negotiations leading to a new European security architecture including Russia. We must use street pressure to force governments to negotiate. But for that, we also need trade unions that say no to war and social war in our countries. We need many concrete actions of resistance, like the dockers in Italy who refused to load arms shipments.

Beyond the prospect of peace, we need to fight for a social and peaceful Europe. But that is not possible with this EU. This EU is neoliberal and imperialist. That’s why we need a different conception of European unity, one in which it is the people who decide, not the capitalists and their monopolies. This EU prepares and leads all the offensives against the working classes in our countries. It is doing so on the basis of the Lisbon and Maastricht treaties. This is why we say that these treaties must be done away with.

The struggle of the French working class and ordinary people in recent weeks against Macron’s pension reform, which has set millions of people in motion, is a source of inspiration for the whole of Europe, for us in Germany too.

The federal government is currently under pressure from the right, in the absence of an effective left-wing opposition. The majority of those who turn to the right against government policy do so in protest, not because they support the right-wing agenda. The right-wing agenda is neoliberal and reactionary.

On the 26th of February 2023, we organised a major anti-war demonstration in Berlin under the slogan “Uprising for Peace”. The response was overwhelming. In a very short space of time, we managed to mobilise 50,000 people. The “Manifesto for Peace”, initiated by Sahra Wagenknecht and Alice Schwarzer and signed to date by more than 850,000 people, has given a voice and a media presence to the large section of the population, so far ignored by the media, which is in favour of more diplomacy and opposed to arms deliveries. The manifesto reflects a broad alliance that extends as far as the bourgeoisie. The heart of the “Manifesto for Peace” is: “Stop the war! – Diplo-

macy and negotiations!" It opposes the delivery of ever more and ever heavier weapons.

The German mainstream media and certain leaders of the SPD, the Greens and the FDP have lashed out violently against the peace rally. But the peace movement must go one step further, it must also reach out to the trade unions and make it clear that the social question and the question of peace are inseparable.

In Germany, we had a major strike in the public sector and, through the bourgeois media, the strikers were told that they were already earning too much anyway and that their demands to compensate for inflation were disproportionate. The workers, the working classes of our country, were told that, given the costs of the war, their wage demands to maintain purchasing power could not be met. The strikers have nevertheless achieved significant successes,

although they have not been able to fully compensate for the loss of real wages. Other social conflicts, for example in the railways, are in the pipeline.

Let's fight throughout Europe against war and social war in every country.

For an immediate ceasefire, for the defence of social gains.

We invite you to a peace conference in Berlin.

■



## ■ Speech of **Maurizio Coppola**, Potere al Popolo (Italy)

**A**ll political action starts with an analysis of the reality around us. So we first need to understand the roots of this war, which I identify as a profound crisis of the dominant capitalist system, expressed on multiple levels:

First, an economic crisis affecting the whole world. The subprime crisis in 2008, the debt crisis from 2011 onwards and the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 have intensified the centralisation of capital in the hands of a few holding companies and oligarchs (I am not just referring to the Russian oligarchs, but also and above all to those in the United States, where 80% of the country's total wealth belongs to a few families). The neoliberal globalisation model is in deep crisis. Secondly, a geopolitical crisis causing major instabilities. Although US imperialism in all its forms (financial, military and cultural) remains hegemonic, it is beginning, because of the crisis in its model of neoliberal globalisation, to show cracks from which new

**"Meloni's warmongering policy abroad, in the conflict in Ukraine, is matched by a warmongering policy at social level, against the working class and the Italian people."**

forces with global ambitions are emerging, notably China and, to a lesser extent, Russia. Russia's invasion of Ukraine must therefore be seen as an attempt, on one hand, to insert itself into a breach caused by the crisis of the globalised economic model, but on the other hand, also as Putin's ambition for imperial expansion (cf. his speeches on the return to the Czarist model of Russia).

Thirdly, a civilisational and cultural crisis. The rise of ultra-conservative and (neo-)fascist forces throughout the world (from Trump to Bolsonaro, from Orban to Erdogan, from Modi to Meloni etc.) is the expression of a crisis of neoliberal subjectivity and of the incapacity to assert a progressive alternative. This is reflected precisely in the victory of the right and the ultra-right in nearly all countries in Europe, in the discriminatory and classist policies (cf. for example the "double standard" applied in migration policies), etc.

In this general context, Giorgia Meloni's Italian government represents an exemplary model of the new dominant politics of our time, in particular the war economy. From her first day in office as the country's new Prime Minister, G. Meloni has confirmed the continuity of her policy of commitment to the transatlantic and European pacts and to the United States' service (economic and financial sanctions, militarisation of the conflict in Ukraine, availability of Italian and NATO military bases in Italy for war opera-

tions, increase of public spending for the army, etc.), and - at the same time - her policy against the lower classes: blocking the implementation of a legal minimum wage, counter-reform of the social assistance system, lack of industrial planning, repressive measures against migrants, refugees and other "minorities". Her warmongering policy abroad, in the conflict in Ukraine, is matched by a warmongering policy at social level, against the working class and the Italian people.

We are convinced that there is no other option today than to join the political and social field for peace. But we are also aware of the inevitable link between the war abroad and the social war against workers in every country. That's why we can't be satisfied with demanding abstract peace, we have to fill this term with socialist content. Being in favour of peace means today supporting any attempt to negotiate, whether it be the proposal of Xi Jinping's China, of the Pope or of the Brazilian President Lula. Being in favour of peace means fighting for social justice by supporting workers' struggles against redundancies, for the defence of their pension systems, for the improvement of their living and working conditions. It means supporting the youth movement that is filling the streets around the world against the destruction of the planet and for climate justice. And above all it means connecting and converging these struggles in a broad social movement capable of building an alternative model to the war economy. United we are everything, divided we are nothing!

■





Demonstration against war and high living costs, February 25, 2023, Genoa, Italy.

## ■ Speech of **Ludo de Brabander**, the spokesperson of the Belgian peace organisation Vrede, publicist (Belgium)

**E**urope, the whole world, is going through a difficult period. The seemingly endless war in Ukraine has a huge impact on society, in Ukraine, in Russia, throughout Europe and worldwide. Militarism is on the rise. Energy and food prices have been increasing. Purchasing power is falling and poverty is increasing. But many extra billions are going to weapons. The US is very open about the purpose of massive arms deliveries to Ukraine. It is not so much about ending the war quickly, but about weakening Russia.

As a peace movement, our actions have denounced and condemned Russian aggression against Ukraine. In Russia, conservative, nationalistic and militaristic forces are in power. Forces that symbolize just about everything the peace movement fights against. We say unequivocally to those responsible in Moscow: stop the war machine!

The peace movement works for disarmament, demilitarization, peaceful coexistence and human security. That is also why we refuse to go along with a black-and-white vision of a complex reality. This is not a war of good against evil. In Ukraine in 2014, a nationalist conflict degenerated into an open war, with superpowers fighting

a second-level battle for hegemony with economic interests at stake, control over access to markets, raw materials, supply lines and geopolitical power. That was the stakes in World War I; that is also the stakes today.

That is why the peace movement must continue to fight hard against the driving forces behind war, behind all wars. More than ever, the military industrial complex is exploiting war to dramatically militarize Europe. This is far from being about merely building a military defence. What is at play is that a Western economic bloc is positioning and preparing for a long battle with what NATO calls “systemic rivals”.

Meanwhile Ukraine’s 1-month-old offensive against Russian occupation forces is, according to senior Western officials, “not meeting expectations on any front”. In recent weeks, the Ukrainian army captured a few villages and around 130 km<sup>2</sup> of territory over a frontline of as much as 2,500 km. The Russian defences do not appear to be easily breached due to the

massive presence of landmines, well entrenched troops and Russian air superiority. In short, it should not be said too loudly, but the long-announced Ukrainian offensive may well end in failure. A failure

does not fit the playbook because it could affect Western readiness for massive military support. That things are not going as desired can also be concluded from a statement by Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: “It’s going to be very long, and it’s going to be very, very bloody. And no one should have any illusions about any of that”.

The mentality as outlined by Milley is reminiscent of World War I: a few miles of territorial gain, is worth thousands of lives. Politicians and generals write the script, the soldiers in the trenches provide the cannon fodder fuelled by the illusion of a “heroic” military victory that, in reality, bogs down in a months-long stalemate.

This war cannot be won, in any of the three possible war scenarios. Either it remains a stalemate at the cost of thousands of

**“The peace movement must further convince unions and other social organizations that our interests converge and thus we must wage this struggle for peace and social justice together.”**

human lives and continuous destructions, or Russia advances with an even more disadvantageous negotiating position for Ukraine than today, or Kiev wins the war, but then we risk the deployment of nuclear weapons or the dangerous consequences of a destabilized nuclear force. None of these scenarios will lead to peace, and those same countries that now arm Ukraine to the teeth will not give in when the billions are needed to rebuild the country.

In other words, the military logic of this war does not offer attractive outcomes. The longer the war in Ukraine continues the greater the suffering and damage to the country.

Nevertheless, calls for a cease-fire and negotiations are surrounded by taboos. Proponents are accused of playing into Putin's hands. Others express scepticism that Putin does not want peace or is unreliable. There may be a ground of truth in that, but there is no alternative given the military scenarios just outlined. And there

is precedent. By the end of March 2022, under Turkish mediation, Kiev and Moscow were well advanced in concluding a framework agreement that, however, did not receive support from London and Washington, which preferred the military option.

A growing understanding that the war is hopeless could create the diplomatic space for a cease-fire and negotiations. Agreeing a lasting peace deal will take time, but time can also generate reasonableness and political will if only the weapons remain silent. The Good Friday Agreement which laid the foundation for peace in Northern Ireland came after many years of hopeless violence. There are many possible ingredients for a package deal covering all layers of the violent conflict. A future agreement should be aimed at 1. ending the Russian invasion 2. responding to the internal nationalist causes of the war that began in the Donbas in 2014 and 3. resolving geopolitical tensions between NATO/EU and Russia based on respect for mutual security interests.

The war is a great challenge to the peace movement that seems divided and unable to weigh politics. In time this will change and it will be realized that the politics of war is hopeless and bankrupt. Therefore, the peace movement must knock on the same nail each time: push for a cease-fire followed by negotiations aimed at a just, but also lasting peace. Militarization and a new arms race come at the expense of necessary environmental and social investments. Tensions between militarized blocs prevent swift action to save our planet from climate change, address unsustainable inequality and poverty, and avert the nuclear weapons threat. We need a new security system that is people-centred, inclusive and based on respect for mutual security interests, on common security.

The peace movement must further convince unions and other social organizations that our interests converge and thus we must wage this struggle for peace and social justice together. ■



## ■ Speech of **Mugurel Popescu**, président of the Hermes Trade Union Federation (Romania)

**D**We thank the organizers for the invitation and for the opportunity created to communicate and collaborate with other organizations, associations and militants interested in the fate of all mankind.

Romania is positioned in the immediate neighborhood of the conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation, being an important strategic partner of the Western military coalition. You should know that our government was changed just three weeks ago, but the government's concerns remained the same: purchasing weapons and ammunition, ensuring transit for Western military and logistical equipment to Ukraine.

More even! The government is discussing the purchase of an entire battalion of Abrams tanks, which officially declared value exceeds one billion euros. The same government wants the permanent presence of 4,000 German soldiers on the territory of the country, a request categorically refused by Germany. The amount destined for military conflicts, destruction and loss of human lives represents priorities for a government facing several internal, economic, social and political crises. The decline in purchasing power caused by higher electricity and fuel prices coupled with widespread corruption has

inevitably led to large-scale trade union movements in education, health and transport.

Unfortunately, Romanian citizens are divided into two parts and are declared sympathizers of either Ukraine or the Russian Federation. The words Peace and Truce (ceasefire) they are associated with so-called "Putinists", supporters of the Kremlin. These are troubled times in which reason and solidarity between nations diminish considerably under the power of totally wrong egos, passions and mentalities.

Certainly, this conflict is widespread on a planetary scale and has extended far beyond its military meaning. We can easily see that the camps of the two initial combatants have provoked new political or military alliances, countries are preferentially positioning themselves, pursuing their own interests, to both warring parties. From this evolution of the conflict we understand that it is not just two countries that are confronted, two world imperialist structures are confronted, witnessing the outbreak of World War III: countries on all six continents are directly or indirectly engaged in this conflict, in this carnage.

The hope of stopping the destruction on the territory of Ukraine, stopping the bloodshed and establishing a truce, a precondition for establishing a lasting peace, cannot come from the rulers of any country engaged in the conflict.

**"It is not just two countries that are confronted (...). countries on all five continents are directly or indirectly engaged in this conflict, in this carnage."**

The chance to promote peace lies with non-governmental organizations, civic organizations, workers, pacifists by definition. They are the only structures whose combined force can impose pressure against the jackals of war in every country, in every government. As the scale of this war has covered the entire world, the force opposing must have the same coverage!

In Romania, a Committee for the Fight Against War has recently been established, which will aim to organize actions and activities aimed at strengthening the international solidarity of the working class, of all peoples, in order to follow

this war another era of prosperity and prosperity well-being and good neighbourliness. Our committee militates for the cessation of this war, for the definitive and irrevocable elimination of any military conflict, for the total destruction of arms and ammunition manufacturers, wherever they are.

We believe that all the people of this world can and must live in peace and understanding, beyond the egos or will of politicians who do not personally experience the horrors of war.

It is with great interest that we participate in the work of this conference to join those who are making similar efforts against military confrontations. The right to life, the first and most important human right, must take precedence in all circumstances. Long live international peace and solidarity! ■





## ■ Speech of **Pedro Soares**, Left Bloc, former Member of Parliament (Portugal)

**W**e had already witnessed the failure of a Europe that promoted solidarity, the convergence of the levels of development between countries and regions, where democratic criteria would be essential, an exemplary Europe in the defence of labour rights and in the fight against discrimination, racism and xenophobia. Today, after the Balkans war, the promise of a Europe of peace has collapsed. In reality, how could it be otherwise? What we have, alongside the war, is a Europe of Treaties that imposes a neoliberal course, attacks sovereign rights, and looks on the Mediterranean and human rights with relative disregard. A Europe dependent on the United States and NATO, with no autonomy in its geostrategic choices. Russia and Ukraine are accusing each other of trying to blow up the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station, the largest in Europe. There have already been the sabotages of the Nordstream gas pipeline and, recently, of

the Kakhovka dam. We don't know who was responsible for the explosions, but what is certain is that they did take place. And, whoever the real perpetrator may be, there is no doubt that the infrastructures are being used as war weapons, with direct consequences on the people's safety and on environment.

Is it possible to continue to regard with great indifference the dramatic danger of an attack in Zaporizhzhia, wherever it may come from, with immeasurable consequences for peoples, territories and ecological systems?

**"The only truly realistic solution to this war begins by condemning the rhetoric of military escalation."**

Everything must be done to reject the blackmail and stop the escalation which is leading to a full-scale war of conflicts between imperialist powers, that currently hegemonic one led by the United States and that of the emerging blocs, with the risk of nuclear disasters and the possible use of nuclear weapons.

The only truly realistic solution to this war begins by condemning the rhetoric of military escalation, by a stance of the international community rejecting the deadly game between the USA/EU and Russia and demanding an immediate ceasefire and the opening of negotiations for a peace plan, as advocated by Lula da Silva.

This is the struggle for peace of a left that stands in solidarity with the peoples, on an

independent line, in any institutional instance or body, aware that workers have nothing to gain from war. A fight for peace with the slogan "Putin out of Ukraine, NATO out of Europe".

Under cover of the war in Ukraine, social war is deepening within the EU. The demonstrations in several French towns against the young Nahel's murder by the police show the deep social problem spreading as Macron's liberals step up their attacks on the rights and incomes of an increasingly precarious, discriminated and forgotten population, which is expanding to the North and South of Europe.

It is essential that the left forces align themselves against this social war, in the fight against wage devaluation, in the defence of labour rights which are bound up with the demand for measures to deal with the climate and environmental emergency, and ally themselves with feminist, LGBTQIA+ and anti-racist rights, by integrating the fight for peace and against the military escalation advocated by the Euro-Atlantic axis into social mobilisations. At all these levels, elements of disobedience to the treaty-based EU and of social confrontation with the neoliberal elite are emerging. They are an essential political element of resistance, of the fight against the far right and populism, of the construction of a political and social alternative.



## ■ Speech of **Marcus Staiger**, animator of the Berlin grouping for heat, bread and peace

**I**'ve organized several major demonstrations on the issue of Heating, Bread and Peace and, more recently, against Air Defender23, the largest NATO air manoeuvre since its creation. These demonstrations only gathered few people, which proves that the peace movement is experiencing a crisis, while today more than ever, a powerful peace movement would be important. For the world capitalist system is in crisis and we witness it every day. We see this from the fact that relations are increasingly strained and that more and more politicians think that the current problems can only be solved by violence. War and militarization are beco-

ming increasingly popular, whether at international, national levels or even Europe's external borders.

The possibility of direct armed conflicts developing against Russia and China is increasingly likely and the media are already preparing for it as we speak. Militarization within the country, with ever more police and repression against the population, continues to grow, as we saw during the recent events in France.

Militarisation at Europe's external borders is re-escalating. Migrants are deliberately left to drown. Dictatorships are paid to keep refugees away from Europe. Huge prisons are to be built on Europe's external borders where the poorest of the poor will be held back. It is the same on a political

level. All we hear of is war and the far right is calling for the definitive cultural war against the countries of the South, at home and abroad. We are entering extremely tumultuous times and I cannot see how the capitalist system can meet these challenges

**"We are entering extremely tumultuous times and I cannot see how the capitalist system can meet these challenges without war and without destruction, without violence and without barbarism."**

without war and without destruction, without violence and without barbarism.

We must oppose this barbarism, this violence, this militarism. In this sense, it is important that we develop ideas that go beyond the problems of our time and are able to overthrow this capitalist system.

But how can we spread these ideas? How can we address them? And this is also a question that will be asked at this conference: how to successfully reach workers, unemployed and reti-



red people, students, so that our ideas become reality.

Conferences are one thing, daily work in neighbourhoods is another. Concrete offers and concrete help are important. The tradition of workers' associations must be revived as well as that of workers' schools. Otherwise, what we witnessed during the demonstrations of young people in recent weeks in France will take place again. The

anger is great. The will to defend against these living conditions is also great. The thoughts in the minds of rioters are however confused and a revolutionary leadership is totally lacking. To set it up, we need time and trust.

And these two aspects are not developed enough. All the more reason to tackle them immediately. We have no time to waste. We must build a revolutionary organization

capable of enunciating answers. That's what we must build. Together. Internationally. In many countries. In a coordinated way. Time is of the essence. Well, then let's go.

Otherwise we risk suffering the alternative Rosa Luxemburg described in her time: socialism or barbarism.

I, for one, am for socialism.

■



Demonstration for heat, bread and peace, Berlin, October 3, 2022.

## ■ Speech of **Pierre Bonnier**, student (France)

**H**ello, my name is Pierre, I'm 21 and a student at Nanterre, France. As you know Moscow and Washington have been at war for the last 500 days.

The macabre consequence is that 300,000 soldiers have already fallen. How many of them youths among them?

It has become normal in society to assume that being young is being poor. And yet to vote a 413-billion-war budget the Parliament has no qualms. You should see the long lines in front of the food banks, people my age.

When on June, 27th 17-year-old Nahel was executed in Nanterre 650 yards from my university the news went viral on social networks. A frightful question crossed many a citizen's mind: how many Nahels had not been recorded on video? The police is what enabled Macron to stay in power against the yellow-vest protest.

And so we come to the question of who is responsible for the current situation?

Instead of responding with social measures, the government prefers to give the screw yet another turn. This takes the shape and form of unheard-of methods of repression against environmental movements. This



takes the shape and form of the regimentation of high school students. There is no money for teachers to teach how to think

but there is money for the military to teach how to obey. With institutional racism in the police force, a government that fuels

youths and the suburbs with anger and this national service for young people we can wonder what has France come to. Is the government seeking a civil confrontation?

Every year hundreds of thousands of young people are thrown out of higher education because the government limits places.

Finally, this resolve to keep young people in line is to be connected with the reaction of the French government to Nahel's death. It is the

**"There is no money for teachers to teach how to think but there is money for the military to teach how to obey."**

government and its justice system that commit state violence. To wit, 17-year-old Nahel was shot in the head by a police officer for failing to comply to his order. It is not surprising, then, that the youths of these working-class districts react so badly; not surprising, then, that such underprivileged populations should loot food stores. Young people, accused of violence? While this government knows nothing but

violence against them! Social violence! The violence of the war they are waging in Ukraine with its consequences! The violence of repression when young people refuse the fate the government dooms them with!

In a statement, 100 political and trade union organizations and associations call for the march in memory of Adama Traoré, another suburban youth who fell to police State violence in 2016.

The demonstration has been banned. A symbol of repression if any. So now we are currently demonstrating in Paris. A symbol of resistance if any. ■

## ■ Speech of **Lida Dodou**, regional councilor with Antarsia in Central Macedonia, New Left Current's International Committee (Greece)

**T**his conference contributes to bringing to the fore a notion and a slogan – against the war/ against the social war- that is crucial as the war in Ukraine has been ongoing for a year and a half, thus rendering it important to strengthen the anti-war fight. All those who saw that the end of the war would come quickly were proven wrong. And it couldn't have been any other way, since this war is an escalation of clashes that have been going on for much time now in the area that consists of regions from eastern Europe all the way to eastern Africa. These clashes are just the military manifestation of the greater competition in the economic sphere. As long as this capitalistic crisis deepens – a crisis, which was inevitable as it stands at the core of the capitalistic system, the military antagonisms will increase too.

This war is not a just war, from none of the sides involved. It is an imperialistic war and two fronts are colliding there; on the one hand, the USA and its allies, the EU being the most loyal one, while on the other

hand, Russia and its supporters, which comprise countries such as China or the BRICKS, that aim to challenge the American hegemony. On the one hand, Russia has pursued imperialistic policies, aiming to promote its bourgeoisie's interests, using the so-called "denazification" only as a pretext. On the other hand, Ukraine's involvement, being the operation theater of many imperialistic countries' military forces as well as having surrendered its land and key infrastructure to private monopolies, hardly qualifies as "a just war for freedom and independence". From both sides, the people are thrown in the battles and are being treated as dispensable, in order for the capital to gain profits and establish dominance over spheres of influence.

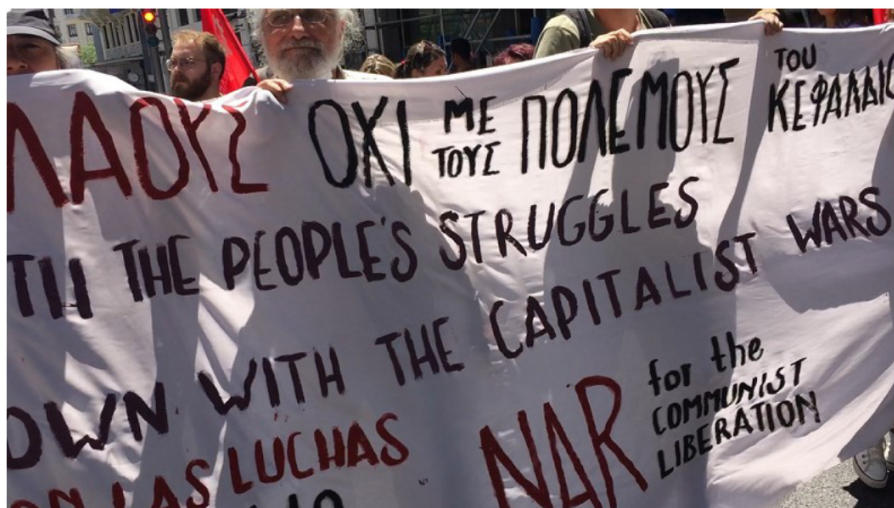
The left must say no to war, and no to the social war, which the bourgeoisies are

waging against the working classes, while taking advantage of the military war. From the Russian opposition to the French demonstrators, the governments make use of the war to suppress political opposition.

This is particularly evident in the EU whose population is heavily influenced by its governments' decision to fully surrender to the US interests, to the detriment of the people, who have suffered from the increase in the prices, the exorbitant inflation, and the constant threat of war. The Greek case is a case in point. While the government has increased the military budget to sup-

port the supply of army material to Ukraine, they have left the social needs so neglected that people are losing their lives because of it, as a person can die in the center of Athens due to lack of ambulances. Because of the government's aim, both of New Democracy and Syriza that preceded, to be perceived as the USA's closest ally in the region, Greece engages itself in imperialistic expeditions, to Saudi Arabia for example, hoping- in vain of course- to gain an advantage in a case of conflict with Turkey- a conflict which it constantly promotes and provokes and which only serves the bourgeoisie of the two countries. At the

**"As long as this capitalistic crisis deepens- a crisis, which was inevitable as it stands at the core of the capitalistic system, the military antagonisms will increase too."**



International demonstration on June 26 in Madrid for the withdrawal of Nato bases.





same time the Greek bourgeoisie, in particular the shipowners, have unforeseen profits thanks to the war. They carry Russian oil, circumventing the sanctions which only affect the working people that cannot afford to warm up their houses. The exchange of oil between Russian and Greek ships ironically takes place at the same place of the Ionian Sea where a month ago one of the most dreadful shipwrecks happened, claiming the lives of at least 500 migrants who were attempting to flee

the wars Europe has inflicted on their countries.

We must fight against all and every war. We must fight first and foremost to defeat the imperialistic formation in which our own state participates; for most of the European countries, that is NATO and the EU. The revolutionary communist forces must strive to take advantage of the ruptures in processes that war can cause because otherwise, radicalization will take the form of the far-right. It is crucial to fight for

contemporary Peace, Land, and Bread so that everyone can live with dignity. It is imperative that the revolutionary left stands against the policies that destroy our lives and doesn't choose between imperialistic poles or the system's administrators. Therefore, we must stand against the imperialist war and the social war waged by the bourgeoisie against the working classes, fighting for the anti-capitalistic overthrow of the system and the construction of a new communist society. ■



## ■ Speech of **Andreas Kutsche**, Alliance for Peace – Brandenburg, trade unionist (Germany)

**D**ear supporters of peace! We have already heard the alliance "What to do?". Our movement shares the same positions. What to do? "The Alliance for Peace" was formed last year. It was founded on the initiative of left-wingers motivated by the search for peace, trade unionists, members of the "Stand Up" movement, DKP members and disillusioned Die Linke supporters in the city of Brandenburg and its surroundings.

Our main objectives are:

- Peace now! Ceasefire now!
- Preventing global nuclear war.

Peace includes both external peace and (social) peace within a country.

Our alliance has organised several demonstrations, the most recent being a demonstration to protest against the Bundeswehr and

Air-Defender Day in June: it gathered around 1,000 participants. We also organise actions every fortnight. Bundeswehr Day served, of course, to highlight the increasing militarisation, and small children were even allowed to climb into war machines.

As a trade unionist, I am deeply concerned about how we can reverse the views of those in power who advocate war, rearmament and arms supplies. After the Second World War, our unions were among the first to launch the peace movement.

How can we ensure that this discussion takes place again today within the trade unions? That we do not just follow the

demagogic political propaganda propagated by the media?

Trade union top leaders show little or even no interest in linking social attacks to the consequences of sanctions - or, in other words, to economic warfare.

The current struggles over collective agreements have resulted in massive losses in real wages!

While people have to spend more and more to cope with everyday life, major companies are getting richer by shamelessly profiting from this crisis. But the government does nothing about it. The government imposes massive budget cuts in the social sphere in order to finance the billions spent on armaments.

Everyone should be concerned, not just us, by headlines such as:

- no money for poor children;
- cuts in family allowances;
- dismantling of the Deutsche Bahn;
- cuts in bus and train services;
- corporate profits driving down real wages and the purchasing power.

A quote from NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg, to which Chancellor Scholz even agreed, went completely unnoticed:

"If they spend more on defence, there will be less money for health, education and other important sectors". (June 19th 2023, ARD TV news).

So I expect my union to take a clear stand against this and to call for major demonstrations against war and for peace negotiations. It must no longer accept that billions are being invested in armaments. Because there will be no special funds of the same amount for hospitals, schools and nurseries.

**"As a trade unionist, I am deeply concerned about how we can reverse the views of those in power who advocate war, rearmament and arms supplies."**

I am the chairman of the works council of a university hospital. The government wants to dismantle our 1,900 hospitals through a "health reform". Because, as Stoltenberg has already said, he who spends more on armaments will have less to spend on health. At present, we can only imagine where this project is heading. But one thing is certain: it is once again the working class that will have to foot the bill, and pay the price.

That's why we need to set up groups for peace in every town and district, create Europe-wide networks, raise awareness and develop a powerful trade union fighting force!

We will overcome ! ■

**BÜNDNIS FÜR FRIEDEN**  
Brandenburg an der Havel und Umgebung

**Keine Bomber über unseren Köpfen!**  
**Kein Werben fürs Sterben!**

**PROTESTKUNDGEBUNG**  
**Samstag, 17. Juni 2023, 13:00 Uhr**  
Franz-Ziegler-Str. 28 (Alte Feuerwache)  
Brandenburg an der Havel

**Friedensaktivisten kommen zu uns u.a. aus:**  
Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern,  
Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt und Thüringen.

**Redebeiträge u.a. von:**  
Christian Leye, Dr. Alexander Neu, Reiner Braun, Gotthard Krupp

**Moderation:**  
Jutta Kausch-Henken

**Musikalische Umrahmung**  
**Linda Kraenkova und Tino Eisbrenner**

V.i.S.d.P.: Bündnis für Frieden \* Domnick Altkühnleuch \* Brandenburg an der Havel  
[www.buendnis-fuer-frieden.de](http://www.buendnis-fuer-frieden.de) E-Mail: [bundnis.frieden@t-online.org](mailto:bundnis.frieden@t-online.org)





## ■ Speech of **Jérôme Legavre**, deputy LFI-Nupes, activist POI (France)

**D**ear comrades, I want to thank every comrade participating in this conference, which seems all the more important to me, given the situation we are in today. I was just at a demonstration in Paris that the French government, the Macron government, has dared to ban. I dare to say it : once more. This demonstration is part of a situation that you know and that I will explain again in a few words.

On the last 27th of June, Nahel, a 17-year-old young man, living in one of the many working-class suburbs of Paris, was killed. I'll say it again : he was 17. He was killed by a policeman, murdered by a policeman. The killing of this 17-year-old young man immediately caused immense outrage and a true explosion of revolt and anger in the whole country. And we do understand why: there have been many Nahel, far too many. In the last few years, there have been dozens of young people who were executed, murdered by policemen in the same circumstances.

The explosion of anger, that lasted for several days in our country, and which set ablaze many cities, and not only working-class suburbs, has been suppressed in a very hard and brutal manner by this

government. Today in Paris a demonstration took place, summoned by the "Truth and Justice for Adama" committee.

Who was Adama ? He was one among the dozens and dozens of victims of State suppression and violence. In 2016, he too was murdered by the police. Since then his family has demanded truth and justice. Every year the "Truth and Justice for Adama" committee organizes a demonstration.

Everytime these demonstrations have taken place perfectly peacefully. And well, this year, while there was no risk, it was banned by the Macron government. And this ban adds to bans on dozens of other demonstrations in the last weeks and in the last month.

You do know that, a couple months ago, millions of workers, along with their unions, fought against the retirement reform of Emmanuel Macron. This retirement reform, backed by almost no one in the population, was forced through by Macron.

He suppressed demonstrations. So this ban today is just one more ban. In spite of all this, thanks to the intelligence of the organizers, we still managed to go through with the demonstration and this is something that I wanted to bring up because it is really important.

**"The only solution is foot-to-foot combat against the governments that oppress us, and here it's the Macron government. A last word : let us stick together in this fight we have just started!"**

So, that same government, which as I've said, only forces through to pass its anti-democratic and anti-working class policies, that same government passed in the National Assembly a couple weeks ago the military scheduling law. The budget in this law amounts to 413 billion euros over the next 6

years. 413 billions for the army, 413 billions for the war.

The parliamentary group I belong to, that of the France Insoumise, voted against it. This same government is still today shipping more and more weapons to Ukraine, and always seeks more weight in NATO leadership. I'll just give you an example so that you can understand how unacceptable these 413 billions are. In my district, hundreds of people are now living in basements. 413 billions for war, but for housing and public services ? Nothing.

So when Macron tells us that there is no other solution than always shipping more weapons and financing the war further and that it would be the only way to have peace: there's no trusting this government ! The only solution is foot-to-foot combat against the governments that oppress us, and here it's the Macron government. A last word: let us stick together in this fight we have just started. Thank you. ■



## ■ Speech of **Marielle Leraand** Fred og Rettferdighet (FOR)\*– Peace and Justice (Norway)

**D**ear comrades, champions of peace! As is widely recognized, the current world situation has many similarities to the situation just ahead of the World War. The problem is that the governing politicians and mainstream media outlets in Norway as in much of the West, are making comparisons with the wrong world war. The current situation is not similar to 1939. Russia of Vladimir Putin is not reminiscent of Hitler's Third Reich. And nor is Ukraine and NATO, despite the current Ukrainian regime's vile

celebration some of the worst local Nazi collaborators as national heroes.

Analogies being made to compare with WWII are part of the war propaganda, on both sides, that make for a situation very similar to that just ahead of WWI. The propaganda on the NATO/Ukrainian regime side, rightly points to Russia as an authoritarian nationalist and imperialist threat, just as the German propagandists could rightly portray the Russia of Nicholas II in a similar way. The problem is that just as the German propagandists ignored Germany's own imperialist atrocities and agenda while rallying the population against the Russian threat, so do the NATO propagandists today. The destruction of Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya and Syria, through illegal Western wars of aggression, is as much part of the reason for the current war in Ukraine,

as Germany's imperialist ambitions, topped with the genocide in Namibia, was part of the reason why the Balkan crisis in 1914 erupted into world war.

Drawing on the correct historical analogies, is a matter of life or death. As much as in 1939, there was no alternative to military struggle to stop the expansion of the genocidal regimes of the Anti-Comintern Pact, the world that started in 1914, and by which long term effects also lead to the war that started in 1937/39, should and could have been avoided by general strike action of the organized international labor movement. The failure to do so can to a large degree be attributed to the effectiveness of

\* Newly founded organization in Norway, aspiring to become a registered party ahead of the next general election in 2025.

the war propaganda on both sides, effectively making use of parts of the truth to demonization of the opposite party, while ignoring the truths that show that our side harbours equally imperialist and illegitimate ambitions. To avoid making a similar mistake, we must be always insist on including the wider picture as part of our analysis. Therefore, we must always dismiss the term “whataboutism”, widely used to try to limit the scope of analysis to what suits the current needs of our propagandists. Failure to challenge such concepts and artificial analytical limitations, have unfortunately plagued the parliamentary Left in Norway, which has for that reason fallen prey to NATO propaganda, just as the parliamentary left fell prey to their propa-

gandists in Germany as well as in France and Britain on the eve of WWI. Both the Norwegian parties that have affiliation with the European Left, the Socialist Left Party and the Red Party, have ended up with supporting Norwegian arms shipments to Ukraine. For the Socialist Left party, this is the third time the party has fallen prey to NATO propaganda, having previously also supported the illegal NATO wars on Yugoslavia in 1999 and Libya in 2011. For the Red Party, having made it across the 4 percent threshold for gaining parliamentary seats for the first time in 2021, this was also the first time fell the party chose to support NATO action. As in much of Europe, the Norwegian Green Party has also abandoned its former peace stand in favor of a cur-

rent hardline pro-NATO position. For these reasons, those of us who want to continue the political tradition of the anti-militaristic labor movement from before WWI, and other peace activists, have decided we need to set up a new political party ahead of the 2025 general election.

We build on the political tradition of the anti-Nato movement lead by Finn Gustavsen, that lead to the establishment of the Socialist Left Party. We are an independent Norwegian organization, operating within the Norwegian political context, but our name – Peace and Justice, and our choice of deep purple as our political color, is based on inspiration from Jeremy Corbyn and his Peace and Justice Movement in Great Britain. ■

## ■ Speech of **Joscha Mecke**, Member of the Federal Executive of the youth organisation SDAJ (Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterjugend / Socialist German Working Youth) (Germany)

**M** Thank you very much for organising this broad and ambitious conference, and thank you also for allowing me to speak here on behalf of the SDAJ, the youth organisation “Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterjugend” (Socialist German Working Youth).

The SDAJ gathers high school pupils, apprentices, students and young workers throughout Germany. In my speech I will focus on the consequences for young people of the course the war is currently taking, and how we are opposing it.

What German military strategists and economic experts have been demanding offensively since 2015 at least has not only taken the concrete form of an epochal change, but has above all made great strides since then. The idea is to “take on more responsibility in the world”, i.e. the autonomous emergence of German militarism, so that German economic interests can be imposed on the world – and if there is any doubt, by military force.

This is not an interpretation on the part of the SDAJ, but it is what can be read, or in similar terms, in various strategic documents of the German army, for example in the Bundeswehr White Paper.

To be able to impose this, the federal government depends, on one hand, on the concentrated military power represented by the pleiad of alliances such as the EU or NATO, but on the other hand, it must also have a strong federal army and the support of society, which has to accept more rearmament, arms exports and interventions abroad.

**“We are taking action in schools and career fairs where the German army presents itself as a defender of human rights, and we are trying not to allow military propaganda to run unchallenged.”**

The consequences for young people are catastrophic. It is social regression that enables the financing of the current rearmament, which has reached historic proportions. This results in insufficient funding for education, health and leisure, as clearly seen in the federal government’s new budget. To us, it means, above all,

school buildings in poor condition, a shortage of teaching staff, bad conditions of hospitalisation and, as a final consequence, increased pressure on results in education and training.

But young people are also confronted with increasing military propaganda. At schools, universities, career fairs and job centres, the German army advertises its death-inducing jobs. This not only

exploits, for military purposes, the poor chances of finding an apprenticeship, but also promotes greater acceptance of foreign missions and rearmament. The Bundeswehr is invited to schools to boast about the lack of alternatives to war missions with shortened artificial scenarios. And with slogans like: “Nobody really likes war, but sometimes it’s necessary. We owe respect to our soldiers for their altruism, and we must ask ourselves whether we too want to enlist for our country”. We are promised an increasingly uncertain future and lured with the pretence of job security, which is becoming increasingly rare these days. We are even offered the opportunity of paid study. Not to mention the free teaching materials provided to teachers, which are modelled on Bundeswehr military courses and thus find their place in apparently normal education.

The SDAJ claims that it is not defending human rights when, for example, the German army trains soldiers in Mali who then execute defenceless villagers as they flee, or when Colonel Klein orders the murder of unarmed civilian women in Afghanistan, or when Ukrainian soldiers are trained in Germany to operate tanks.

We clearly oppose the rearmament and the extension of the German army’s competence, because it only increases once again the possibility of a major war breaking out, including on German soil – particularly considering the current course of the aggressive confrontation against Russia and China, which the German state is playing a major role in developing.

This is why we are taking action in schools and career fairs where the German army presents itself as a defender of human rights, and we are trying, with local partners, to disrupt the German army’s interventions and not to allow military propaganda to run unchallenged. We fight in schools against mouldy toilets and rain-dripping ceilings in classrooms, while explaining clearly that the problem can only be tackled if the money that goes to armaments and war is used to secure our future. By way of comparison, the special fund dedicated to the German army could cover more than twice the cost of the overdue renovations of German schools. We fight for better working conditions and pay rises in collective bargaining, as well as for cost-cutting and in negotiations in the public sector, and we show that we must act against the federal government’s warmongering policy.

We say:

- The Bundeswehr out of schools, universities, career fairs and job centres!
- Disarmament instead of rearmament! 100 billion for young people, not for armaments and war!

■



# “Left-wing activists must be the driving force for social justice and peace”

■ Message of **Sevim Dagdelen**, Bundestag's deputy (Germany)

**D**ear friends, “Peace is not everything, but everything is nothing without peace”, former German Chancellor Willy Brandt once said. With this in mind we must welcome any initiative today that aims at winning peace and not the war.

The war in Ukraine, like any other war, had its forerunning events. The war is the consequence of the expansion of NATO eastward to the borders of Russia, contrary to all previous promises. Just as the United States would not tolerate military bases of another great power at its immediate borders, for example in Mexico or Canada, or even in Cuba, Russia has always warned against Ukraine's integration into NATO and its opening to US military bases and missile bases that could reach Moscow or Saint Petersburg in five minutes.

The war in Ukraine did not begin with the attacks and the Russian invasion on February 24, 2022. The war began as of 2014, as NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg himself acknowledged. Let's bear in mind what then Secretary of State for Europe at the US State Department, Victoria Nuland, notorious the world over for her “Fuck the EU” admitted. According to Victoria Nuland, the United States then pumped \$5 billion into a coup in Kiev. Following the 2014 nationalist coup in Kiev, the mostly Russian-speaking regions of Donbass seceded, as did Crimea. The Black Sea peninsula was therefore integrated into Russia.

And just as we criticized the Kiev coup at the time, we today reject the attempts at overthrowing the regime under a false banner in Serbia, so that the country be brought onto the unconditional path of NATO and forced, through sanctions, into economic war against Russia. An economic war that would be fatal for Serbia.

The war for reintegration in Donbass lasted eight long years. Fourteen thousand people died in that war. As we know today, the Minsk peace agreement, negotiated at the time by German Chancellor Merkel and French President Hollande, did not aim at bringing peace to the region. Instead, it was supposed to enable the Ukrainian government that emerged from the Kiev coup to buy time to arm itself and militarily regain

the territories. NATO, led by the United States, bears a great deal of responsibility in the current war.

Even if this is still denied by our governments the war in Ukraine has meanwhile turned into a NATO proxy war against Russia, brutal attrition warfare at that, in which thousands of young men, Ukrainian and Russian, must die needlessly for a few acres of land, with no prospect of military victory on the battlefield.

NATO members are involved in the war through weapon deliveries and military and intelligence aid to Ukraine. First the United States delivered 43 billion euros worth of weapons to Kiev last year, followed by Great Britain and Germany, who delivered billions worth of weapons, and then Poland. Together with the EU, these four NATO members

have also provided more than €60 billion in financial assistance to Ukraine.

In 2022, the 30 NATO countries together spent around eleven hundred billion euros on the military and weaponry, the same as all the other countries in the world combined.

The US alone spent \$877 billion in 2022 on the military, ten times more than Russia. This over-spending on weapons increases the risk of war worldwide.

And it is extremely dangerous that the German government should now want to station a brigade of Bundeswehr combat troops in Lithuania. The largest German military base abroad is to be located in this country bordering Russia. This does not contribute to the de-escalation of the Ukrainian conflict. This decision constitutes a fundamental renunciation of the agreements concluded so far by the federal government and NATO. With the permanent stationing of up to 4,000 German soldiers and the construction of a permanent German military outpost in the Baltics, the NATO-Russia founding act of May 1997 is being permanently buried by NATO.

In this important document of international law, NATO assures that “substantial additional combat troops” will not be “permanently” deployed by the Alliance in the former Eastern bloc states. Last April, NATO reaffirmed that it would “fully” comply with the NATO-Russia Founding Act. Even security experts from think tanks close to the government such as the SWP and high-ranking generals of the Bundeswehr warned against such a move, as reported in the Swiss newspaper NZZ (Neue Zürcher Zei-

tung).

I think we need to lobby to revive the consultation and cooperation mechanisms agreed on in the NATO Founding Act-Russia, rather than fuel the escalation by sending more and more weapons to Ukraine and setting up permanent NATO bases on Russia's western border. This madness must be ended. That is why we are committed to an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and to a diplomatic solution.

We support the Irish left and the anti-NATO movement on the island in their struggle to defend neutrality. Neutrality is very valuable these days. It is only by safeguarding neutrality that democratic sovereignty is safeguarded.

Many countries of the global South are experiencing the fact that NATO countries will not accept their neutrality these days, but want to force them to join the economic war against Russia including sanctions and providing Ukraine with weapons. In a kind of neocolonialism the countries of the global South are to be dictated what they must and mustn't do. The latest example is the pro-NATO right-wing Finnish government, which wants to cut development aid to African countries it considers too pro-Russian on account of their votes at the UN.

Advocating neutrality, even in these difficult times, is to advocate the very freedom, justice and democracy.

Our solidarity goes to the left-wing and indigenous movements in Peru, who are announcing demonstrations against the dismissal of left-wing President Pedro Castillo and his imprisonment since last December, who march for justice and for new elections, who take to the streets to protest the unprecedented violence of the police, accounting for over 60 deaths and thousands injured in the first weeks of the year. The Inter-American Organization for Human Rights speaks of real massacres of natives. They protest against Dina Boluarte's putschist government, which condones the perpetrators, which is trying to gain international legitimacy at the next CELAC summit-EU in Brussels and which is about to ban left-wing parties in Peru because they are campaigning for a constituent assembly. We say that we stand with the indigenous people in their struggle for freedom and democracy.

Finally, dear friends, just as it is our responsibility to stand for and support left-wing activists around the world, it is also our responsibility to be the force of social justice and peace here and now, to create justice here in the country and peace around the world, one way or another.



■ Speech of **Ratibor Trivunac**, anarcho-syndicalist and anti-militarist activist, antiquarian bookseller by profession (Belgrade, Serbia)

I am anarcho-syndicalist and anti-militarist activist for more than two decades, with primary focus on activism in the Balkan region of Eastern Europe. I was very pleased to get an invitation to this video-conference and I am very sorry that I will not be able to participate in it directly, due to previously planned engagements, but via this video message. I do hope, on the other hand, that there will be other opportunities in which we will be able to exchange our opinions and coordinate joint actions against inter-imperialist bloodbath that is the war in Ukraine.

Some of us, working-class activists from ex-Yugoslavian region of the Balkan peninsula, who are unlucky enough to have lived through and remember the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, have ourselves directly witnessed civil war, nationalist bloodshed, imperialist aggression, sanctions, anti-war movement, colored revolution, brutal transition to neo-liberal capitalism, mass impoverishment of the working class, retraditionalization and general lowering of the civilization level in our societies and Eastern Europe as whole. Therefore, our understanding of this events is not only theoretical, but has an experience note in itself, and is thus providing us with important additional insight into the nature of Ukrainian war, that is eluding many of the comrades in the West.

Specially us, anti-militarists from the Republic of Serbia, apart from the above-mentioned things, had an experience of the proxy-war during the Yugoslav civil war. Slobodan Milošević, leader of Serbia (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), which was not an official participant in the war in Bosnia and Croatia, has been arming,

training, organizing and directing Serbian forces in those places. This experience sheds additional light into nature and praxes of proxy-war that US and EU are engaged in the inter-imperialist conflict in Ukraine. But also into mechanism that warmongers are using to deny participation in the war, while providing infra-

structural and every other practical support for the working-class slaughter.

War is not lead only via direct military clashes, via funding, arming, training, organizing and directing armies, but also by imposing sanctions. As we, anti-militarists from Serbia, have lived during the 1990s under strict regime of sanctions, we have experience, apart from rational understanding, that confirms that sanctions are in fact war against the population of the sanctioned state.

There is no doubt in our mind of horrifying social consequences of sanctions politics. Thousands of preventable deaths and all other form of additional suffering were imposed on the population which did not have any responsibility for the war politics of their ruling class. It is never the ruling class that suffers from sanctions: in the case of war in Ukraine, Putin and his cronies will not be the one who will have difficulties in obtaining needed medications and other necessities, but, as always, ordinary working class people. This is why all states that are sanctioning Russia are part of this war, leading the war in fight against the Russian population. And this is why anti-militarist struggle must include vehement fight against sanctions.

As with all wars, this war has lead to rising of nationalism and chauvinism. In this context, for us as European anti-militarists, it is important to underline anti-

Russian racism that is prevalent in the EU, discrimination of people of Russian (and Belarusian) origin, denial of their right to move, study or work freely, banning of Russian culture, etc.

We have to remember that our primary role as anti-militarists - and especially during capitalist and imperialist war conflicts - has to be fight against our own ruling class. We should never allow our ruling class to convince us that the ruling class that is the enemy of our own masters should be primary target of our activities. In case of war in Ukraine this means for anti-militarists active in NATO states or NATO controlled states, that our primary target has to be NATO side of the war. This does not mean that we support Russia, but that we understand that, apart from abstract declaring that we are against both sides in this inter-imperialist conflict, our practical focus can and should primarily be on the activities of our ruling class. And in Balkan, as it is in majority of Europe, this is the ruling class whose military arm is NATO. Concretely in Serbia: in period before the war Serbia was publicly claiming to be militarily neutral as it held joint military exercises with NATO and Russia in 10:1 ratio - 10 with NATO comparing to one with Russia. Since the war started, Serbia proclaimed neutrality in the war, which it is in reality keeping by jet not imposing sanctions on Russia, but also proclaimed terminating all joint military exercises with both sides. But, just after one year of war, Serbia restarted its joint military exercises, now /only/ with NATO, while Serbian produced guns and ammunition are being sent in huge volumes to NATO side in the war and territory of Serbia is used for the transport of military equipment to Ukraine, again to NATO side in this bloodbath.

I do hope my short presentation didn't take too much of your time, and that we will be continuing our joint fight against the war in the near future.

■

## ■ Speech of **Ratibor Trivunac**, anarcho-syndicalist and anti-militarist activist, antiquarian bookseller by profession (Belgrade, Serbia)

**C**ongratulations for undertaking the coordination of several initiatives for Peace throughout Europe. We are in accordance with the slogan “No to war! No to social war!” which links the fundamental issue of Peace to the workers movement and several other movements. Recent developments on the war front a war conducted by NATO against Russia on Ukrainian territory are most disconcerting. Kiev’s failure to counterattack and massive losses in human lives and military equipment have led to a fierce escalation rather than leading the European NATO block at the negotiating table. In spite of the voices of reason that are being heard around the world even by conservative politicians (e. g. Robert Kennedy Jr.) the western war block continues to spend enormous amounts in order to supply military equipment even prohibited as such (indicatively weapons of depleted uranium) keeps condemning Ukraine’s younger generation to death keeps causing irreversible environmental disaster (e. g. in the case of the recent

blow against the dam and the fertilizer pipeline, etc.) and is currently expanding war operations in Russian territory. By the looks of things new provocative actions are being planned aiming for an open direct engagement of NATO. A nuclear holocaust is being all the more probable.

**“Thus our main focus is : to demonstrate the repercussions of this war being no other than huge cutbacks in public health and education.”**

Greece under Mitsotakis’ administration which has unfortunately been strengthened in the recent parliamentary elections is assisting this barbaric war by supplying military equipment by ceding NATO military bases throughout the country by supporting sanctions. With the exception of favoring Greek ship owners transferring Russian oil. Most unfortunately the pro-peace movement in Greece is weak. It can not be compared to the movement that was once developed in our country triggered by the war in Iraq and the war in Yugoslavia. The total number of mobilizations against the war in Ukraine within a year equals the protests that took place within three days only right after NATO started bombing Yugoslavia. We consider the arguments

about who in particular is the attacker being the main reason for this. In our opinion this reasoning of “equal distance” is enhancing constraint versus these dramatic events. Regardless of individual opinions about Putin’s regime and the operations led by him it is absolutely clear to us that NATO expansion is a major threat to world peace.

Thus our main focus is:

To demonstrate the repercussions of this war being no other than huge cutbacks in public health and education. To make clear that this war could at any minute reach our doorstep given the fact that drones aiming to hit Russian targets are led by NATO military bases in our country. Bring to light the actual truths about this war truths that are being drowned in the mud of misinformation and neo-McCarthyism practices aiming to gag any opinions that do not embrace the dominant narrative.

We are interested in following any action that can contribute to achieve peace friendship and cooperation among people as well as collective safety for all countries from the Atlantic Ocean up to the Urals.

WE WISH YOU STRENGTH IN YOUR STRUGGLE.



## ■ Speech of **Alexander King**, member of the Berlin Chamber of Deputies, Berlin Landtag, Die Linke. (Germany)

**T**hank you for inviting me to this important conference. I am very pleased to be here with so many supporters of peace from all over Europe.

I am a member of the Berlin Chamber of Deputies, the Berlin Landtag. There I am a media expert for “Die Linke”.

I was also one of the organisers of the “Peace March”, the major peace demonstration that took place in Berlin on February 25th. It had been the largest left-wing demonstration for peace in Germany for decades. Up to 50,000 people took part. The demonstration was initiated by the left-wing political leader Sahra Wagenknecht, who has already spoken to you

today, and the feminist activist Alice Schwarzer.

Peace and the media - these are my themes.

And in Germany, they are unfortunately linked to each other in a negative way.

I’ve been a political militant for decades, and I have to say that I was actually surprised by the scale of the media fury that followed the peace demonstration.

The demonstration had to be presented as pro-Russia and open to the right.

To do so, the newspapers and news websites that usually present themselves as serious (the so-called quality media, as they say in Germany) did not hesitate to lie outright.

Thus, they reported that Russian flags were massively displayed at the march, whereas there were no flags at all. They spoke of a mass right-wing mobilisation at the march,

whereas only a few scattered right-wing individuals appeared on the fringes of the demonstration - and were repelled by our security service.

But not a word was said about the motivations of the tens of thousands of participants, ordinary people, families and workers.

A particularly vile hatred was poured out onto the demonstration initiators, Sahra Wagenknecht and Alice Schwarzer. An unprecedented witch-hunt.

Unfortunately, public broadcasting was not any different. The public media often didn’t even mind spreading the most abject insults, fallaciously distorting the aims of

the peace demonstration and pillorying Wagenknecht and Schwarzer as Moscow’s fifth column.

It’s worth noting that German public

**“The demonstration had to be presented as pro-Russia and open to the right (...) But not a word was said about the motivations of the tens of thousands of participants, ordinary people, families and workers.”**

broadcasting is funded by the audiovisual licence fee that every household has to pay: 18.36 euros per month after all. In return, it has a remit, enshrined in law, to reflect and promote the diversity of opinions; it has an educational remit and a duty to inform. It did not fulfil this mission during the pandemic, and even less now in the context of war.

The need to be sometimes a thorn in the flesh of dominant politics has completely disappeared.

There is no longer a question of public broadcasting being independent of the state. Instead, it is the words of the ruling class that are regurgitated unchanged and dissenters scorned.

The good news is that the establishment and its media are faced with a surly population.

The following points are important for a critical approach to the media:

1. I still appeal in Germany to support and strengthen the counter-media, the existing counterweights.

2. We must actively oppose the incitement to hatred in the mainstream media. I call on people to write readers' letters, to address the editors of newspapers and television channels.

3. And we must realise that public service broadcasting belongs to us. We pay for it. We must not be taken in by this type of reporting. We are entitled to higher standards of quality and we must demand them.

But above all, we must not let ourselves be intimidated by this media frenzy – and even less take it for granted.

It is precisely Die Linke that must strive to ensure that there is once again a strong peace movement. There's still a long way to go, at least in Germany. I'm curious to hear about your experiences, including in other countries.

It's nevertheless astonishing that, despite total brainwashing, so many people have come out to demonstrate and that, in the polls, half the people questioned speak out against arms deliveries and in favour of negotiations. This gives hope, and it is on this basis that we must stand. ■



Berlin, 25th February 2023.

### ■ Message of **Marcus Carlstedt**, Trade union delegate, education (Stockholm-Sweden)

**I** wholeheartedly support your initiative and thank you for your efforts in this very difficult period, with war-mongering rhetoric and actions on all levels.

In Sweden, the general support for the war, for the deliveries of arms and for the sanctions is combined with the process of affiliation to NATO, which I equally oppose.

The resistance here is unfortunately still weak, but I have translated and spread your appeal to numerous trade-unionists and anti-war contacts here in Sweden.

I will be happy to participate at the conference, on my personal capacity. ■

### ■ Speech of **Beppe Savary**, cantonal MP, Forum Alternativo (Switzerland)

**I** come from Italian-speaking Switzerland. I'm a member of Forum Alternativo, a small group, and I am a regional MP. From the start, our position has been "No Putin, no NATO". This is of particular relevance in Switzerland because our Defence Minister is moving ever closer to NATO.

The latest step has been to get together with Austria and Germany on an air defence system. He also wants Switzerland to take part in NATO manoeuvres. Up to now, Switzerland has taken part in peace missions in partnership with NATO. The Social Democratic Party has now put on its helmet and our government is going to deliver tanks.

Leopard tanks have been sent to Ukraine. Normally we cannot deliver already-used weapons to countries in conflict. In 1945, on weekdays, Switzerland supplied arms to the Nazis and prayed for peace on weekends.

The Swiss government is not prepared to liberalise the conditions for exporting its weapons, but we don't know if that will last.

Switzerland is neutral when it pays to be neutral, but gives up neutrality when it thinks it can get closer to the USA. Switzerland officially declares itself neutral, but since the end of the Second World War it has clearly been part of the pro-American alliance. ■





## ■ Speech of **Andrej Hunko**, Die Linke, Member of the Bundestag (Germany)

**T**hank you for organising this important conference. Its aim is to bring together different political and trade union forces to promote joint action against war in Europe. And the slogan of this conference is also of the utmost importance: “Against war - against social war”. Our first common international task centres around the question of how to create an “anti-war” force. We are therefore trying to bring together at European level the forces that are united in their opposition to the war, i.e. to the arms deliveries by European governments to Ukraine, and to the policy of sanctions against Russia, which particularly affects the population. It is illusory to think that sanctions will ruin Russia, as Annalena Baerbock announced with great fanfare, but it is increasingly realistic to think that sanctions will ruin Germany. Sanctions primarily affect the Russian population, not the oligarchs. But at the same time, they are hurting people around the world and in Europe. Rising energy costs are driving de-industrialisation. At the same time,

sanctions are a weapon in the economic war waged by the United States against Europe, and Germany in particular.

In the parliaments of our countries, but also at a European level, it is unfortunately only a minority that is opposed to the war.

Yet the overwhelming majority of people around the world are opposed to this war. The majority of countries do not support the arms supply and sanctions policy of the US government, NATO and European governments. The majority of the world's peoples are with us in opposing the war and arms supplies.

In Germany, the majority of the population would like to see diplomatic initiatives developed. This increases the need to take this demand for peace to the streets. We have seen this. The most effective action was undoubtedly the demonstration by Sahra Wagenknecht and Alice Schwarzer at the Brandenburg Gate.

The American war economy needs this war to ensure its survival.

For the US, this war is about obtaining markets, raw materials and finding new sources of profit. As in Europe, there are those who profit from war by making their profits from people's deaths.

The acceleration of this rearmament is also destroying public budgets.

Workers are the ones who have to bear the costs of the war. To this end, the govern-

ment is waging a social war against the working population. This makes it all the more important for us to show solidarity with the strikers, who are fighting to defend their real wages and their jobs. Through their struggles, they are also defending the achievements of the social state.

Allow me to conclude with a personal comment. I myself have Ukrainian roots and let me say that the most important solidarity with the Ukrainian people, with the people of Ukraine, is to support initiatives and resolutions that provide information about the war and the crisis and that commit to an immediate end to this war. To achieve this, immediate negotiations are necessary.

We need an immediate ceasefire. Today! That is true solidarity with the Ukrainian people.

Unfortunately, the European Union, European governments and NATO are not taking any initiatives in this direction. Initiatives to send more weapons have nothing to do with solidarity, with solidarity with the Ukrainian people.

I thank you for this important conference, for your commitment in all countries, for your work and your invitation, and I am convinced that a broad force will emerge to defeat the belligerents in all countries.

## ■ Message of **Anton Schou**, retired, former business school teacher, member of The Peoples Movement Against The European Union (Aalborg, Denmark)

**W**hile US Secretary of State Blinken is visiting China and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen – US President Biden's subordinate – is visiting Africa, both with the aim of paving the way for a new escalation of the imperialist war between the US and Russia, Denmark is slowly but surely changing from a so-called welfare state to a military war state with a government that has both started a social war against the working class and the youth and an unprecedented three-

digit billion Danish military rearmament. At the sound of the propaganda war drums with the slogan to “save” Danish welfare, democracy and security, the recently formed coalition government with the Social Democratic Prime Minister Frederiksen at the head is preparing Danish society for a totally different future with dramatically less security, welfare and democracy.

The latest reports from the government that they are preparing to deliver Danish F-16 fighters to Ukraine will certainly be

regarded by the representatives of Russian imperialism as a further step towards direct war between NATO and Russia.

We are sending this small text as an unserved declaration of support for the video conference on July 8, 2023.

Only by standing together and by helping the peoples of Europe to find the way to unity against military and social war can we avoid the threat of a third world war, the consequences of which are unimaginable.