

Berlin demonstration against Ukraine war: From serious concerns to pro-NATO propaganda

Max Linhof, Christoph Vandreier
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Well over 100,000 people demonstrated in Berlin on Sunday against the war in Ukraine. Many participants were shocked by the Russian attack and came to the demonstration to express their concern about an escalation of the conflict. They carried Ukrainian flags, peace signs and rainbow flags.

“I am here because I am deeply shocked that something like this is possible in the 21st century,” said a member of the group “Grandmas against the right.” She was “insanely angry at how much money and material is now being wasted on war that we could all need right now for climate protection and for a liveable future.”

Another participant said, “I am here to express my desire for peace. The war must stop no matter what.” A social worker said that weapons must be laid down. “We are all human beings, and we should not do this. No way, no how. There is no point in doing that. We have seen this in the past and it is catching up with us so madly. The fact that we haven’t learned from this is an incredible shame.”

But the demonstration was marked by misunderstanding and political confusion, which was exploited by the organisers to promote an aggressive pro-NATO policy against Russia.

Verdi service union leader Frank Werneke declared that Germany had the responsibility to “restore the peaceful order.” Therefore, it must now react with tough sanctions, which should not be weakened because of the economic interests of corporations.

Christoph Bautz, executive director of the pro-government organisation Campact, also spoke out in favour of tough sanctions. He declared the war in Ukraine a fight for “democracy” and “our liberal value

system.” Waving flags alone would not help, but one had to respond in the only language Putin understood. Therefore, gas and oil imports must be stopped, even if that means “shutting down industrial production.” He did not discuss the consequences for jobs and housing costs in Europe.

Climate activist and Green Party politician Luisa Neubauer sang from the same song sheet and called for a shift away from Russian gas, which was financing the war. “Weapons alone are not enough,” she declared, thus also backing the German government’s arms deliveries to the Ukrainian army.

The call for confrontation with Russia was accompanied by the complete concealment of the background to the attack on Ukraine. Not a word was spoken about NATO’s illegal wars or the systematic encirclement of Russia. In the speeches, the enormous danger of a third world war, which is threatened by the escalation on the part of NATO, was largely ignored, as well as by many participants.

Yet only a few hours before the demonstration in a speech in the Bundestag (federal parliament), Chancellor Olaf Scholz had announced that Germany would supply weapons to Ukraine, increase the deployment of troops to the Russian border and triple Germany’s war budget for 2022.

Governments in the US, Germany and the other NATO states are using the war against Ukraine to increase arms spending without precedent and drive the nuclear power Russia more and more into a corner. Their goal is to reduce the country to colonial dependence and annex its numerous natural resources.

Only against this background can the war against Ukraine be understood. It is the product of the policy of

the last 30 years, during which NATO encircled Russia more and more and waged countless illegal wars of aggression, among other things, in order to push back Russian influence. Now, NATO is reacting by threatening Russia with open war and amassing troops on the Russian border.

The Russian attack on Ukraine must be rejected from the standpoint of international socialism. The demonisation of Russia, which was all-pervasive at the demonstration, on the other hand, serves to cloak NATO's previous aggression and justify future wars. The logic of this policy leads directly to a third world war.

Representatives of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) distributed a statement by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) at Sunday's demonstration to lay the basis for a genuine anti-war movement that opposes the NATO warmongers as well as the Russian invasion. In the statement, "Oppose the Putin government's invasion of Ukraine and US-NATO warmongering! For the unity of Russian and Ukrainian workers!" states:

Despite the provocations and threats by the US and NATO powers, Russia's invasion of Ukraine must be opposed by socialists and class-conscious workers. The catastrophe that was set in motion by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 cannot be averted on the basis of Russian nationalism, a thoroughly reactionary ideology that serves the interests of the capitalist ruling class represented by Vladimir Putin.

On this basis, NATO's war propaganda is rejected in the strongest terms and the historical context of the Russian attack is shown:

As always, the US media projects on to whomever it confronts as an enemy the image of pure evil. This explains nothing. The present confrontation with Russia is the outcome of a geopolitical strategy pursued by the United

States since the dissolution of the USSR 30 years ago. Its aim has been US global hegemony, using military power to offset economic decline. This has been the source of the numerous and unending series of wars launched by the US, involving the invasion and/or bombing of Iraq, Somalia, Serbia, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria.

Based on this historical understanding of the conflict, the ICFI develops the only perspective that can prevent a world war:

The danger of a catastrophe can only be averted by the action of the working class, within the US and throughout the world, on the basis of a revolutionary socialist program. ... The ICFI calls for an immediate end to the war. In opposing the invasion of Ukraine, we denounce the policies of US/NATO imperialism, whose claims to be defending democracy and human rights are blood-drenched with hypocrisy.

This perspective now acquires crucial importance. Against the all-party coalition for rearmament and war against Russia, a genuine anti-war movement of the international working class must be developed, which makes common cause neither with the NATO aggressors nor with the nationalist Putin regime. We call on all those who wish to participate in such a movement to contact the *World Socialist Web Site* and take up the struggle for socialism.



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