

Beyond Yes and No: A Communist's Guide to Consent

By J.K. Singh

Talking about sex is hard—but talking about consent is even harder. Between poor sex education and misleading media portrayals, we rarely learn how to communicate boundaries and desires openly. A communist guide on the topic.

We are not taught much in sex education classes at school. We can consider ourselves lucky if we learn how to put condoms on bananas or get handed a tampon. But it's not really that helpful when you're trying to have sex. In class, the focus is on genitals, with the female ones often being misrepresented (for example, the clitoris is not a small spot that is veeeeery hard to find), and homosexuality, bisexuality and asexuality are not really touched upon. Intimacy, responsibility or feelings are hardly ever talked about. Instead, sex education falls back on the wide range of distorted representations of intimacy and sexuality in bourgeois society.

Um, what does that mean?

Whether in movies or series: intimacy is portrayed in extremes. Either the basis is love until the end of the infinite universe, or it's about proving one's own wo

rth by getting someone into bed. There's not much in between. Usually, of course, the man also knows what the woman needs. Without asking, he can just feel that the woman wants to be kissed and, through telekinesis, everything fits together seamlessly until suddenly you're naked – and the woman gets an orgasm from pure penetration. That's the "nice" version; after all, there are still plenty of moments where the woman says no, but the man of course knows very well that this is just a secret code word for "fuck me". Accordingly, he acts on it, and as a spectator, you don't know what to do with the sexual violence you've just seen.

What can happen as a result?

In summary, that doesn't sound very sexy. And it isn't. The idea that you have to "conquer" your love interest leads to many problems in practice. This is how sexual boundaries are crossed and assaults occur. This can happen consciously, for example, if you do not take a "no" as a "no" because you believe that you have to convince the other person. Or unconsciously, when you just do it because you believe that asking is a sign of ignorance and weakness. Likewise, you feel pressured yourself because you are trying to live up to an ideal standard that does not even exist. Thus, sexuality degenerates into an individual performance in which you magically know what the other person is thinking and have to "prove" yourself.

But why is that so?

This is mainly because, in bourgeois society, sex is primarily there to ensure reproduction. For the ruling class, that means offspring to whom they can pass on their property (this inheritance usually takes place through the male line). For the working class, this further secures the existence of the family, which, among other things, is also the place where one can recover and reproduce one's own labor. This may sound quite outdated, but it is the basis on which much is happening today.

Under capitalism, 1. bourgeois states and large corporations are always in economic competition and therefore need as many new workers as possible on the market. And 2., especially in the oppression of women, that they must be pushed into unpaid domestic work and the role of the educator, so that the capitalists have to spend as little as possible on reproductive work - otherwise they would make less profit. Thus, domestic labor is pressed into the private sphere. Both patriarchal inheritance and private reproductive labor ensure that women are supposed to fit into the typical bourgeois family, because only in this way can the man also inherit his property to "his children" and have a place to retreat to in the working class for recreation. Women are degraded to mere birth and child-rearing machines that don't need to enjoy sex. They are supposed to fixate on only one man, whom they love for life, and to justify the fact that they now also have to do most of the

housework (in addition to their jobs) unpaid, they are portrayed as being worth less and more stupid. All of this is reflected in our society. Like housework, sex is increasingly being pushed into the private sphere. The 1968 movement played an important role in pushing back outdated sexual morals, but it was unable to address the fundamental problem. As a result, we now have a more open approach to sexuality in many areas, but this has also led to a liberalization of the sex market with all its negative facets.

This means that sexuality under capitalism is not intended for personal development. Even if it seems that as an individual you can enjoy unlimited freedoms, that is not the point at all. Rather, sexuality is strongly influenced by the fact that existing patterns of oppression such as racism, sexism and LGBTIA+ discrimination are reproduced, which actively prevent us from developing freely and reflecting prejudices. For example, women of colour are often exoticized or there is a very strong focus on the man as the initiator, while the woman is often a silent accessory. Our sex life is therefore always a question of our socialization and cannot be considered separately from society.

What can help?

Feminist movements have developed two concepts in this context. On the one hand, there is the “No means No!” concept. This is based on recognizing a “no” as such, without asking follow-up questions that can build up pressure (Are you sure? Don’t you want to drink more?) and accepting the other person’s boundaries. However, this concept also excludes a few important things. In our society, we are socialized with certain role models. Not everyone finds it equally easy to say “no”. In addition, you only get feedback when it’s too late – that is when you are about to cross a line. That’s why the concept “Yes means yes” was developed. By actively asking a person what they want to do and if they are enjoying themselves, a violation of boundaries can be avoided more easily. Sexual acts are not just a one-way street, after all.

That’s easy to say, isn’t it?

Let's be honest: actively asking is damn hard. The generally existing image of sex in our corner of society tells us that sex is always great and super hot, and that our value is determined by bringing our partner to orgasm without talking. As a result, sex becomes more of an individual achievement and not something that you share. On top of that, there are the stereotypical expectations. In male socialization, asking is considered weak - after all, a "real man" takes what he wants and thus shows his strength. Female socialization is characterized by playing an accepting role, after all, you have to please the guy.

Apart from that, depending on the situation, there are still fears of failure and the fear of being judged for one's own needs. All in all, this results in a cocktail of doubts that is not easy to swallow. So no. Actively asking questions or talking about your own sexual desires is damn hard for many of us. It's uncomfortable, embarrassing and you're afraid. But it's worth it. The only question is:

Where do you even start?

Confronting yourself?

Learning to reach sexual consent doesn't happen overnight, it's a process. Start by confronting yourself: examine your own needs, your own desires, your own limits. If you've never done this before, it's probably quite difficult. Female socialization and some mental illnesses make it more difficult to deal with. In practice, this can mean asking yourself questions and answering them one by one. For example: Am I good at saying "no" and "yes"? Can I accept myself? What do I actually feel like, what do I want to experience? Am I afraid of rejection? If so, what does that do to me?

In addition, it can help to put in the work to accept your body. Social beauty ideals can exert huge pressure: whether it's breasts that are "too large" or a penis that is "too small", 99% of all people do not feel comfortable in their own skin. This automatically also affects how we feel about others. You should be aware of this and start to critically question existing beauty ideals.

And lastly: seriously talk with friends about sexuality. It may sound strange to

talk about it with people you don't want to be intimate with, but exchanging ideas with others can show you what boundaries look like for others or that you may not be alone with your fears and difficulties. This is especially difficult in male circles of friends, because there is a great inhibition to talk about feelings and especially in school sexuality is something that is used to distinguish oneself. But that can be dealt with too. It may help to discuss it in a conversation with a particularly good friend, as opposed to a group. If there is no way to talk to friends about it, you can look for other ways. For example, talking to your parents if they are relatively open-minded or, if nothing else works, you can also try to see a psychologist. Contrary to popular clichés, they are not only there for mental illnesses, but also for simple mental problems.

Even if it sounds exhausting, it is worth trying these steps and developing further. Finding out your own needs, limits and desires – and then being able to express them – is a good basis for seeking conversation with others.

Where do you start as a couple?

In reality, your heart is beating wildly and you're not quite sure what's happening and somehow you end up kissing. Or you're drunk at a party. But rarely have you taken the time to ask what the other person wants. You haven't learned that either. But it's not as hard as it may seem. A good starting point is to ask how well they can express their own needs and limits. In other words, how easy is it for them to say "no" in specific moments? Is it easy for them to do so, or would a hand signal be better? How do I know what the other person likes? How do you get out of uncomfortable situations? What provides security? What causes fear? What is extremely embarrassing?

The list of questions can be extended by a few more. The rule here is: instead of assuming that you know what you are doing, just ask. On this basis, agreements can be made between people, such as non-verbal communication. Or you may find it difficult to take the initiative and appreciate it when someone else takes it and you want them to follow through – but intentionally and not just out of the blue.

At the same time, one should be aware that there are certain power relations that can distort the answers and stand in the way of dealing with each other as equals. These are often associated with existing mechanisms of oppression, such as sexism or racism, such as typical female socialization, which ensures that one is more likely to accept what the other person does. Other dynamics such as experience gaps, drug use, relationships of dependency (financial, for example) or a large age difference can also lead to one person being attributed more awareness and the other person simply subordinating.

This also means being aware that consent does not always ensure that everything goes smoothly. The “Yes means Yes”-principle is not an abstract, rigid set of rules in this context. While some things are clear, such as “No means No”, sexual consent actually describes a relationship between people who become intimate with each other and can therefore be practised and exercised in very different ways. It’s about trying not to reproduce violence and not just imposing your own needs, but doing what you enjoy together. It’s about knowing and taking into account that socialization and social patterns of oppression exist and can get in the way or make it difficult to access each other. Sometimes you only realize afterwards that the situation didn’t go the way you wanted it to. That can happen, even if you try your best. Sexuality is a field of tension and at the same time there are an incredible number of oppressive moments in our society. That’s why it’s also important to be willing to talk about what you’ve experienced afterwards, to accept criticism and to actively address things you were unsure about yourself. Sex can only be really enjoyable and beautiful for both parties with a basis of cooperation, mutual consideration and trust.

All of this sounds exhausting and not romantic at all!

For some people, it is exhausting to deal with themselves and the needs of others. But if you don’t like hurting others (which is perfectly ok, provided it happens within a consensual framework) and putting your own needs above others, then you realize that this is the most practical way. The idea of romance that we are taught in movies and Netflix shows is based on the fact that it crosses boundaries. And what is romantic about that? It just seems

easier because you avoid the danger of getting rejected. Such statements are just statements with which one wants to be freed from responsibility.

So we all ask for consent and we have a liberated society?

No. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Some people benefit from the current social dynamics. They have no interest in changing anything because to end the root cause of these forms of oppression, they would have to give up their possessions and privileges. The idea that it is okay to sleep with people without asking them for consent stems from patriarchal-capitalist dynamics. And they are reproduced, for example through socialization. In order to change that on a fundamental level, we have to create new material conditions.

So we might as well leave it at that?

No. As revolutionaries, we know that we cannot simply live liberated lives in bourgeois society. After all, we cannot simply get rid of the constraints, such as the one of having to sell our labor power. We can't just wash away the way we were socialized and start over. But we can be aware of the mechanisms within bourgeois society. Actually, this is a must.

After all, we are fighting for a liberated society without exploitation and oppression. This works best when we fight for improvements in the here and now and try to deal with social discrimination, instead of postponing that until "after the revolution". That is why we demand, for example, socialization of housework, because it attacks bourgeois society's sexist material basis and would be an enormous relief for the working class. Furthermore, as an organization, we have decided to actively include sexual consent as part of our debating practice and education. However, this can only be successful on a large scale if we remove the system's basis by banishing the bourgeois family and gender stereotypes to the dustbin of history! We can only do this in a system without wage labor, where decision-making is no longer in the hands of the (mostly male) ruling class. That is why we have to collectively take ownership of production, expropriate the core industries and place them under the democratic planning of the working

class. Only in this way can we collectively determine the reproduction of labor and thus remove the basis for the double exploitation of women, sexism and role clichés.

Right-wing politics is the politics of the rich

By Urs Hecker, January 2025

A few weeks ago, the new US President Donald Trump celebrated his inauguration.

Surrounded by billionaires and representatives of the US bureaucracy, he announced his racist, sexist and nationalist program for the rich. Just one day before, at the official victory party of his election campaign, Elon Musk, the richest man in the world, gave the Hitler salute twice on stage. After his inauguration, there was a flood of authoritarian decrees passed by Congress, representing an in this millennium unprecedented attack on the rights of the socially oppressed. These attacks are very similar to those we could face in Germany under Merz or a future AfD government. So what is their impact and how can we fight back?

Attacks on migrants

Once again, migrants from Latin America are a key target of Trump's attacks. A national emergency has been declared on the border with Mexico, which means that the military can be used against immigrants in the future. Images are already going around the world of migrants in despair at the border between the USA and Mexico. The reason: Trump has simply blocked the app that millions of people used to legally make appointments to cross the border. These people often gave up everything to obtain a US visa, only to be turned away at the border despite having an appointment. This cruelty shows once again that "legal" immigrants are also affected by the attacks of the

right and the hypocrisy of those who deny this and claim that it is only about “illegal immigration”. In addition, Trump wants to abolish another key right of migrants in the USA: Citizenship by birth. This will disenfranchise entire generations of descendants of today’s migrants, who can now remain second-class citizens in the USA forever. But we have to see whether the whole thing is legally valid, as citizenship by birth is a historical cornerstone of US society that will not be easy to cut down.

We are facing something similar in Germany. Apart from the fact that citizenship at birth has never existed here, the major parties are also calling for a tightening of the deadly EU border regime and a restriction of citizenship. Among other things, the CDU is calling for people with dual citizenship to be expatriated if they commit two criminal offenses. This opens the way for the deportation of German citizens and creates two classes among them: the “natural Germans”, who are safe citizens forever, and those who can lose their rights again.

We therefore demand internationally:

- Tear down border fences and walls! Open borders everywhere for everyone!
- Full citizenship rights for everyone in the country in which they live!

Attacks on trans and inter people

Trans people are also heavily under attack by the new president and can probably expect even worse in the future. For example, Trump said at his inauguration: “In the future, there will only be two genders in the USA: Man and woman” and instructed authorities to only recognize male and female gender entries.

Furthermore, in future, the chromosomes or “sex at conception” will determine which gender people have. This not only denies the reality of trans and inter people, it also takes away their right to determine their own body and gender and opens the door to further criminalization. At the same time, we can expect an increase in anti-trans and anti-queer sentiment worldwide and therefore further attacks on trans people and their rights.

The situation is similar in Germany, for example when Friedrich Merz calls for the Self-Determination Act to be withdrawn or the AfD wants to abolish same-sex marriage.

Instead we demand:

- Self-determination over one's own gender identity: for the right to free and unbureaucratic access to official name and civil status changes! Against being forced to state your gender in official documents!
- For self-determination over one's own body: For the right to free and unbureaucratic access to medical gender reassignment!
- Fully legalize intersex: Prohibition of medically unnecessary, cosmetic genital operations on children!

Nationalism and authoritarianism

These attacks are embedded in an increasingly aggressive nationalism, which sometimes appears ridiculous from the outside, and a growing authoritarianism. The Panama Canal should be "reconquered" and Panama is openly threatened with a military attack. In a future conflict with China, this is intended to ensure secure control over this important shipping route, but also means that internal criticism can be suppressed through nationalist furor. The announcement that the Gulf of Mexico is to be renamed the "Gulf of America" seems ridiculous and yet should be taken seriously. This act is of course only intended to distract Americans from the real problems in the country by creating a purely symbolic conflict with foreign countries. Authoritarianism is also already on the rise in the country and is the other side of the measures to enforce the attacks on the oppressed groups. As mentioned above, the military is being unleashed on migrants at the border. In addition, Trump has announced that the death penalty will be enforced more strictly again and also wants to "ensure" that individual states have enough means of killing available. This measure will again primarily affect Black and other racially oppressed people. In addition, the civil service is to be placed more directly under the control of the president and civil servants can be dismissed more easily. An even greater expansion of repressive measures is to be expected in the future.

In Germany, too, the increase in repression is a trend towards a shift to the right, as we can see from the attacks on the Palestine Solidarity movement, as well as intensified attacks against anti-fascists and climate activists. The bourgeois state, whether in Germany, the USA or other Western countries such as Britain, is increasingly relying on autocratic measures and

punishments to enforce its domestic and foreign policy goals against criticism.

We demand against this:

-Stop all imperialist intervention! USA and all other imperialists out of Latin America!

-Abolish the Police: Instead of internal rearmament, invest in education and social welfare at the expense of the rich!

Right-wing politics is the politics of the rich

The fact that Trump was surrounded by the richest people in the world at his inauguration illustrates what must have been clear to us: The politics of the right is the politics of the rich, the capitalists. We also see this when Trump pulls out of the Paris climate agreement again and declares an energy emergency to get even more fossil fuels out of the ground. This policy, which attacks the livelihoods of us all, obviously serves the American oil industry and the rest of the capitalists, who can hope for lower electricity prices as a result. Furthermore, an incredible 500 billion is to be invested in private AI infrastructure, which of course serves the tech billionaires on Trump's side, but is also intended to give the US a advantage in the international battle with China. Further massive tax gifts to companies are planned. For example, Trump announced in Davos that all companies should produce in the USA and receive "the lowest taxes ever". The costs of this will be borne by workers and young people if, for example, the already shitty education system is getting even worse as a result of new social cuts. One method of weakening future resistance to this is the attacks now being carried out by the Trump government. The racism, nationalism and queerophobia spread by the government weaken and divide young people and the working class. The disenfranchisement of migrants means that they are less and less able to participate in economic and political struggles. In Germany, too, one social cut after another is being made in combination with racism. After a no increase of the „Bürgergeld“ (social welfare for unemployed people) despite inflation, the CDU is now threatening to cut it completely for hundreds of thousands of people, while in Berlin the CDU and SPD carried out massive cuts in the youth and cultural sectors.

Don't despair: build a youth movement!

Given the scale of the attack, the (supposed?) strength of the right-wing and billionaire government and the terrible impact on those affected, it's hard not to despair. Many of us have been shocked over the last few days and felt powerless and disbelieving. In Germany, too, the shift to the right seems to progress without any brakes and is threatening the living conditions of us young people.

But isolated and shocked in front of the screens, we don't realize one thing: organized together, we can develop incredible strength! A movement of young people and workers that is anchored in schools, universities and companies can stop the shift to the right. For us as young people, this means that we have to organize ourselves where we have to be every day: Schools. This is where we can reach other young people the best, this is where we feel the effects of the shift to the right the most, this is where we can create an anchor for a future movement. Mobilizations like the one against the AfD in Riesa (huge protests against the parties national conference) show that tens of thousands of us are ready to fight!

Such a movement has to be also international and develop perspectives and strategies together in order to stop the international shift to the right and the major attack by the capitalists. So even if we must first defend ourselves against the local attacks of the rich, these all have the same cause as responses by the rich to the global crisis of capitalism. We can only win if we confront the rich on a global scale with a response from workers and youth to the crisis! This response should take up the already mentioned demands against social oppression and authoritarianism and combine them with social demands:

- Self-defense committees and anti-discrimination offices at school, university and workplaces against social oppression and discrimination!
- Joint antiracist and economic struggle: Refugees into trade unions!
- Hundreds of billions for education and social welfare at the expense of the rich, instead of for armament and as tax gifts to billionaires!

Youth and Militarization

A resolution passed by the international delegates conference of the communist youth organization REVOLUTION

Declaring war on war: No to the increasing militarization!

There is war: whether in Yemen, Myanmar, Kurdistan, or Ukraine. Wherever war rages, it destroys our livelihoods, drives millions of people from their homes, and brings death. And in between destruction and weapons production, heated up by the interests of the profiting parties, we young people are the ones who have to cope with the consequences of this chaos. But simply hoping for peace will not help us, because warlike conflicts and military budgets have steadily increased in recent years. In particular, the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine represents a new quality of the conflict. This war is an escalation of the imperialist conflict between Russia and NATO and bears the danger of escalating even further. We say clearly: No to the imperialist invasion of Ukraine by Russia, for an immediate withdrawal of all Russian troops! But equally, we oppose the influence of the NATO powers, which only want to expand their own influence at the expense of the Ukrainian population. because this conflict is inciting young people in particular. In the end, they only have two options: to fight at the front or to desert. We take the side of the Ukrainian youth and the workers' movement against the Russian war of aggression, with the aim of building up a resistance that is politically independent of NATO. The effects of the war do not stop at the borders of Ukraine or Russia, but are felt worldwide. The war is driving up inflation, causing energy and food prices to skyrocket. This should not be our future! But if we want to fight effectively against war and its consequences, we must first ask ourselves: Why does war exist at all? And why has there been an increase in warlike conflicts in recent years?

The strongest wins

The world we live in is completely subjected to capitalist production and the logic of profit. There is no land, no raw material on earth, that does not belong to a capitalist. This is a characteristic of the highest stage of capitalism, imperialism. Even if everything is divided, competition still exists between different capitalists as well as different nation states. They sometimes have no choice but to wage wars over economic routes (the West African coast), economic spaces (Mali), or geostrategic spheres of influence (Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan) in order not to fall behind. In some crises, however, profits are too low for capitalists to want to invest in their own production, in which case it may be worthwhile for them to destroy competing productive forces in a war. In short, the policy of recent years is a sharpened form of economic competition, and war is ultimately the continuation of this policy by other means.

Capitalism has the compulsion to always accumulate ever more profit, to open ever newer markets, and to obtain ever cheaper labor. The imperialist blocs have the urge to escalate conflicts between them ever further in order to destroy competing capital and productive forces. Both will inevitably lead to war. If we are to fight against these forces, we must look at their role at all levels of the global system. Fighting wars is thus always synonymous with fighting capitalism!

Crisis

Crises act as accelerators in this process, as they increase competition between the individual factions of capital. So it is no wonder that military spending has skyrocketed in the last 10 years and international conflicts are on the rise again. After all, the global economic crisis of 2007/8 is still shaping current events. At that time, bailout plans were created for capitalist states to end the crisis. Thus, we have been witnessing a long-standing low interest rate policy of the U.S. Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank, government stimulus programs of the Chinese state, and the growth of new speculative bubbles. Instead of capital being destroyed in the crisis, its costs were passed on to the working class, and further crises were artificially delayed by means of the rescue plans. The consequences were massive impoverishment and indebtedness, an international shift to the right, and

increasing competition. With the collapse of the international economy during the Corona pandemic, the situation has now worsened again – and the struggle for the redivision of the world has been further fueled. The main conflict here is between the U.S. and China, who are fighting over who will be the dominant force on the world map. At the same time, however, other forces are also getting into the mix, trying to save themselves from going under in the context of the competition.

Bloc formation and the threat of conflict

Thus, in the wake of the Ukraine war, NATO, which was thought dead, has re-formed – and even expanded to include Finland and Sweden. In addition, imperialist states such as Germany and the EU as a whole have moved closer to the United States in the wake of the war of aggression. Even if ultimately each side fights for itself, different blocs are forming in the current showdown. Not every power can be fully counted towards a bloc. The struggle for spheres of influence also generates forces such as India and Pakistan, which cannot assert their interests internationally on their own, but try to make the best of it through shifting alliances. However, even if the bloc formation is not yet complete, it is certain that confrontations will increase due to the sharpened struggle for control. Where the confrontations will take place is not clear, but looking at the bloc formations and the world economic crisis, some regions more than others may become more and more the scene of confrontation. In addition to Ukraine, Taiwan is another country that is repeatedly targeted by the superpowers China and the United States. Taiwan is denied its national independence by the Chinese, because Xi Jinping, who is currently struggling with recurring unrest, is beating the drum of chauvinism more and more before the upcoming elections. In addition, China has been trying to establish a new Silk Road on land and water for several years, sometimes with great success, and is making many semi-colonial countries dependent on it. The dwindling power and influence of the USA in North Africa, the Middle East, and parts of Asia, leads to a power vacuum on the one hand, and on the other, leaves the door open for other imperialist powers. However, it should be clear to all of us that this struggle will not take place without military means.

More money for death

A look at arms spending also shows us this: in 2020, global military spending will reach a new record: according to the Stockholm International peace research institute Sipri, it will be \$1.981 trillion, more than ever before. That's \$5.4 billion per day and \$226 million per hour. If the amount spent per hour on military spending were spent on hunger in a year, world hunger could be eliminated in 15 years.[1] The United States spends 39% of all military spending worldwide (\$778 billion). Next in line is China, which within the last decade (since 2011) increased its defense spending by 76% to \$252 billion, covering 13% of global spending. Germany is also increasing its military spending, to \$52.8 billion, an increase of 5.9%, It has thus increased its spending even more than the U.S. compared to last year, ranking 7th behind China, India, Russia, the UK, and Saudi Arabia. Japan is another example of the ongoing militarization of the world. The country has already softened its pacifist foreign policy in recent years, and in 2022 it will again massively increase its military budget. The figures speak for themselves, and make it clear: the imperialist states are arming themselves and preparing for coming wars.

Future: Cannon Fodder?

All these developments show that „the good life“ is not automatically part of our future if we don't do anything for it. We young people, in particular, are frequently sent to the frontlines first, while a wave of nationalism tries to persuade us that it is in our best interests to die for the fatherland. However, we saw during the pandemic that nations do not act in our best interests. The economy was shrinking; the health sector was collapsing in many countries - but instead of investing in it, arms spending kept growing and growing. And this is just one of countless examples that should make this clear: the wars that are currently being waged are wars of capital. They occur in order for the ruling class to secure their own profits. But advertising and the obligation to die are routine for many of us. Because youth is an essential part of armies. We are not yet completely part of the productive process, can therefore be drafted without great losses for the economy, and often do not even have to be paid. The fact that the youth have no say in political issues

and social decisions makes it deliberately difficult for resistance to arise or be formulated.

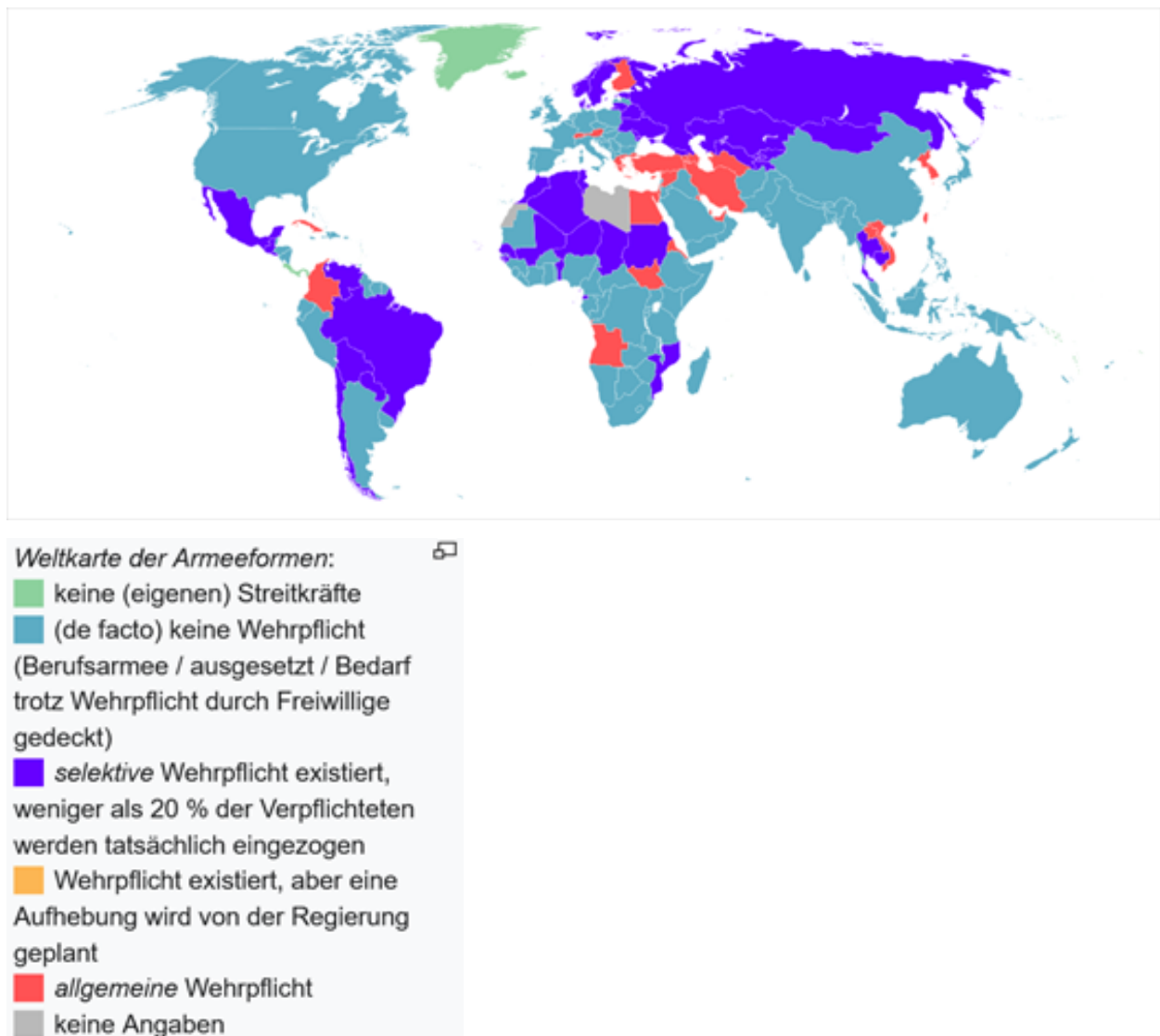
Bitter Truth: Youth in the Crossfire

Currently, 250,000 children and young people around the world are deployed as soldiers in armed conflicts, both by regular armies and by rebel groups. They increasingly form an integral part of the military infrastructure, whether as regular foot soldiers, as spies, as information transmitters, or in other emerging activities. In addition, it is often forgotten that sexual violence is always on the rise in military conflicts and is also used specifically as a weapon of war. For example, 5 to 20 percent of child soldiers are girls, who are mainly used as forced prostitutes[2]. In this context, mass rape is the highest form of violence and unfortunately a recurring weapon, especially in massacres, wars against minorities, etc. Myanmar (2017), Ethiopia (2021/22), and the Democratic Republic of Congo (since 2007) are sad examples of our time, in which several thousands of women have been raped to break the will of the people and dehumanize them in the most brutal way.

Thus, in 2022, there are 67 countries in the world where there is compulsory military service[3]. It can be seen that most countries in the world have some form of army, but they differ mainly in the way they recruit. Countries without conscription often have large recruitment campaigns and various offers that provide both affordable opportunities for education and the option to serve in the military for life. In addition, some countries have de jure conscription, which means that men, and in some countries women, must enlist in the military between a certain age and are recruited when „needed.“ Currently, however, sufficient volunteers enlist in most countries, so this is implemented in very few cases.

In Europe, only Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Cyprus, Greece, Switzerland and Austria currently have compulsory military service, but in light of the Ukraine war, several more countries are considering reforming their military services. Latvia was the first country to introduce conscription at the beginning of July due to the war. A draft law on the matter is expected to be passed by parliament next year. The Minister of Defense Pabriks makes

this clear in his statement about the reintroduction: „This should reduce the risk that Russia will attack Latvia at will „[4]. That other countries will follow is certain, in most countries of the EU (e.g. the Netherlands) the strengthening of their own armies has been discussed, and studies about the reintroduction of military service have been commissioned. Germany has not remained silent in the debate either. Voices have been raised from the ranks of all parties calling for the reintroduction of conscription, which in this context is a vote for the progression of militarization.



War to war: not a cent, not a human to militarism!

We don't want to be cannon fodder or watch as our livelihood is destroyed. Because wars do not only kill directly but also fuel the climate crisis. So what to do? We do not condemn it in itself when the youth take up arms to fight for

their interests against capitalism, exploitation, and imperialism. When it comes to self-defense in contested areas, they frequently have no other option. From Kurdistan to Palestine, young people fight side by side in liberation struggles for their own interests, against occupation and displacement. This is not the same as the wars of the imperialist states for the profits of an elite.

If we want to oppose them effectively, we have to learn from history. Here, the October Revolution as well as the anti-war movements of the First World War should be mentioned as relevant examples, in which workers took mass organized action against the imperialist system. Only if we attack the problem at its roots can we be successful. In the October Revolution of 1917 a workers' state was established, which, in combination with the failed November Revolution of 1918 led to the end of the First World War. On the basis of these historical events, it is necessary to analyze the strategies used and derive from them methodical ways of overcoming imperialist wars and imperialism as a whole. Another important example are the Arab Spring uprisings, which are of great importance for anti-imperialism movements in semi-colonial countries.

However, simply analyzing and transferring the strategies and tactics of previous worker and youth movements is insufficient. We must apply the lessons we can draw from them to today's changed situation in international politics and the changed realities of the situation for the working class. But there remains the necessity of building a workers' and youth movement against imperialist conflicts! But how and where can we succeed in this? To be successful, such a struggle must necessarily take place on an international level. Clearly, those of us in imperialist countries must oppose the war interests of our own nation. But since imperialism is also a global system, we can only be successful if we also organize internationally. This means that a successful anti-war movement must be international and combine the struggle against the effects of war with the struggle against the capitalist system. In doing so, it is important that we do not allow ourselves to be divided by nationalism and still defend the right to self-determination of oppressed peoples and semi-colonies.

- For the smashing of all imperialist military and economic alliances! For the defeat of imperialism - immediate withdrawal of all imperialist troops and their henchmen!
- Against all imperialist militarization: Neither conscription nor professional army - for the self-defense of the working class! For democratically legitimized workers militias under the control of workers councils!
- Not a cent and not a human to militarism: Against all advertising for the military! Against any „rearmament packages“ and military budgets!
- Smash the arms industry! Nationalize its war profits and convert the war industry into a civilian industry.
- For the establishment of a global youth and workers movement against war and capitalism!
- For the right of self-determination of oppressed nations.
- For the right of self-determination of Ukraine, neither under control of Russia nor under control of NATO.
- Expropriate the war profiteers! All arms corporations under workers control.
- For the workers' right to self-defense! Disarm the bourgeois state!
- No dying for imperialist wars: Against general mobilizations of the imperialist countries.
- For the establishment of an international workers' movement opposed to war and capitalism!

[1]<https://www.handelszeitung.ch/politik/welt-ohne-hunger-kostet-267-milliarden-dollar-810985#:~:text=Um%20in%2015%20Jahren%20den,650%20Millionen%20Menschen%20Hunger%20leiden.>

[2]<https://www.tdh.de/was-wir-tun/themen-a-z/kindersoldaten/>

[3]<https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1334153/umfrage/verteilung-der-laender-nach-status-der-wehrpflicht/>

[4]Translation

from:

<https://de.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/07/27/welche-lander-in-europa-wollen-wieder-eine-wehrpflicht-einfuehren>

Resolution: Refugees Welcome, fight the causes of flight!

International Resolution of REVOLUTION, October 2015

More and more people are fleeing the civil war in Syria and from the breakdown of the Iraqi state. The refugee camps in Turkey and the states surrounding Syria have been overrun way past their capacities for years but recently pressure on the European states has increased as refugees make their way into the imperialist heartlands.

The first signs could be seen in Lampedusa or Calais - in the last month though the number of refugees has significantly surpassed the capacities of the camps and registration infrastructure provided by the bourgeois states of Europe. The barbed wire fences in Hungary and the other border states will not stop people who have come so far to escape Assad's barrel bombs and the terror of ISIS. Right now there are police and military stationed at the borders shooting teargas and rubber bullets at refugees trying to enter. The Hungarian military has even received permission to use firearms in a non-lethal way. That is what capitalist human rights look like when it comes down to it. The imperialist core of the EU is trying to make it seem like this is just Hungary's right wing, nationalist government going buck wild. But looking at the billions of Euros that have been invested into the Hungarian border this is hard to believe. It is just the scenario easiest to sell to the public while screening heartening pictures of individual activists who are trying to compensate for the shortcomings of the European governments, a task that can not be accomplished by them. At the same time the EU is preparing more

coordinated military actions in the Mediterranean Sea to simply sink the boats trying to cross over to Europe.

As a result of EU policy the hungarian government is now able to using the current “refugee crisis” in order to push through a variety of anti democratic and racist laws which will not only enable the hungarian police to search all places where they suspect illegal immigrants without any sort of search warrant. They have also now pushed through a law, making it a criminal offence to enter hungary illegally and set up a system of speed trials in order to deport and criminalize refugees. As an enormous number of refugees are young people and children they are also legally treating 14 to 18 year olds as adults to get rid of them. The ruling party in Hungary, FIDESZ under Viktor Orban, has been pushing through antidemocratic measures and austerity policies in the last couple of years and has recently lost its absolute majority in parliament[1]. Since the fascist party Jobbik are now the second strongest parliamentary force in the opinion polls, almost catching up with Fidesz[2], this might lead to a future coalition of Fidesz and Jobbik furthering the right wing backlash.

The rest of the european countries is currently trying to make it look like they have nothing to do with the actions of the military or FRONTEX at the EU borders. The German and Austrian governments are praising their great “welcoming culture”, while closing the borders. Especially the weapon industries in Germany and France have profited from both the wars in Syria, Ukraine and Africa and the investments into border security.

The ruling classes of Europe have also found another way to exploit the precarious situation refugees are faced with when fleeing to countries like Germany. It is no coincidence that capitalists are all of a sudden calling for a work permission for refugees, the welcoming culture is limited to the principle that refugees are welcome as long as capitalists are welcome to exploit them. They hope to create a completely vulnerable, powerless strata of the working class which they can exploit as much as possible. We fully support the right of refugees to work and lead an emancipated life in the

countries they had to flee to, but we need to force the unions into organizing a campaign in support of refugee rights as well as organizing refugees as fellow union members and workers.

As for the war in Syria it has also developed more characteristics of an imperialist conflict. The US are bombing oil refineries and sometimes even ISIS, the CIA tries to put forth a force acting in their interest, Russia is exporting aircraft, battle tanks and even personnel to Assad and regional powers such as Qatar and Saudi-Arabia are investing in the war as well. The rigorous continuation of this brutal conflict has led to a wave of refugees not matched in decades.

To meet the needs of these people, which is our duty since our wealth is founded on their misery, we need to coordinate internationally. We need to force the European governments into opening the borders, providing safe passage for every refugee and organizing sea rescue initiatives. We need to force them into providing appropriate housing, food and healthcare for everybody. We oppose the idea of creating „nicer“ forms of detention camps but we argue for the right of refugees to live in socially funded housing, not segregated and hidden away from society but as an equal part of it. We need to fight against racism, the growing right wing in Europe and the ongoing attempts to divide us. Therefore, we also oppose every concept of discrimination between economic and political refugees – freedom of movement is everyone's right, no matter if they are fleeing war, hunger or poverty. We need to demand full citizenship for everyone, the right to vote, to work, to live wherever they want and the right to organize.

Right now we see the individual effort of thousands of volunteers and their great sacrifices all over Europe, which is admirable and a natural reaction to the suffering of others. But it is not a possible solution. We need to address the issues that are really responsible for this situation; the Assad regime which has slaughtered tens of thousands and displaced countless more, the imperialist governments and economies that are profiting from war, exploitation and poverty and finally ISIS who are a creation of imperialist interventions. We need to demand that they stand up to their crimes and pay for them. The struggle for the refugees is not fought or won in the camps, at

the registration sites or borders. It must be brought to the streets, into the imperialist centers if we want to solve it. The war that has been brought upon the Syrian or Iraqi people needs to return to those who caused it, the bourgeois class.

Though the demands we are raising against the governments of Europe are based on the dire necessities of being a human, it would be foolish to expect the bourgeois states to try to fulfill them as they attack the very base of their power and wealth. The recent development, the crisis, shows with even more vigor that we have all the right to do so. This tragedy cannot be ended until we eradicate the real cause for it, the capitalist system. A social structure based on ever growing exploitation of the majority of people has not the potential to solve this crisis for it is the cause of it. If we want to help the refugees, if we want to fight the rising racist and nationalist movements we need fight capitalism as a whole and bring it down.

[1]

<http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2015-02/ungarn-orban-verliert-popularitaet>

[2]

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/ungarn-rechte-jobbik-partei-macht-auf-nett-a-1031915.html>

To the struggling Youth of Greece

We young students, workers and unemployed from all over Europe, but especially from Germany, declare our deepest sympathies and solidarity to you, the struggling youth of Greece.

We know how you have suffered under the crisis of the past years. And we

know who's fault this is.

It's the fault of the Greek capitalists, but even more the big European imperialist powers with Germany at its heart who sent the Troika to Greece to impose cuts and attacks on the Greek working class and the youth of Greece.

In the past weeks we could see how the Troika tried to impose even bigger attacks. In the past weeks we saw how Merkel, Schaeuble and Co. tried to shame the Greek people and take their dignity. They linked this to an outrageous hate campaign against the Greek workers and youth, they tried to let you feel isolated within Europe.

We want to let you know: You are not alone. We despise the German government, the EU bureaucrats and the banks and companies behind them as much as you do. We know as much as you do that it's their fault we are in a deep crisis.

Now they want to divide us to let you suffer first and then go on to let us suffer all over Europe.

But we say „OXI“. We say „NEIN“. We say „NO“.

For millions of workers and youth all over Europe you are an inspiration. There are many German youth and young workers who don't believe the lies of the media and politicians. Still, the long tradition of revolutionary thought is weak after decades of co-management and the rotten compromises of social democratic leadership. But there are a growing number of youth in Germany who recognize: „The main enemy is at home“.

We hereby declare to fight against this enemy, German imperialism and the capitalist rulers all over Europe, to help you breathe and fight against the capitalists in Greece more confident.

We want to encourage you to let them know on Saturday that Greece says „OXI“. OXI to the memoranda and OXI to the Europe of capitalist crisis.

We don't want the rulers to kick you „out of Europe“. Instead we want to kick them out together. Don't let us fight for national solutions. Let us coordinate,

organise together for a struggle for the United socialist states of Europe. May the first flame of Revolution start from the rising fists of the Greek Youth!

REVOLUTION - international communist youth organization