

War in Europe – How about the Global South?

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In public debate, it appears as the grand exception: a large war in Europe, for the first time since 1945. When considering the wars in the Balkans during the dissolution of Yugoslavia, in the 1990s (including NATO Bombardments and the first direct German involvement in a war since World War II, under a reg-green government), as well as the ongoing war of Turkey against its Kurd population, this is not entirely correct. Still, wide-spread reference to a 'turning point' is indicative of a need and challenge for fresh thinking about the global regime of violence.

Obviously, in world regions outside the largest parts of Europe, North America, East Asia and Oceania, wars have been much more a part of normalcy than seriously registered in public awareness, specifically in Germany. Or else, such wars have been registered, however, war in an ostensibly civilised Europe is evaluated in different terms – precisely not as normalcy, but as a 'turning point'. This circumstance is registered graphically, in the current discrepancy between the ways war horrors are perceived in Ukraine as against much lower awareness when it comes to Yemen. In the latter war, parties such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt have been supplied with German weapons. Part of this reality, which still is largely pushed into the back of public communication is also the focus of the Bundeswehr on foreign missions and connected experiences which cannot be encouraging even for those who will not countenance fundamental criticism of such actions. The connections that exist between military interventions of Western states – not including Germany – into Libya in 2011 and the following violent developments in the Sahara region form an important example of this. This is true particularly given the current critical situation, the quasi-official failure of the European Mali missions, the military advance of Islamicist groups and the appearance of the group Wagner, which seems to act on Russian fiat, just to mention some salient instances. In an exemplary way, these developments link ongoing war in important parts of Africa and the Near East to the war in Ukraine. At the same time, we are reminded in this way, that not only states are parties to war but also terrorist groups, paramilitary formations and mercenaries. Frequently, their actions flow from a mixture of ideological, religious and economic motives.

A further dimension of the war against Ukraine pertains to the voting behaviour in UN bodies of important governments of the Global South – besides China and India, this comprises a large group of African states. Here, specific positionings and real or potential alliances become apparent. Thus, abstention in the UN General Assembly has sparked lively debate in South Africa – including the issue which among the states that both have been part of the

Soviet Union's support of the struggle against Apartheid should be a close partner. A further issue concerns the concept of a feminist foreign policy, as announced with the change at the head of the German foreign ministry. Such initiatives, and also postcolonial, anti-racist and anti-nationalist perspectives on world politics are now in the defensive. In times when readiness for military action and emphasis on strong men gain in prominence, advocates of these concerns are often blamed for a lack of clearness and for naiveté.

Further, there is reason of concern given open racial profiling by Ukrainian, Polish and German authorities in dealing with refugees from the war in Ukraine. The fact that persons fleeing from a theatre of war are assisted or experience obstruction along racist criteria throws serious doubts on the kind of solidarity that is now a frequent reference in Europe. The inequality which confronts refugees is brought out graphically in the contrast between the murderous regime in the Mediterranean as against the welcoming culture meeting white Ukrainians in Poland and elsewhere. Poland is still pursuing the building of a wall on its border with Belarus to keep out refugees.

Besides efforts to describe, systematise and understand the situation, the sudden shift in public debate in Germany towards a positive attitude concerning the militarisation of politics, communicated as a 'turning point', also confronts us with a need for more fundamental reflections on war and peace. Repeatedly, this has been a topic for *PERIPHERIE*. We recall critical engagement with armed liberation struggles and their aftermath, the turns associated with the Second Gulf War (No. 42 [1991]), issues of intervention and occupation (No. 55/56 [1994]; No. 79 [2000]; No. 84 [2001]; No. 116 [2009]), as well as the aftermath of 9/11 (No. 88 [2002]) and basic issues of 'security' (No. 122/123 [2011]), or the problematic of 'war, power, gender' (No. 133 [2013]), and the experience of the occupation of Afghanistan.

Doubtlessly, the catastrophic turn in Eastern Europe challenges these debates, but these in turn can help to work towards an understanding that counters Eurocentric thinking. Such an effort includes the question about any specific differences between the situation now troubling Europe and the continuing wars in the Global South. One factor to be considered is certainly the much more direct danger of all-encompassing nuclear war, as against the numerous 'proxy wars' of the past.

A further topic concerns the meaning of empire and colonial rule within the (former) power sphere of Tsarism and the Soviet Union. At the same time, we need to reflect anew on issues that have been with us in connection of the above-mentioned conflicts for a long time. These concern the meaning and effectiveness of international law which has been raised acutely by the Kosovo war of 1999, and also chances for regional orders of peace as have been discussed for a long time not only concerning Europe, but for instance (with even much less effect) for the WANA region (West Asia and North Africa). Regardless of its pitfalls, this debate remains of vital importance. A further fundamental concern remains the debate about 'ethics of conviction' (*Gesinnungsethik*) and 'ethics of responsibility' (*Verantwortungsethik*), where also contributions in *PERIPHERIE* have shown the difficulty of attributing answers to the issues of war and peace to one of these two sides.

For an issue which responds to the current situation, we welcome in particular contributions on topics such as:

- regional orders of peace as a realistic perspective;
- those who wish for peace must make peace – or prepare for war?;
- ethical issues of war and peace;
- globalisation of war processes and consequences of war;
- the wars in the Sahara – their transregional reasons and consequences;
- consequences of regional wars in the WANA region;
- strategies of governments of the Global South in the face of war in Europe;
- feminist foreign policy in reality check?
- eurocentrism and conceptions of conflict;
- war in Ukraine and international regimes of migration – discrimination among refugees;
- Russian imperialism: perspectives from Eastern Europe;
- purposes of diverse strategies of communication and pictures in connection with wars.

The submission deadline for articles is
August 31, 2022.

For manuscripts, correspondence with regard to potential contributions, and further questions, please contact: info@zeitschrift-peripherie.de. Further information for authors can be downloaded from <https://www.zeitschrift-peripherie.de>.