

The struggle against war and the tasks of the PSG

By the Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (PSG)
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Between October 31 and November 2, the Socialist Equality Party (Partei für Soziale Gleichheit, PSG), the German section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, held its regular party congress in Berlin. Six weeks before, a special congress of the PSG adopted a detailed resolution on “The Return of German militarism and the tasks of the Socialist Equality Party.” The regular congress confirmed this resolution and an additional resolution, which we publish here, summarizing the conclusions from the developments that had taken place in the intervening weeks.

1. The German ruling elite is responding to the crisis of world capitalism and the impending failure of the European Union with a return to militarism. The Special Conference of the Socialist Equality Party on 13/14 September 2014 analyzed this development and resolved to place the fight against war at the heart of party work. “History is returning with a vengeance,” the resolution states. “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.”

2. Since then, the militarization of Germany has not only continued but accelerated. The highest levels of government, all political parties—CDU/CSU, SPD, Greens and Left Party—the media and leading academics are all involved. Not a day goes by without the media agitating against Russia, calling for a massive upgrade of the *Bundeswehr* (Armed Forces) and demanding a major military intervention in the Middle East. Their campaign is aimed at intimidating the public and silencing all opposition to war.

3. For example, on October 27 in *Spiegel Online*, Klaus Segbers, a political scientist at the Free University of Berlin, complained that Germany had so

far responded to the annexation of Crimea by Russia “mainly with speeches” and “with hesitant, late, half-hearted sanctions.” “Our mentality no longer contains the option of responding to a basic threat—if necessary, with self-defending violence,” he wrote, and called for the use of force “where appropriate, against undemocratic disrupters of peace—decisively, without warning and permanently.”

4. In his latest book, *Will Europe fail?*, former Green Party Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer advocates a sharper confrontation with Russia, which he accuses of seeking to expand into Eastern Europe and the Balkans. “And the Europeans are at odds as always, militarily weak and disinterested, lulled to sleep over the years in their peaceful cloud cuckoo land with their homegrown illusions about the blessings of European-Russian cooperation, Russian money and business,” Fischer writes.

5. A particularly pernicious role in this militaristic campaign is played by the Left Party and the pseudo-left groups within its ranks. They are doing everything to undermine the anti-militarist sentiments in wider layers of the population and mobilize support for the government’s war policy. Fourteen leading party members of the Left Party responded to the renewed military offensive in Iraq and Syria by calling on the federal government to sponsor a resolution in the United Nations to legitimize imperialist military intervention—with German participation. The pseudo-lefts inside the Left Party reject the US bombing missions as ineffective and call instead for a proxy war on the ground—by arming Kurdish militias and other ethnic minorities.

6. The PSG is literally the only political organization in Germany that opposes militarism. Immediately after the Special Congress in September, the PSG launched

an offensive against militarism, holding a series of meetings, “Why do the German elites once again want war?” The most important meeting organized by the IYSSE was at Berlin’s Humboldt University, which has developed into a centre of ideological preparation for war.

7. The IYSSE successfully rebuffed efforts to censor the event politically by the university administration, which had sought to make provision of a room conditional to agreement that “prior to, during and after the meeting, members of the University are not once again maligned, e.g. on leaflets, posters, the Internet, or otherwise reviled as militarists and warmongers.” This was a reference to criticism of professors Jörg Baberowski and Herfried Münkler, who play a key role in the ideological offensive for militarism.

8. The IYSSE refused to accept this condition and published details of the attempted censorship, declaring, “As a student group at the Humboldt University, we consider it not only our right but also our duty to oppose and condemn such views. This in no way stands in contradiction to the discussion of ‘controversial issues on a purely scientific basis’ as stated in your letter. Rather, it forms its very essence.” In the end, the university administration undertook a retreat.

9. The meeting was a great political success. Approximately 200 people, mostly students, took part and attentively followed the lecture. While most had no revolutionary understanding of the causes of war and militarism, the meeting revealed that widespread opposition to war exists among students and workers. The PSG campaign against militarism has brought this opposition to the surface and provided it with an orientation.

10. From the standpoint of the Marxist method and the tasks of the party, this is of great importance. In his *Theses on Feuerbach*, Marx stated, “the chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the *object or of contemplation*, but not as *sensuous human activity, practice*, not subjectively.” Therefore it “does not grasp the significance of ‘revolutionary’, of ‘practical-critical’, activity.” Marx concluded that “The dispute over the reality or non-reality of thinking that is isolated from practice is a purely *scholastic* question.”

11. Determining objective reality is only possible in practice. From this it follows that the party must systematically expand and develop its political and theoretical work in the present period of economic crisis, social tensions and military conflicts.

12. At the centre of the struggle against war is the ongoing analysis and exposure of political developments through the WSWS, a systematic turn to the working class and student youth and a permanent political and theoretical delineation of the PSG from all pseudo-left tendencies. The influence of these bourgeois, pro-imperialist tendencies must be systematically undermined in the working class.

13. “There can be no fight for socialism without a struggle against war and there can be no fight against war without a struggle for socialism,” the International Committee of the Fourth International statement of 3 July 2014 reads. The struggle against war requires the unification of the international working class on the basis of a socialist program. The close collaboration with the other sections of the ICFI, especially in Europe, and the construction of new sections is a central component of the PSG’s political offensive against war.

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