

# Die Zeit campaigns for military intervention in Libya

Johannes Stern  
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“And now Libya,” it reads in large letters on the front page of the current edition of the German news weekly *Die Zeit*. The message of the editorial by Gero von Randow, the weekly’s political editor, is clear: Following Iraq and Syria, the West should now intervene militarily in Libya under the guise of the fight against “Islamic State”.

Von Randow writes: “So, Libya. As if there were not already enough regions of urgency. But we have to look there, because the country now not only serves IS as a safe haven, but also as a staging post for recent attacks.” This was an “alarming find, for us in Europe too”.

To mobilize support for a new, and this time much more extensive intervention in the oil-rich country after the NATO bombing in 2011, von Randow claims that IS stands on the verge of overrunning large parts of Africa and even Europe. “From North African Libya, IS wants to expand southward to Chad and Niger, west to Tunisia and Algeria and not least to the north, to Europe.”

“Tripoli or Ben Guerdane [in Tunisia] is only 500 kilometres away from Italy. The Caliphate fascism moves closer to us”, von Randow enjoins his readers. Moreover, “if North Africa should become a second Syria, another mass exodus” is threatened, “this time not via Turkey, but via Italy”.

Visibly satisfied, von Randow notes that the *New York Times* had already reported on “Washington’s plans for a massive military intervention in Libya”. Also, “American warplanes had already attacked a Libyan IS base close to the Tunisian border,” and there were increasing reports of American, British, French and Italian special forces supporting opponents of IS on Libyan soil”.

Von Randow is aware that the “massive military

intervention” of which he writes would not only breach international law but would stand in the worst traditions of European colonialism.

Under conditions of “state collapse” and “two competing governments”, “no one had the legitimacy in the eyes of Libyans to beg abroad for a military intervention,” says von Randow. “The dilemma: Any intervention by former colonial powers would provide IS with political credit in the country—to defer in turn meant granting the terrorists time to entrench themselves deeper into Libya.”

Cynically he adds: “So whatever is done or not done will end badly. The skill is to make the less bad choice.”

“Whether there will be an international intervention in Libya” was “uncertain”, notes von Randow, just to make it clear in the next sentence what he regards as the “less bad choice”. The only conditions he places on an “international intervention” is that it should not be limited to Libya, and also involve the use of combat troops!

He writes: “It must ... only be undertaken when Tunisia is prevented from being overrun by retreating IS troops. So far, it has protected itself only by means of porous sand walls and with troops of limited effectiveness. Foreign powers, if they intervene in Libya, therefore, have the moral obligation to provide the Tunisians with all relevant resources to secure their border—combat forces included”.

Von Randow is one of those media lackeys who were already of the opinion in 2011 that German non-participation in the NATO bombing of Libya had been a big mistake, which must be corrected. A cursory glance at his outpourings in recent years provides eloquent testimony to his position.

In March 2011, he published an editorial headlined,

“The clever Monsieur Sarkozy,” in which he praised the former French president for his central role in the war in Libya. With the French intervention and official recognition of the “rebel council as lawful representatives of Libya”, Sarkozy had shown “decisiveness”. He could use this to “score points again—this time even in the political centre and the left.”

With his warmongering, Sarkozy could apparently “score points” especially with von Randow himself. In the following months, von Randow spent much of his “journalistic” work with the French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy (BHL), who played a key role in organizing the intervention of the imperialist powers under the false flag of human rights.

On March 31, 2011, Randow published an interview with BHL on *Zeit online* with a programmatic headline calling for the sacking of the then-German foreign minister Guido Westerwelle: “Fire Westerwelle. The philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy on bombs against Gadhafi and German, popular pacifism”.

Later, there followed joint calls to escalate the war in Syria. On November 3, 2011, an interview was published under the title, “Evil remains: Must the West also intervene in Syria? What will happen to Libya? Is Sarkozy now a friend? An interview with the French philosopher and advocate of war Bernard-Henri Lévy”. And on March 8, 2012: “What are we waiting for? Europe invites shame on itself if it does not stop the killing in Syria, says the French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy.”

This culminated with an article by von Randow in June 2015. Under the headline, “My foreign friend”, he published an obituary for a fallen jihadi, underscoring that imperialism in Libya and Syria had worked for a long time with the same Islamist forces that were now being used as a pretext to intervene again militarily.

“My friend Zied is dead, only 33 years old, he fell in the fight against the Syrian army. Zied Kanoun was a Tunisian revolutionary. And jihadi,” von Randow complained, and reported further: “Over two years ago, he left his wife Betty and their baby to fight against Syrian dictator Assad. But on whose side? Zied wandered around, tried with IS, with Al-Nusra (an offshoot of Al Qaeda) and others.”

Von Randow did not mince his words and even admitted that he had been discussing with “his friend

Zied” on Facebook “for months”, “even when he was already in Syria”. It was no longer possible to agree “on most things”, however, until the end, “contempt for kleptocracy and the police state—and the search for truth and the real life” united them.

Von Randow’s “search for truth and the real life” led him from the editorship of *elan*, the Stalinist Socialist German Young Workers (SDAJ) youth magazine published in the late 1970s/early 1980s, to the political department of *Die Zeit*. He is thus a prime example of a generation of former Stalinists, Pabloites and Maoists who now hire themselves out as well-paid manipulators in the media and politics, and have set themselves the goal of reviving German militarism and imperialism.



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