



Federal Working Group on Europe - Attac Germany

Federal Working Group on Globalisation & War - Attac Germany

No to racism, anti-Semitism, the production of enemy images and the distortion of history!

Declaration on the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz

On 27 January 1945, Auschwitz was liberated by the Red Army. The camp was part of the murder system of German fascism and since then has been a symbol of the Holocausts singular crime against humanity towards Jews. Auschwitz also stands for all the other human beings "*whom National Socialism systematically murdered or had intended to exterminate,*" as is stated in the Remembrance Day Act of 1996, Sinti, Roma, disabled people, Soviet prisoners of war, countless civilians from Eastern Europe, who in the extermination camps were degraded to "subhumans", enslaved and murdered. This must never be forgotten and must be a reminder to today's generations for vigilance against all tendencies that led to Auschwitz, which is particularly important at the moment in view of the appalling extent of inhuman ideologies and right-wing terrorism. For these reasons we are actively engaged in the fight against racism, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, right-wing extremism neo-fascism and social inequality.

Never again fascism, never again war!

We are concerned that the lessons of the past are increasingly fading or are even being instrumentalised for other purposes. Already the ruthless misuse of Auschwitz to justify the international war against Yugoslavia in 1999 by the then Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer was a shocking relativisation of the Holocaust. This led with the secession of Kosovo to the first border change by military force in Europe since 1945. Simultaneously, NATO's eastward expansion destroyed the opportunities for a zone of security and cooperation from Lisbon to Vladivostok. Long before the Ukraine crisis, Russia had already been stigmatised once again as an enemy. Currently, we are witnessing a similar stigmatisation of China, and at breathtaking speed the stage is being set for a Cold War 2.0. At the same time, the enemy image of Islam - an extremely useful enemy image for the wars in the Middle East and North Africa is being constructed.

Weapons, arms production and armies are necessary prerequisites for war. A major driving force of violence under capitalist conditions is the worldwide hunt for raw materials and ever new sources of profit. War is then the continuation of profit maximalisation by military means. However, the willingness of a population to engage in confrontation and war also depends on the corresponding enemy images.

Enemy images - ideological basis for confrontation and readiness for aggression

Enemy images are characterised by a simple, binary world view. The enemy is portrayed as completely evil while "we" are the good guys. At present, media reporting on Russia and, more recently, China are basically following the same pattern. The nuances between absolute evil and good are faded out. Over time, the images of the enemy become entrenched.

A typical outcome of this, in connection with the Russian Corona vaccine, is expressed by the daily DIE WELT "*Even if a Russian product can hold its own in international competition, the stamp of being Russian is and will remain a stigma.*" (4.11.2020; S. 10). The implications of such a statement becomes fully apparent when one imagines that instead of *Russian*, *American* or even *Israeli* were used instead.

Most major media are part of this dynamic. Whenever it is about "external enemies", they often engage in state supporting coverage and seldom, if at all, ask critical questions. Unverifiable statements by secret services suddenly become sources of unquestioned truth. The most recent examples are the grotesque orchestrations of the Skripal and Nawalny cases.

No image of the enemy without an idealised self-image

The image of the enemy is always accompanied by an idealised self-image. We are the good guys, the bad guys are the others. The formula is then often emotionally underpinned by patriotism. But since patriotism is quite rightly discredited in this country, there are more and more attempts to package the matter as European patriotism.

Those who prefer not to talk about patriotism speak rather of "European" values. But this too amounts to Eurocentric superiority thinking. Of course, values like democracy and human rights - including those of second generation human right such as economic, social and cultural rights - have universal validity as normative guiding principles. But it is precisely this universal validity that is undermined when it is applied selectively in international relations and exploited for geopolitical interests. Compared to Saudi Arabia, Russia is in a very different position when it comes to democracy and human rights. Nevertheless, close economic, political and military relations are maintained with Riyadh while Cold War is waged against Moscow.

Falsification of history

Part of the enemy and self-image fabrications has always been an aspect of the *politics of history*, i.e. the manipulation of historical truth. We are shocked to see that the EU also falsifies the history of the Second World War with its more than 70 million dead, 27 million of them Soviet citizens. For example, in the declaration "*The importance of remembering the European past for the future of Europe*" by the European Parliament of 19.09.2019, in which the Second World War became a joint undertaking of both Hitler and Stalin. This is a scandalous relativisation of the German responsibility for the war. Similar falsifications can also be found in Commission and Council documents.

The history of the Second World War has been thoroughly researched and documented. The evidence that Hitler was aiming for war from the outset in order to reverse the results of the First World War and subject Eastern Europe for "the master race" and "the people without space" is overwhelming. The chain of evidence stretches, among other things, from his book "Mein Kampf" and the delusion of the Jewish-Bolshevik world conspiracy, to the massive rearmament after 1933, the intervention of the "Condor Legion" on the side of the troops of the fascist General Franco against the elected government in Spain 1936-1939, the annexation of Austria in March 1938, the occupation of the Sudetenland in October 1938, which France and England had agreed to in the Munich Agreement, the destruction of Czechoslovakia up to the decision to invade Poland in May 1939. Germany's sole guilt was also clearly proven at the Nuremberg Trials.

One does not have to be a historian to realise that the claim in the EU Parliament's resolution that Hitler and Stalin had set the course for the Second World War absurdly distorts the prehistory of the war.

Peace policy instead of Cold War

Against the backdrop of the dramatic upheavals in the international system, the renewed increase of nuclear war due to the termination of arms control agreements and new technologies - key words: digitalisation, hypersonic weapons, drones - as well as the global challenges posed by pandemics, increasing poverty and also increasing wealth, climate crisis and the loss of biodiversity, a new Cold War is sheer madness. Peaceful coexistence, confidence-building measures, international law and human rights, international cooperation and disarmament measures are prerequisites for mastering global problems.

Required is broad solidarity-based, anti-racist and anti-fascist alliances in the struggle against inequality, privatisation, militarisation and surveillance, as well as for a strengthening of fundamental rights and resolute environmental and climate justice.