

German newspaper close to the Left Party slanders refugees

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The refugee crisis is functioning as a political catalyst, exacerbating social and political conflicts. While many working people have demonstrated tremendous solidarity with the plight of the refugees, the ruling elites are trying to exploit the situation for a reactionary agenda.

They seek to exploit the plight of refugees in order to attack basic social and democratic rights, to push down the standard of living of all workers and implement new military interventions in Africa.

At the same time, they want to strangle the opposition to this policy, especially as it expresses itself in solidarity for the refugees, with racist and anti-refugee campaigns. The newspaper *Junge Welt*, which is close to the Left Party, is supporting this agenda.

Last Friday, the head of the paper's economics department, Klaus Fischer, published an article in which he presents solidarity with the refugees mainly as a "marketing tool" of German business, and the refugees themselves as being responsible for pushing down wages.

According to Fischer, in an act of "brainwashing", the current mass immigration is being defined as a "blessing" about which no questions are permitted. When politicians talk of "colourfulness" and a "welcoming culture", they only want to enforce the interests of capital, which needs "job slaves", or cheap labour, because it provides too few apprenticeships. Moreover, unskilled labour from the Balkans provides competition for Germany's "own precariat (class suffering from social insecurity)", said Fischer.

Fischer briefly mentions the fact that the streams of refugees had been unleashed by the policies of the "Lords of the West", who now confront the "result of their work" with astonishment. But all in all, he draws a picture of forced immigration which threatens to blow

apart Germany's social systems.

In this, he completely ignores the situation in which the refugees find themselves. There is no mention of the images of the miserable people on Europe's frontiers who are being attacked and abused by border guards, or the tens of thousands driven to their deaths by the European Union's immigration rules, or asylum seekers who are herded into camps in Germany where there is no medical care and inadequate sanitary facilities.

For Fischer, these scenes are apparently only propaganda to justify immigration. In his opinion, this is all part of a campaign of "Gleichschaltung" (political conformity). "The inquisitors of opinion monitor a politically correct treatment of the topic." What is needed is analysis, "instead of the prescribed manipulation of emotions", he says.

In relation to refugees, such insults against an alleged "politically correct" media can usually be found in extreme right-wing publications. Fischer's talk of an immigration-friendly conformist press is absurd given the nasty xenophobic campaigns, such as support for the right-wing extremist Pegida movement by politicians and the media, or the most recent witch-hunting of refugees by the influential politics professor Herfried Münkler.

Fischer's attacks on the media are obviously meant to whip up sentiments against refugees. The essence of his thesis is the same old, far-right slogan that foreigners take away "our" jobs.

Fischer is not alone in his position at *Junge Welt*. Last Wednesday, the senior editor, Arnold Schölzel, published a commentary that goes in a very similar direction.

First, Schölzel spins a yarn about "wage and pension increases" in Germany that the employers cannot

accept in the long run. This is why they are now strongly in favour of immigration, in order to redistribute wealth from the bottom to the top. Schölzel does not spare a single word about the inhumane situation facing refugees, but presents them exclusively as being responsible for pushing down wages.

This nationalist position runs deep with both journalists. Fischer and Schölzel were both citizens of the GDR (former East Germany), who were enthusiastic supporters of Stalinism and who still sympathise with its dictatorial regime. Born in 1951, Fischer was a member of the FDJ Stalinist youth organisation and later the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED). Schölzel, who is four years older, worked until 1989 for the Stasi Stalinist secret police, for whom he spied on oppositional students at Humboldt University.

The ideology of the GDR was based on the Stalinist position of “socialism in one country”, consciously resting on the traditions of German nationalism. The few authorized migrants allowed into the GDR were kept largely separated from ordinary workers, and faced discrimination. The state apparatus itself conducted xenophobic campaigns.

But the insults of *Junge Welt* cannot simply be explained by nostalgia for the Stalinist dictatorship. They serve very definite social interests. The Left Party, which is the successor to the SED, has been actively involved in the implementation of a war policy that has produced the misery of the people now fleeing to Europe.

In Syria, it systematically built up the pro-imperialist Syrian opposition to overthrow the regime of Bashar al-Assad and replace it with a pro-Western puppet regime. The groups supported worked closely with the US and constantly called for NATO military intervention.

Only on Monday, Elias Perabo of the pro-imperialist initiative “Adopt a Revolution” published a discussion piece in the Left Party newspaper *Neues Deutschland* in which he demanded Germany finally stop being a spectator and actively intervene in Syria to overthrow the Assad regime. He called the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) mission to destroy chemical weapons, supported by sections of the Left Party in parliament, “spectating”.

However, the Left Party has proved not only an important pillar of German imperialism, it is also deeply involved in pushing through social cuts within

Germany. In the Berlin state government, together with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), it organised unprecedented austerity measures. In Thuringia, the first Left Party state premier Bodo Ramelow swiftly accepted the debt ceiling proscribing the taking on of new loans.

The abuse of refugees as being responsible for pushing down wages arises from the logic of this programme. Those who support German imperialism and organise the cuts in social spending have an interest in dividing workers and shifting the blame onto others.

However, in order to defend their social interests, workers who have lived here longer must unite with the refugees. In reality, the attacks on the social and democratic rights of asylum seekers are aimed against all workers.

The misery generated by the military interventions in Africa and the Middle East is being exploited to justify new wars that will only further increase the misery. The source of this resurgence of German militarism, like the cause of the social attacks within Germany itself, lies in the deep crisis of capitalism.

For workers, there is no national solution to this problem. They must unite internationally in order to conduct a joint political struggle against capitalism. They must decisively oppose nationalist positions, such as those formulated in *Junge Welt*.



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