

Back to the Future: War, Fascism and Class Struggle in the 21st Century

David North to speak during Frankfurt Book Fair 2024

Marianne Arens
15 October 2024

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party--SGP) and its publishing house Mehring-Verlag have invited leading Trotskyist David North to speak at a meeting during the Frankfurt Book Fair. This will take place next Saturday at 4:00 p.m. in the Saalbau Gallus.

The title of the meeting is: “Back to the Future: War, Fascism and Class Struggle in the 21st Century.” The announcement of the event states:

The extension of the genocide in Gaza to the entire region and the escalation of the NATO war in Ukraine against Russia show that there are no longer any “red lines” for the imperialist powers. To push through their interests, they are even willing to risk the use of nuclear weapons. However, as in the first half of the 20th century, the same contradictions that lead to world war and the rise of fascist forces also intensify the class struggle and create the basis for overcoming capitalism.

Teams have been active in the region to promote the event among workers and young people. Flyers advertising the event have been well received, with thousands handed out at Goethe University, the University of Applied Sciences, the Riedberg natural science campus and the old Bockenheimer campus, as well as at many workplaces and in working class neighborhoods.

There is great interest in the issues that will be addressed by David North, the chairman of the International Editorial Board of the *World Socialist Web Site* and the author of many books on Trotskyism and the history of the socialist movement.

At Goethe University, hundreds of flyers are being handed out every day by International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) members to students and faculty members. One student, Sofia, came back to the IYSSE information stand with the flyer in her hand on “university start” day for first-year students and said, “I think it’s good what you’re doing, and that someone is really doing something about it.” She said that her parents come from Gaza and agreed that the current protest movement, which essentially appeals to those in power, can achieve absolutely nothing, noting that Israel and the governments backing it are escalating the war.

The same sentiment was voiced by other students who have taken part in demonstrations against the genocide in Gaza, and some bought David North's *The Logic of Zionism: From Nationalist Myth to Genocide in Gaza*, which has just been published in German by Mehring-Verlag.

Many were concerned about the danger of war and the rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). A Polish student who grew up in Australia initially saw a third world war as inevitable, but stopped to learn about the Trotskyist perspective, which bases the fight against war on the working class. He had not been aware of the alternative fought for by Trotsky to the betrayals of Stalinism.

Mehring-Verlag has just published the German edition of Leon Trotsky and the Struggle for Socialism in the 21st Century, by David North, which sheds light on these questions, and much more.

On October 7, teams distributed flyers for David North's lecture at a pro-Palestine demonstration in downtown Frankfurt. The organisers of the demonstration did not offer any viable perspective on how the genocide could be stopped.

Many participants were very bitter about the situation. "We see this enormous escalation, also against Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and especially Iran," said a participant who comes from Syria. "The Israeli regime is now threatening to plunge the whole region into war. A war with Iran would be catastrophic."

Another said, "What Israel has been doing for the last 12 months is nothing other than open genocide and a war crime," adding that the German government had increased its support for Israel.

Tamino Dreisam, a WSWS writer and SGP Executive Committee member, said before the rally, "For a year, millions of people around the world have been demonstrating against the genocide in Gaza. But the governments are not abandoning their policy of war and genocide."

This clearly showed that it was futile to put pressure on governments, he said. "Their policy of war and genocide is not a mistake or foolishness. It is an expression of capitalist class interests. Putting pressure on them is the same as telling the devil to cut off his own claws."

Dreisam called on the audience to attend the event being organised by the SGP and Mehring-Verlag to find out about the only viable perspective. "The only way to stop the genocide and the escalation of war," he said, "is to turn to the only social force that has no interest in war: the international working class."

At the Rödelheim bus station, a campaign team spoke to several bus drivers, who were interested to hear that their colleagues at public transit operator BVG in Berlin are beginning to organise independently of the Verdi trade union. There were drivers from Poland, Romania and Turkey.

A German bus driver with three children said he now had to pay kindergarten fees that the state used to pay. "I earn just €2,500 gross a month," he said. "Now I'm supposed to pay the €300 fees myself because all the

taxpayers' money is going to Ukraine. Who wants this war? — Nobody."

The team explained that the SGP fights for independent rank-and-file action committees in all workplaces to jointly oppose layoffs, wage theft and the pro-war policy.

In front of Deutsche Bahn (DB) railway offices in Frankfurt, a sales employee took the flyer and said: "It's good that you're addressing the job cuts. Here at DB, 30,000 jobs are being cut, and apparently no one is bothered. The EVG trade union has just agreed to job cuts at DB Cargo."

In fact, jobs are under threat at numerous companies where the SGP and IYSSE campaigned for David North's lecture. This includes tire maker Continental in Rödelheim and auto maker Opel in Rüsselsheim.

As SGP Chairman Christoph Vandreier states in a video for Saturday's event:

As in the first half of the 20th century, the same contradictions that led to world war and the rise of fascist forces are intensifying the class struggle and thus creating the conditions for overcoming capitalism. Only a socialist perspective can stop a relapse into barbarism.

Back to the Future: War, Fascism and Class Struggle in the 21st Century

Event with David North

Saturday, October 19, 4pm

Saalbau Gallus, Fritz-Bauer-Saal

Frankenallee 111, Frankfurt am Main



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact