

The “No to Wars” demonstration: A cover for the war policy of the German government

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The “No to Wars—Stop the Rearmament Madness—Make the Future Peaceful and Just” demonstration taking place on Saturday in Berlin is a cynical attempt to steer the growing opposition to the NATO war in Ukraine and the genocide in Gaza into a dead end.

Anyone genuinely wishing to fight against the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East should take a closer look at the organisers’ politics. The Left Party and the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance, which together with 200 other organisations and individuals are calling for the demonstration, are playing a malicious double game. They employ general phrases against war and rearmament madness, but in practice they support the warmongers and their policies.

This is particularly evident in Gaza. Israel is conducting a systematic policy of genocide and expulsion. It has dropped ammunition with the explosive power of two Hiroshima bombs on a densely populated area little more than half the size of Berlin, killed more than 14,000 civilians and injured over 36,000, displaced 1.6 million from their homes and destroyed large parts of the infrastructure. And this is just the beginning.

Washington and Berlin are fueling this massacre with money and weapons because they see the repression of the Palestinian resistance as a prerequisite for their own domination in the resource-rich region.

The Left Party has joined this murderous campaign. On October 12, the Left Party’s parliamentary faction, which at the time also included the deputies of the Wagenknecht Alliance, voted together with the right-wing extremist Alternative for Germany (AfD) and all other parties in favour of a Bundestag (federal parliament) resolution that gives the Israeli government a blank cheque and promises it all available support.

On October 22, Left Party Chairman Martin Schirdewan spoke alongside the Israeli ambassador and German president at a cross-party demonstration at the Brandenburg Gate to back Israel’s genocide. The recent Left Party congress in Augsburg also continued this course. The

guiding motion, passed by a large majority, states: “Israel has the right to defend itself.” A delegate who criticized the genocide in Gaza was booed.

The Left Party also supports NATO warmongers in the war in Ukraine. The European election programme adopted in Augsburg condemns Putin’s “criminal war of aggression” and advocates “punishing those responsible.” There was not a single syllable of criticism for NATO, which has systematically encircled Russia since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, provoked the Kremlin’s invasion and fueled the war with billions.

Sahra Wagenknecht criticises the war in Ukraine, but not because she rejects German militarism. Rather, she believes that Germany would be better off ending the alliance with the US today than tomorrow and pursuing its own geopolitical interests as a “European leader.”

Among the keynote speakers at a rally under the slogan “Uprising for Peace,” which Wagenknecht organized together with feminist Alice Schwarzer on February 25, was retired Brigadier General Erich Vad, a fervent militarist and longtime insider of Germany’s security apparatus.

In an article for the right-wing extremist Swiss *Weltwoche* last summer, Wagenknecht demanded that Germany finally “focus on its own security and economic interests.” It must not be satisfied with the role of the “vassal” of the US but must become its own pole of power in a “multipolar world.”

Both the Left Party and the Wagenknecht Alliance are deeply troubled by the resistance to militarism and social cuts expressed in the worldwide mass demonstrations against the genocide in Gaza and a growing international strike movement against wage and social cuts, which they fear as much as the government. That is why, although they have just split, they are cooperating at the Berlin demonstration to stifle the growing resistance.

The list of signatories to the appeal reads as if the peace movements of the early 1980s and 2000s had risen from their graves, both of which ended in debacles because they refused to combine the struggle against war with the struggle against capitalism. The NatureFriends environmental group,

the German Communist Party (DKP), various peace initiatives, numerous active and former trade union officials and professors have also signed the appeal. All that is missing are the Greens and the Social Democrats' youth organization, which are now firmly in the government's war camp.

The organisers are not interested in peace but in covering up the war course of the Social Democrat/Green/Free Democrat coalition, which includes parties with whom they work closely at the federal, state and local levels. The only peace that interests them is the "labour peace" with the ruling class.

The appeal for the demonstration carefully avoids any wording that could be interpreted as a call to build a movement *against* the German government. Instead, it foments the illusion that Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Defence Minister Boris Pistorius, Foreign Minister Analena Baerbock & Co. could be moved by pressure from the streets to a more peaceful policy.

"We demand from the Federal Government an end to unrestrained rearmament, as well as immediate mediation for a ceasefire and peace negotiations," the appeal reads. "We advocate a new détente policy and for arms control and disarmament."

One may as well ask a wolf to become a vegetarian. The federal government will not abandon its war policy. It is one of the worst warmongers in both Ukraine and the Middle East.

Chancellor Scholz has just announced that military aid to Ukraine will be doubled to €8 billion, so that Ukrainian and Russian soldiers will continue to slaughter each other in a deadlocked trench warfare next year. The German government denounces resistance to the genocide in Gaza as antisemitism and prosecutes it as a crime.

It is not pursuing this war course because, as the appeal claims, it has turned away from Willy Brandt's "détente" policy but because now it can only achieve the goals that Brandt pursued with his Ostpolitik—unhindered access to the raw materials and markets of Eastern Europe, Russia and other regions of the world—by military force.

Defense Minister Pistorius does not want to make Germany "warlike" because he has lost his mind but because German imperialism, whose interests the Social Democrat-led coalition represents, can only expand under the conditions of an advanced crisis of world capitalism by resorting to violence. It is returning to its criminal traditions, supported by all parties represented in the Bundestag.

Three decades ago, with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a fierce struggle for the redivision of the world began. The US, Germany and other major powers wanted direct access to the vast areas that had been deprived of

capitalist exploitation since the October Revolution of 1917. They moved NATO's borders further and further east and organized a right-wing coup in Ukraine in 2014, which ultimately provoked the war with Russia.

In the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa, where national governments had maneuvered between the US and the Soviet Union, the US and its NATO allies waged one brutal war after another to restore their colonial hegemony. The war in Ukraine and the genocide in Gaza are two fronts of this global expansion, which is increasingly openly becoming a third world war whose main target is the rising economic power of China.

The brutality with which the NATO powers use tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers as cannon fodder and support the slaughter of the Palestinians shows that they will stop at nothing, not even at the use of nuclear weapons.

During the First World War, the Russian revolutionary leader Vladimir Lenin wrote: "One of the forms of deception of the working class is pacifism and abstract preaching of peace. Under capitalism, particularly in its imperialist stage, wars are inevitable." On the eve of the Second World War, Leon Trotsky quoted this phrase, adding: "It is impossible to fight against imperialist war if one whines for peace in the manner of pacifists. ... Only a revolutionary mass struggle against war and imperialism that produces war can ensure a real peace."

This is as true today as it was then. It is impossible to put pressure on the warmongers; they must be disempowered. Only an independent movement of the international working class, combining the struggle against war, oppression and exploitation with a socialist program to overthrow capitalism, can prevent a nuclear catastrophe. The objective conditions for such a movement are developing rapidly, but it needs a conscious perspective and a political party to lead it. Building such a movement is the goal of the Socialist Equality Party and the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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