

# The return of German militarism and the tasks of the Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (Socialist Equality Party of Germany)

## Resolution of the Special Conference Against War of the Partei für Soziale Gleichheit

20 September 2014

*On September 13 and 14, the Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (Socialist Equality Party—PSG) held a Special Conference Against War in Berlin. The following resolution was adopted unanimously by the delegates.*

1. The Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (Socialist Equality Party—PSG) supports the statement of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) of 9 June, “Socialism and the fight against imperialist war.” It begins with the words: “One hundred years after the outbreak of World War I and 75 years after the start of World War II, the imperialist system is once again threatening humanity with a catastrophe.” The political events of the past three months have dramatically confirmed this statement. The imperialist powers have opened up two new fronts, one against Russia and one in the Middle East.

2. A clique of political operatives, military figures, journalists with close ties to the intelligence agencies and other opinion makers has manipulated events and taken decisions that threaten to plunge all of humanity into a bloodbath. This militarist policy has met with strong opposition among wide layers of the population. Polls show that more than two thirds of all Germans oppose supplying weapons to Iraq. But popular opposition goes unheeded. The political parties are not accountable to their voters. They receive their orders from the most powerful representatives of German and global capital. Democracy serves only as a façade for the rule of a minority.

3. A nuclear war with Russia is now no longer a hypothetical possibility, but a real danger. In February, Washington and Berlin cooperated with fascists to organise a coup in Kiev. Ever since, they have systematically intensified the confrontation with Russia. In July, they utilised the crash of Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17, under circumstances that have never been clarified, to impose economic sanctions. At the beginning of September, the NATO summit in Wales adopted a fundamental reorientation of military strategy. While over the past two decades the alliance has mainly conducted wars in the Balkans, North Africa and the Middle East, its vast weaponry is now once again being turned against Russia, as it was directed against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. NATO commanders have effectively taken control of European foreign policy. NATO provided an unconditional guarantee of assistance to the right-wing regimes in the Baltic States, which now have carte blanche to provoke a war with Russia at any time.

4. In a column for the *Washington Post*, Anne Applebaum, wife of the Polish foreign minister, called for “total war.” Under the headline “War in Europe is not a hysterical idea,” she posed the question: “So is it hysterical to prepare for total war? Or is it naïve not to do so?” German

Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, one of the leading protagonists in these events, admitted that “the dynamic of military escalation is increasingly determining political action, rather than the reverse”—a reference to the eve of World War I, when the strategic schemes of the German general staff dictated political decisions and made the drive to war irreversible.

5. In the Middle East, Israel is conducting a brutal offensive against the Palestinians, with German and American support. Under the pretext of the struggle against the terrorist militia Islamic State (IS), which was built up and supported by the US, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, a further violent division of the raw material-rich region has begun, threatening to prove even bloodier than the previous wars in Iraq, Libya and Syria.

6. The June plenum of the International Committee of the Fourth International set the task of placing the fight against war at the centre of the political work of the ICFI and making the ICFI “the international centre of revolutionary opposition to the resurgence of imperialist violence and militarism.” The Partei für Soziale Gleichheit, the German section of the ICFI, bears a major responsibility in this struggle.

7. Unlike the wars in Iraq in 2003 and Libya in 2011, Germany is this time playing a leading role in the drive to war. The country’s ruling elites, which have thrown the world into the abyss twice before, are once again calling for “German leadership” (Führung) and preparing to realise their imperialist interests through military violence. They are forcing their way into Eastern Europe, the territory of the former Soviet Union, and the Middle East and Africa.

8. History is returning with vengeance. Almost 70 years after the crimes of the Nazis and its defeat in World War II, the German ruling class is once again adopting the imperialist great power politics of the Kaiser’s Empire and Hitler. The speed of the escalation of the war propaganda against Russia recalls the eve of World War I and World War II. In Ukraine, the German government is cooperating with the fascists of Svoboda and the Right Sector, which stand in the tradition of Nazi collaborators in the Second World War. It is using the country that was occupied by Germany in both world wars as a staging ground against Russia. In addition, by arming a party to the Iraqi civil war, the Kurdish Peshmerga, the German government has announced its intention to participate in the next round of the violent redivision of the area.

9. The propaganda of the post-war era—that Germany had learnt from the terrible crimes of the Nazis, had “arrived at the West,” had embraced a peaceful foreign policy, and had developed into a stable democracy—is exposed as lies. German imperialism is once again showing its real

colours as it emerged historically, with all of its aggressiveness at home and abroad.

### A political conspiracy

10. The return of German imperialism was systematically prepared behind the backs of the people. After Germany's abstention in the Libyan war, the media began a campaign against the foreign minister at the time, Guido Westerwelle (Free Democratic Party—FDP), and President Christian Wulff, which led to the collapse of the FDP and Wulff's resignation due to a manufactured corruption scandal. Wulff was replaced by Joachim Gauck, whose ingrained anti-communism and anti-Russian stance seemed better suited to impose the new war policy against Russia in the face of widespread public opposition.

11. In 2013, more than fifty leading politicians, journalists, academics, military personnel and business representatives worked to develop a new strategy for German foreign policy under the direction of the government-aligned think tank Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Foundation for Science and Politics—SWP) and the Washington-based German Marshall Fund (GMF). They defined Germany as a “trading and export nation” which, more than almost any other country, is dependent on “demand from other markets as well as access to international trading routes and raw materials.” They concluded that Germany had to once again play a “leadership role” internationally, particularly in military interventions within the framework of NATO, described as a “unique force to strengthen German security interests.” Germany had to “use its growing influence” to “newly orient” NATO's future direction. [1]

12. Immediately after the federal election in September 2013, President Gauck went on the offensive for this new strategy. He declared on the anniversary of German unification that Germany was “not an island” which could remain out of “political, military and economic conflicts.” It had to play a role “in Europe and in the world” commensurate with its size and influence.

13. This strategy formed the basis of the new government's foreign policy. It had barely taken power when foreign minister Steinmeier and defence minister von der Leyen announced that the period of military restraint was over. Germany was “too large to comment on global politics from the sidelines” and had to be “ready to intervene earlier, more decisively and more substantially in foreign and security policy.” In Ukraine, this policy was put into practice. Washington and Berlin provoked a political crisis to create a pretext for the militarisation of Europe, and to break the deeply-rooted hostility to war within the population.

14. Public opinion has been consistently worked on ever since. The two most important news programs on public television, *tagesthemen* and *heute journal*, have been transformed into daily propaganda shows. The foreign ministry is publishing statements under the headline “Germany's destiny: to lead Europe in order to lead the world.” Von der Leyen poses as “War Minister” on the cover of *Stern* magazine, and Gauck attacks Russia on Westerplatte, where Germany's 1939 attack on Poland initiated the Second World War. Journalists with close ties to transatlantic think tanks such as Josef Joffe and Joachim Bittner (*Die Zeit*), Stefan Kornelius (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*), Nikolas Busse and Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*), Nikolaus Blome (*Der Spiegel*) and Dominic Johnson (*taz*) are tirelessly whipping up anti-Russian propaganda.

15. The universities have also been placed at the service of militarism. The distinction between history and propaganda has been systematically undermined in the process. Above all, the historian Fritz Fischer, who died in 1999, has become the object of fierce attacks. In the 1960s, Fischer exposed the aggressive war aims of the German empire in World War I, and demonstrated that Hitler resumed the same aims in the Second World War. Fischer is now attacked because his findings are highly

relevant: German policy towards Ukraine once again follows the footsteps of the Wilhelminian Empire and the Third Reich. There is a direct historical continuity from Bethmann Hollweg to Ribbentrop and Steinmeier.

16. The propagandists at the universities are not content to rehabilitate the war policies of the German empire. They are also attempting to rehabilitate Hitler's reputation. To this end, the 91-year-old historian Ernst Nolte, who provoked the historians' dispute 30 years ago by downplaying the role of National Socialism, is being revived. In February, Berlin-based historian Jörg Baberowski announced in *Der Spiegel* that Nolte “was historically correct.” For his part, Nolte denounces in the latest edition of *The European* magazine “the extent of the hatred and condemnation, which has made the one-time ‘liberator’ (i.e. Hitler) the representative of ‘absolute evil’ and a ‘taboo’.” Hitler was “the forgotten representative of tendencies of ‘self-assertion’, which are missing in the official policy of the German government”, writes Nolte.

### The crisis of the European Union

17. The reason for the re-emergence of German imperialism is the deep crisis of global capitalism and the nation state system on which it is based. When Trotsky analysed the objective driving forces in 1932 that led to the rise of Hitler, he wrote: “As the productive forces of Germany become more and more highly geared, the more dynamic power they gather, the more they are strangled within the state system of Europe—a system that is akin to the ‘system’ of cages within an impoverished provincial zoo.” [2]

18. Hitler's attempt to break out of this system of cages by violently conquering Europe left the continent in ruins, costing the lives of 70 million and ending in total military defeat. But the post-war order resolved none of the problems that had led to war. The economic power of the US made possible a temporary stabilisation and the post-war boom. The Cold War not only kept the Soviet Union at bay, but also kept Germany under control. But with the reunification of Germany and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the period in which German business could conduct its affairs in the wake of the US and the German army could restrict itself to national defence was irrevocably over.

19. There was nothing progressive about the reunification of Germany. It led not only to an unprecedented social decline in the east of Germany and Europe, but also to the re-emergence of militarism due to the dynamism of German capitalism. When members of the government declare today that Germany's military weight must correspond to its economic strength, they are once again talking the language of German imperialism.

20. In 1990, the Bund Sozialistischer Arbeiter, the predecessor of the PSG, warned against the return of the same bourgeoisie to the east of Germany and Europe that had committed some of the most barbaric crimes humanity had ever seen. “The collapse of the national states in Eastern Europe was, in the final analysis, only the first result of a deep world crisis of imperialism,” we wrote. “The international balance of forces, within which the imperialists have regulated their rule with the assistance of the Stalinists and social democrats and defended their global interests, has broken apart. The old conflicts between the imperialist powers for the redivision of the world, which have thrown humanity into the horror of world war twice this century, are re-emerging.” [3]

21. The British government of Margaret Thatcher and the French government of François Mitterrand sought at first to prevent the reunification of Germany, fearful of the consequences of its rise as the predominant power in central Europe. Ultimately, the founding and expansion of the European Union was agreed. While France saw the EU as a means to control its dominant neighbour, Germany regarded it as a mechanism for the control of Europe.

22. The German government made little effort to conceal its ambitions. Already in 1993, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel declared: “As a people of 80 million, as the strongest economy in central Europe, we

carry a special, partly new responsibility, whether it suits us or not. We must adjust all of our foreign policy activity correspondingly. Due to our central location, our size and our traditional relations to Central and Eastern Europe, we are predestined to be the major benefactor of the return of these states to Europe.” [4]

23. The EU was presented to the public as a major step towards the unification of Europe. In fact, it was and is a weapon of the most powerful business and financial interests against the working class; a fortress at whose walls thousands of refugees die every year; a war zone in which the European powers struggle for dominance; an incubator for nationalism and chauvinism; and an instrument for internal and external rearmament. It is a breeding ground for militarism, austerity policies and dictatorship.

24. Already at the beginning of the new century, the tensions within the EU burst into the open. The idea that Germany at the head of the EU could become a world power on an equal level with the US turned out to be an illusion. Neither Britain nor France was prepared to tolerate an overpowering Germany in central Europe. In 2003, it came to an open break over the Iraq war. While Britain and a series of Eastern European states supported the US militarily, France and Germany refused to participate in the war. In 2005, French and Dutch voters rejected a constitution for the EU.

### **The consequences of the 2008 financial crisis**

25. The crisis of the EU escalated with the international financial crisis of 2008. The biggest financial crash since the 1930s was not a cyclical episode, but rather the beginning of an ongoing crisis of world capitalism. Six years later, none of the fundamental problems that brought the international financial system to the brink of collapse have been solved. On the contrary, the trillions awarded to the banks, the flooding of the financial markets with cheap money from the central banks, and the relentless assault on wages, jobs and benefits have exacerbated class tensions enormously and created the conditions for the next financial collapse.

26. The recent decision of the European Central Bank (ECB) to cut interest rates to 0.05 percent and buy up the junk bonds that triggered the crisis in 2008 for hundreds of billions of euros is a political declaration of bankruptcy. It resembles the action of a drug addict who, fearing death, takes a last fatal dose. ECB President Mario Draghi justified the latest move by referring to “lack of confidence in the future” and the risk of another downturn. But rather than stimulate the stagnant European economy, the fresh rush of funds to the banks will inflate the speculative bubble on the stock markets to the bursting point.

27. There are sharp divisions within the central body of the ECB that express growing national tensions in Europe. But from the standpoint of class relations, there is no fundamental difference between Draghi’s policy of printing money and the strict austerity measures demanded by the German government. Both complement each other. They serve to enrich an insatiable financial aristocracy which, at the expense of the large majority, has lost any connection to the production process and the needs of society. The situation increasingly resembles the eve of the French Revolution, when the masses facing starvation because of the shortage of bread were advised by Marie Antoinette to eat cake.

28. In Greece, Portugal and Spain the draconian austerity measures dictated by Berlin and Brussels to pass the cost of the bank bailouts onto the working class have already met with fierce resistance. However, the measures imposed by the European Union in response to the financial crisis have also dramatically intensified social tensions in Germany and all other European countries.

29. The German stock index DAX is currently 2,000 points above its pre-2008 crisis peak, even though the economy is barely growing. The owners of the shares of the 30 largest German companies have increased their portfolios by €200 billion without lifting a finger. Over the same

period, the standard of living for the majority of the population has declined dramatically. Some 126 million Europeans, a quarter of the population, are at risk of poverty. The number of poor children has increased by 800,000 since 2008. Eleven percent of adults and 23 percent of young people in Europe are officially unemployed. Almost one in three receives no social support. In Eastern Europe, the social situation is much worse than 25 years ago, when the Stalinist regimes collapsed. While a small, often corrupt and criminal minority has enriched itself enormously, the vast majority of the population struggles to survive under conditions of mass unemployment, poverty wages and the collapse of pension, health and social provisions.

30. The revival of militarism is the response of the ruling class to the explosive social tensions, the deepening economic crisis and the growing conflicts between European powers. Its aim is the conquest of new spheres of influence, markets and raw materials upon which the export-dependent German economy relies; the prevention of a social explosion by deflecting social tensions onto an external enemy; and the militarization of society as a whole, including the development of an all embracing national surveillance apparatus, the suppression of social and political opposition, and the bringing into line of the media.

31. Former CIA operative Edward Snowden has revealed the gigantic scale of government monitoring undertaken not only by the American and British intelligence services, but also by the closely linked German secret services. In the name of combating terrorism and organized crime, Germany has largely done away with the separation of the police and secret services, enshrined in its post-war constitution as a measure to prevent the emergence of a new Gestapo. Huge, centralized databases give the security agencies access to data on millions of ordinary citizens. The aim of this Orwellian nightmare is the suppression of all social resistance and protest. The state of emergency imposed on the American town of Ferguson following the murder of 18-year-old Michael Brown, with the police and National Guard deploying military weapons against unarmed inhabitants, is a taste of what is to come as social tensions grow.

### **Growing tensions with the United States**

32. An additional aim of the confrontation with Russia is to draw together an EU that is increasingly drifting apart. Previously largely defined by economic objectives, such as the free movement of capital and goods and a common currency, the struggle against a common enemy is now intended to secure the cohesion of the EU. As was the case in the Cold War, Russia is once again being presented as the common enemy of “the West.” However, behind the façade of European unity against Russia, tensions are growing. The conflicts that twice transformed Europe into a battlefield in the 20th century are re-emerging. Other EU members are flexing their muscles and preparing to pursue their own imperialist interests. In France, the National Front has been able to expand its influence by promising an exit from the EU and a return to a national currency. Across the Channel, Britain’s own departure from the EU is becoming increasingly likely.

33. Germany’s current alliance with the United States against Russia is also fraught with internal tensions and contradictions. Washington and Berlin follow the same path against Russia, but have different objectives. The aim of the United States is to prevent the emergence of a competing world power on the Eurasian landmass. Its aggression against Russia forms the western edge of its “pivot to Asia,” which is primarily directed against the rise of China. For its part, German imperialism is intent on exploiting Eastern Europe and Russia as a source of energy and cheap labour, as well as a market for its goods, while at the same time maintaining close economic and political relations with China. In Eastern Europe, in the increasingly important Black Sea region, as well as in Russia and China, Germany confronts the United States as its strategic rival.

34. In the Middle East, German imperialism is pursuing its own interests as well. The region is an important market for German industry, and this is threatened by the policy of the United States. The disaster unleashed by the United States in Iraq forced Berlin to re-evaluate its strategy in the region. The tensions between Germany and the United States were expressed most recently following the unmasking of an American spy in Berlin.

35. The weaker American imperialism appears, the more the other imperialist powers develop their own independent strategy. In Asia, Japan has undertaken its own re-militarization with the support of the United States and eradicated the commitment to pacifism contained in its post-war constitution. But Japan has its own independent interests. The basic imperialist conflicts that led to two world wars in the first half of the twentieth century are re-emerging in new forms.

### **The Left Party, the Greens and “human rights imperialism”**

36. All of the parties represented in parliament support German militarism. The Social Democratic Party (SPD), which holds the post of defence minister, is at the forefront of this campaign in the grand coalition. It is celebrating the hundredth anniversary of its vote to support the First World War by preparing another war against Russia. Ten years after the adoption of the Hartz laws, the SPD is reaffirming that it has both feet firmly in the camp of big business and finance. The wealthy politicians, top civil servants, small businessmen and trade union bureaucrats who set the tone in the party no longer seek to reconcile the workers with capitalism through social reforms. Instead, they defend capitalism by ruthless attacks on the working class and support for aggressive great power politics.

37. A central role in the revival of German militarism is being played by the Greens and the Left Party. Nominally, they constitute the opposition in the Bundestag (parliament), but in reality they are integrated at the highest level in the working out of the new policy. Both parties were involved in the drafting of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik strategy paper “New Power—New Responsibility” and support the government on all key issues. Their own special contribution is to disguise the return of German militarism with platitudes about “peace,” “democracy” and “human rights” and suppress popular resistance to the revival of militarism.

38. The Greens long ago junked their pacifism. They have a long record of selling pro-war politics as a “struggle for humanity.” They cynically utilize the historic crimes of German imperialism in the 20th century to justify its crimes in the 21st. In 1999, the Green foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, justified German participation in the Kosovo War with the cynical cry of “No to another Auschwitz.” Since then, the Greens have supported every act of aggression on the part of German imperialism with talk of the defence of “human rights” and “humanity.”

39. When the Greens criticize the government on foreign policy issues, they do so from the right. They were the sharpest critics of Germany’s abstention in the Libya war. Now they are banging the drum for tougher action against Russia and a massive military operation involving German forces in the Middle East. In his Bundestag speech on the 75th anniversary of the German attack on Poland, Green leader Anton Hofreiter called for a new German war policy. “Russia’s aggression must have consequences,” he declared, and demanded that Putin “pay a price for his duplicity.” He added, “In Iraq, it is correct to discuss the use of military force and what Germany can contribute to it.” He continued, “US air strikes are not enough. A more massive military intervention is necessary in keeping with the Responsibility to Protect.”

40. Fifteen years ago, it was the Greens who played the crucial role in organising the return of German militarism on the world stage and whitewashing it with “humanitarian” platitudes. Today it is the Left Party. While Stefan Liebich, the party’s representative on the Foreign

Affairs Committee of the Bundestag, was helping draw up the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik’s new foreign policy strategy, a new consensus was struck in the party. Since then, the Left Party has backed the aggressive foreign policy of the German government.

41. An official statement by the party executive in March blamed Russia for the “confrontational course” and condemned “the military threats of the Russian Federation.” Just one month later, Left Party deputies in the Bundestag voted in favour of a German military mission against Syria—all in the name of “disarmament” and a “peace policy.” Now, the Left Party is attacking the government from the right and advocating a more expansive military operation in the Middle East.

42. In early August, the party’s official newspaper *Neues Deutschland* had already demanded “UN action against the atrocities” of the “jihadists” in Iraq, writing: “The Left Party cannot duck away in this debate.” Party leader Gregor Gysi was one of the first German politicians to call for arms supplies to the Kurds. In the Bundestag he demanded a massive intervention by UN troops. Ulla Jelpke, the spokeswoman for the so-called Anti-Capitalist Left (AkJ), summed up the position of the Left Party during a special session of the Bundestag to discuss German arms shipments to Iraq. She declared: “We are demanding much more for Iraq and Syria than was decided here.”

43. Pseudo-left currents in the party such as Marx21 and Socialist Alternative Germany (SAV) are the most aggressive advocates of “human rights” imperialism. They provide the arguments and ideological justifications with which the ruling class cloaks its war policy. They have described the pro-imperialist opponents of the Syrian Assad regime as “revolutionaries,” portrayed the fascist-led riots on Kiev’s Maidan as a “democratic popular uprising,” and denounced Russia as an “imperialist aggressor” in order to poison public opinion. They are currently agitating for military intervention in Iraq. In one of its latest leaflets, headed “Stop the Islamic State,” the SAV asks: “Why not help when an imminent genocide can be prevented?” By “help” they mean US air strikes.

44. While the SAV specialises in propaganda, Marx21 is personally involved in official war policy at the highest level. Marx21 member Christine Buchholz is the Left Party’s representative on the Bundestag Defence Committee. She is given first-hand information on the war plans of German imperialism. In February, she flew, together with Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen, in an army plane to inspect German troops in Africa.

45. Ninety-five years ago in his book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin wrote: “‘General’ enthusiasm over the prospects of imperialism, furious defence of it and painting it in the brightest colours—such are the signs of the times.” There could be no better description of the reaction of the Greens and the Left Party to the current revival of German militarism. Once again, as Lenin wrote, finance capital is concentrated in a few hands, which dominate all sectors of the economy, while the growing conflicts between the great powers over the redivision of the world “cause the propertied classes to go over entirely to the side of imperialism.” The hysteria and enthusiasm with which the wealthy middle class layers represented by the Greens, the post-Stalinists, the trade union bureaucrats and the petty-bourgeois radicals of the Left Party embrace the imperialist policy of war recalls the feverish support for war by the German middle class prior to WWI and raises fundamental social and historical issues.

### **The Tasks of the PSG**

46. The same factors that drive the ruling class to war also create the objective conditions for socialist revolution. The collapse of the political, economic and social mechanisms that provided Europe with a degree of stability in the post-war period confronts the German bourgeoisie with the same problems that prevailed in the first half of the 20th century. To dominate Europe and strive for world power, it must declare war on the

working class. The same applies to the French, British and all the other European ruling classes. This is underlined by the draconian austerity programs that have become the norm throughout Europe, the unceasing attacks on wages and working conditions, and the systematic erosion of democratic rights. The working class must also bear the costs of militarism—by enduring further cuts in social spending to finance re-armament, by providing cannon fodder for new wars, and through the destruction of democratic rights and the thorough militarization of society.

47. Theoretically, politically and organizationally, the PSG bases its struggle against militarism and war on the working class. It is the only international class and the only force that can prevent a third world war. Its interests stand in diametrical opposition to the capitalist system. The socialist revolution, however, is not an automatic process. Its pace and success is decided in the realm of politics. As Trotsky wrote on the eve of World War II, the historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership. The solution to this crisis depends on the decisions and actions taken to build our party.

48. The PSG conducts tireless political work to develop the consciousness of the working class. It exposes the deceptions, propaganda and lies of the media and all the mouthpieces of the ruling class. It seeks to inoculate workers against all forms of nationalism and chauvinism, and advocates solidarity with the struggles of workers in all countries. It struggles for the unity of the European and international working class on the basis of a socialist program. It rejects the European Union and fights for its replacement by the United Socialist States of Europe. The construction of sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International in Europe is one of the most important tasks in the struggle against war.

49. Our opposition to the war drive against Russia does not imply any support for the regime of President Putin. Its response to the provocations of NATO is an expression of its political bankruptcy. The Putin regime emerged from the dissolution of the Soviet Union under Gorbachev and Yeltsin, the devastating effects of which are becoming clearer by the day. Defending the interests of the billionaire oligarchs who made their fortunes by plundering the Soviet Union's state owned property, the Putin regime fears a mobilization of the international working class that would in turn inspire Russian workers to fight for their class interests. Putin appeals to Russian nationalism. This reactionary policy is one of the major trump cards in the war propaganda of the imperialists.

50. The struggle against war is closely connected with all other areas of party work. The PSG links the struggle against militarism and war with the mobilization of the working class to defend their social and political rights. The fight against imperialism is a struggle against capitalism. All demands arising from opposition to war—the abolition of the Bundeswehr (German military), the immediate withdrawal of German troops abroad, the dissolution of the secret services—require the independent political and revolutionary mobilization of the working class, with the goal of assuming political power and transforming the world economy on a socialist basis. The rational and democratic planning of production to meet social needs must replace the drive to accumulate private profit.

51. The strength of the International Committee of the Fourth International and the PSG is based on the fact that their program corresponds to the logic of global economic development and articulates the interests of the working class. The growth of the party is the conscious expression of this objective process. However, this growth does not take place automatically. It is necessary to fight for its revolutionary program. Each member has the task of building the party in the main factories, workplaces, schools and universities in order to provide the foundation and leadership for the coming struggles of the working class. The construction of the International Committee of the Fourth International and its sections as the new revolutionary leadership of the working class

is *the* central strategic task in the struggle against war.

**Notes:**

[1] Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) and German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF): “New Power—New Responsibility: Elements of German foreign and security policy for a changing world” [back]

[2] Leon Trotsky, “What Next? Vital Questions for the German Proletariat,” *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1971), p. 142. [back]

[3] “The end of the GDR and the prospects for the working class,” Statement of the Central Committee of the BSA, October 21, 1990, in *Das Ende der DDR*, Arbeiterpresse Verlag, pp. 393 and 412-413. [back]

[4] Quoted from “Socialist Prospects following the collapse of Stalinism,” BSA program, 1993, pp. 112-113. [back]

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