

Solidarity instead of geopolitics

Monday 20 February 2023, by [ZELLER Christian](#) (Date first published: 2 February 2023).

The appeal “Stop the war”, initiated by parts of the Left Party, sees only a great power conflict in the war in Ukraine; it does not even perceive the Ukrainian population as acting subjects.

Russian troops are bombing cities, killing people incessantly and deliberately destroying civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. In the east of the country, they have razed Soledar and large parts of Bachmut to the ground and are advancing westwards. Vladimir Putin’s regime is militarising Russian society and industry. Its military hasards herd hundreds of young men to the slaughter every day. Currently, the Russian occupation forces are preparing another major offensive.

In this situation, the Left Party warns against an escalation of the war - by the West. “Supplying weapons only leads to a further escalation of the war,” reads a recent resolution of the party executive. While supporting “Ukraine’s right to self-defence against Russia’s attack, as guaranteed by international law”, the party does not want to grant the people weapons for self-defence.

This contradictory attitude of de facto refusal of solidarity, however, does not go far enough for some party currents. Last week, the appeal “Stop the War” was published. It was initiated by Heinz Bierbaum, president of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, which is close to the party, and Christine Buchholz, who is a member of the party executive. The appeal interprets the war geopolitically, as a proxy war. NATO and the EU are both interested in expanding their geopolitical influence and bringing Russia to its knees. The war in Ukraine is therefore “predominantly a war between Russia on the one side and Nato on the other”.

This appeal only sees great powers and their alleged interests, it disregards the Ukrainian population. It does not even name them as actors. Do the authors really think that the dynamics of this war can be understood without the broadly supported social resistance against the Russian occupation? Many people in Ukraine are resisting Russian imperialism - regardless of what the USA or Germany are doing. It was this resistance that gave the NATO countries the chance to weaken Russia’s position in the first place.

Even after a year of war, this will to resist exists, although the neoliberal government of Volodymyr Zelensky severely restricts the rights of workers and the companies intensify exploitation. If this resistance did not exist, the governments of the Nato countries would not even be faced with the uncomfortable decision of whether to supply tanks to Ukraine.

A prerequisite for peace is that the Ukrainian people can live safely and sovereignly in their country. Those who call for a ceasefire without taking this elementary concern into account are tolerating Russian aggression. Do we want to force Ukraine into a situation where the government feels compelled to hand over part of the population to the Russian dictatorship of occupation with prison camps, torture, expulsions, and Russian indoctrination in school lessons?

The whole world knows that a ceasefire is concluded on the basis of concrete military and political power relations. But who would be able to bring Putin to the negotiating table? If the

Ukrainians:inside stopped fighting, they would come under an occupying dictatorship. If the USA and Germany stopped supplying weapons, Ukrainian defeat would be certain. Putin's regime is preparing for a long war and is gearing the whole of society towards it.

Many in the Left Party warn against escalation. A nuclear power cannot be defeated militarily. But for the people in Ukraine, this escalation is taking place every day. A look back at history: the Vietnamese resistance, with strong support from the USSR and China, forced the nuclear power USA to retreat. The anti-colonial fighters in Algeria and the Mujahedin and Taliban in Afghanistan also defeated nuclear powers. How can anything socially change for the better if the imperial claims of nuclear powers are accepted from the outset?

One can have doubts about the delivery of weapons to Ukraine. What is unacceptable, however, is that solidarity with the resistance of the terrorised Ukrainian people is denied, that they are not even perceived as acting subjects. The fact that this resistance is taking place through the army of a capitalist state is irrelevant. Emancipatory forces have to orientate themselves exclusively towards the interests of the attacked, oppressed and driven out, regardless of what one or the other imperialist power wants.

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