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WAR ON WAR! Second Zimmerwald Manifesto

Ever since the start of the Second World War, there have never been more people seeking asylum than today. Wars and crises have transformed many places on our planet into settings of barbarism. Where whole cities are bombed, whole districts are devastated and human rights are trampled, there cannot be a life in dignity. Where humanity and civilisation have been destroyed, any hope for the future vanishes – often for many generations.

Today, hundreds of thousands of people are forced to either submit to this madness or become a part of it, therefore betraying themselves. Their only opportunity to escape this chaos is the flight to other regions or countries. The misery of these fleeing people is barely conceivable. They are being expelled, raped and exploited. Their life is not determined by their own wishes, their own wills or their own decisions, but by the mood of the warring parties. Their flight is often a suicide mission. Refugee organisations estimate that in 2013 alone, 25'000 refugees died on the Mediterranean Sea. The flight of many ends in a wet grave in front of the gates of the fortress Europe. Those who do arrive safely have to prove their suffering and are often proved inhumanely.

100 years ago, the First World War was raging; hundreds of thousands of people had to flee their homes. This global war, its totality and death machines fundamentally changed the world. Approximately 17 million people died in its course – as many as never before. The consequences of this new form of brutality in warfare can be felt until today.

From the 5th to the 8th September 1915, leading international socialists organised a secret conference in Zimmerwald near Bern in Switzerland. In order to prevent further escalation of the war and express their solidarity with the victims of the war, they adopted the Zimmerwald Manifesto. In it, they promoted the fight for a humane economy and against capitalism, instead of the fight between nations and people. They appealed to the social democratic parties of all European countries to vehemently oppose further war participation. This call for peace and humanity was the cause of large discussions and united the war opposing organisations.

On this day, 100 years later, war once more dominates world politics while global inequality has reached its temporary climax. On this day, 100 years later, we socialists are once more responsible to be a voice for peace. Just as importantly, we need to combine the struggle for

peace with the struggle against social injustice, which is the true cause of the wars of our time. In the capitalist world order, wars are more than just fights for property, resources and land – they are an integral part of the system.

Nationalism on the rise

In all of Europe, powers are rising whose answer to globalisation, inequality and violence are nationalism and isolation. They are the powers which agitate against the unknown, against minorities and against Europe. They promote regression as a solution to an unsettled world. They are the powers which want to reverse the progress of tolerance and openness. They are the ones who have forgotten what ruthless egoism and widespread nationalism have led to in the past. These are the powers we oppose with all our determination in the name of peace and progress.

Europe's powers profit from the war

While the rulers of Europe demand an end to violence, contemplating military intervention, they simultaneously profit from the global wars and crisis. In 2014 alone, the worth of the military goods exported from Europe exceeded 16.8 billion dollars. Thousands of stolen millions lie on European bank accounts; the worth of European deals regarding raw materials is inestimable. As we know, wherever the extraction of raw materials takes place, the local people are often shown no consideration. With fiscal constructs in the Cayman-Islands, in Switzerland and London, Europe exposes itself as a strong supporter and beneficiary of these proceedings. In fact, Europe not only profits from the exploitation of labour and land, but also from the resulting conflicts. Thanks to them, the military production can once more draw a profit at the expense of the poorest of the world.

We know: If the powerful talk of peace, they all too often think of possible profits. And when they speak of freedom, they often mean the freedom of the markets. Those who really want peace don't pursue good trade relations or high profit rates, but humanity and human rights.

War deepens the global problems

Today, one percent of people own 41 percent of the global wealth. At the same time, over 800 million people around the world suffer from hunger. 1.4 billion live in extreme poverty. War and armed conflict further deepen this social inequality. A few rich profit from war, while the big majority is plunged into horrible suffering. War and armed intervention are not fit to resolve conflict, but instead harden, relocate or move the lines of conflict. War can never be a part of socialist politics. We are for a world of cooperation of the people, civil collaboration and diplomacy. No longer will we accept economical, power, political or religious interest as excuses for acts of cruelty amongst humans.

Our solution: International Solidarity

We are appalled by the worldwide escalation of violence. Our generation is not willing to accept this social regression. Our fight is for peace, and our way is the international solidarity. The true lines of conflict are not between nations, religions or ethnics. They are between the classes. We demand an alliance of progressive forces against the dominance of capital and for social justice and peace. We express our undivided solidarity with the victims of all armed conflicts.

War is not a law of nature. War is manmade and can only be prevented through us humans. The struggles against the systematic causes of violence and war have to be our priority. Our aim is a free, just world of solidarity, where human rights, democracy and peace are protected.

We, the Young European Socialists, therefore call for:

- The protection of human rights and the international humanitarian law. These are the rules, which could ensure a peaceful coexistence of all humans.
- The reinforcement of civil and democratic structures. The UN must be reformed in order to become a global warrantor of peace. The EU has to remember its core civil task. Cooperation with military alliances has to end – only the UN is legitimized to protect the international peace.
- An end to blood profits: Exportation of war material has to be forbidden.
- An end to economic relations with war mongering groups and countries.
- International demilitarization: Weapons of mass destruction have to become a thing of the past and the global spending on military has to be drastically reduced.

We also demand:

- The fight against unequal distribution of global resources – the cause of numerous conflicts.
- The fight against austerity, poverty, hunger and hopelessness, which push people into the open arms of right-wing conservatives, fascists and religious fanatics.
- Politics focused on social justice and the collective self-determination of the people and not on free markets and limitless competition.