

# German Left Party defends its support for war against Syria

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Two weeks after top German Left Party officials signed a statement calling for intervention in Syria, *Neues Deutschland*, the Left Party's main newspaper, published a comment by its editor-in-chief, Tom Strohschneider, reiterating its support for the war against Syria.

Strohschneider begins his article, entitled “We have to talk: on the debate about the Syria appeal Freedom Needs Assistance,” by praising the Syrian opposition as a progressive movement that must be supported. He writes that people “had the courage to go into the streets against [Syrian President] Assad, to protest for their rights, for democratic reforms and social equality.”

He adds that the “Freedom Needs Assistance” statement—signed by leaders of the Left Party, the ruling Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Social Democratic Party (SPD), and the Greens—was issued to build support for “civilian resistance” in Syria: “It was about solidarity with the local coordination committees, Kurdish initiatives, student groups and Palestinian youth who reject the military logic.”

This is a falsification. The opposition forces praised by Strohschneider, such as the Local Coordination Committees (LCCs), support the military operations of NATO and its Islamist proxies to oust Assad and install a pro-Western puppet regime in Syria.

The LCCs are part of the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces (NCSROF), the Western-backed umbrella organization of the Syrian opposition. The NCSROF was cobbled together by Washington in Doha last November and is considered the “legitimate representative of the Syrian people” by the NATO powers and the Gulf States. Dominated by the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood, it calls on its supporters to “bring down the regime” through

armed struggle carried out alongside Islamist terrorist forces.

The so-called “Adopt a Revolution” (AaR) initiative, which, together with the human rights group Medico International, issued the “Freedom Needs Assistance” statement, raises funds for the Syrian opposition. Its founders and leaders include members of the Islamist-dominated Syrian National Council such as Rami Nakhle, Ferhad Ahma and Hosan Ibrahim. They have all repeatedly called for foreign military intervention in Syria.

Backed by the CIA, Al Qaeda-type forces like the Al-Nusra Front and other Islamist brigades are waging a sectarian war against religious minorities, setting off car bombs in civilian areas and murdering and torturing suspected supporters of the Assad regime. Since the war began, tens of thousands of Syrians have been killed and hundreds of thousands more turned into refugees. Much of Syria’s cultural heritage, including World Heritage Sites such as the historic *souk* (market) in Aleppo, has been destroyed.

Strohschneider is trying to defuse broad public opposition to foreign intervention in Syria and help rally political and financial support for the Western-backed armed opposition. He does this by posturing as an advocate of an all-sided debate on the political “left” about supporting the AaR initiative.

He writes: “We have to talk. Without a self-critical debate about the conflict in Syria that seriously addresses different standpoints, the left in this country will repeat an oft-made mistake: it will become politically entrenched. This neither helps the left nor, and this is more important, helps the people in Syria or anywhere else whose pursuit of liberation, self-emancipation, democracy, and social justice has a right to be taken seriously and not be dispersed in the

intricacies of great world interpretations.”

The entire so-called “debate” proposed by Strohschneider is in bad faith. Far from being “self-critical” or left-wing, it obscures and dismisses the central issue in the war: the role of the imperialist powers in arming and promoting murderous, right-wing opposition forces in Syria.

Strohschneider's demand that the “left” not become “politically entrenched” or get “dispersed in the intricacies of great world interpretations” reflects the Left Party's hostility to any firm political principles in general, and to Marxism in particular. Opposing any concrete analysis of the political situation in Syria, the class character of the opposition and the role of imperialism, Strohschneider promotes the lie that democracy in Syria can be achieved by right-wing forces allied to imperialism.

Strohschneider baldly states: “Yes, Syria is at the mercy of international interests. As cracks grow in the political order, regional powers want to seize their chance; behind the call for human rights stand murderous regimes, arms traders and religious leaders. All this is true, but it doesn't relieve us of the responsibility for those who are fighting for a better world—not despite this reality, but because of it. With all the mistakes one can make. In Syria and here.”

This debased statement exposes the deeply reactionary character of the Left Party, which functions as a political agency of German imperialism. Strohschneider knows that the Left Party's promotion of the Syrian war as a war for human rights is a political cover for the bloodstained regimes of the NATO powers, Turkey and the Persian Gulf feudal regimes, as well as the arms dealers and Islamist fanatics with whom they work. He proudly supports the war nonetheless.

As he covers for the Left Party's support for a US-led imperialist war, Strohschneider concocts the most incoherent lies. He claims that the forces he is promoting, who are armed and financed by imperialism, are fighting for “a better world,” not only against Assad but also apparently against their own imperialist backers!

The position which emerges out of Strohschneider's arguments is no different from the claims of US imperialism that by invading and occupying virtually defenseless countries and installing puppet regimes it is

spreading democracy and human rights. Strohschneider would have us think that the horrendous crimes carried out by the Bush and Obama administrations in the neocolonial wars against Iraq and Afghanistan are mere “excesses” or “mistakes” in the pursuit of “a better world.”

A man who can write such things is capable of supporting any crime carried out by German imperialism. He lies about the war against Syria without seeing any need to justify his arguments because he and his party instinctively support the interests of German imperialism.

Strohschneider's statement must be taken as a warning by the working class in Germany. As its support for an imperialist crime of such monstrous proportions shows, the Left Party has nothing to do with left or progressive politics. It will stop at nothing to defend German capitalism against any revolutionary threat from the working class.



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