

In the framework of the Book and Culture Fair of the CLAE in Luxembourg City
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"Test Case Ukraine - Russia's War, the West and the Paths to Peace"

Abstract

On behalf of the peace initiative "Ad Pacem servandam - For Peace and Against War", the President Claude Pantaleoni welcomes Mr Manfred Sapper, editor-in-chief of the monthly magazine "Osteuropa", to his lecture in Luxembourg in the framework of the CLAE Book and Culture Fair.

In the introduction, the President refers to the great danger posed by Russia's war of aggression to peace in Europe. This conference is intended to explore possible scenarios for ending the war. There will then be a moment of silence by all participants to remember all those killed and injured in this war.

According to Sapper, the arms deliveries to the Ukrainian army are regulated by Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which guarantees the right of any state under attack to receive military assistance from other states. It is obvious that without Western support Ukraine would have long ceased to exist and Europe would have millions of additional refugees to mourn. In addition, there are the numerous human rights violations by Russian security forces that can already be observed in the areas occupied or re-liberated by Russia (Butscha, Irpin, Isjum).

Since 24 February 2022, Ukraine has been helped mainly by the British, Canadians and Americans and by the states that used to live under Soviet occupation (Baltic states, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia). In contrast, the rethinking in Western Europe has taken a long time, also because in Germany and other states the "never again war" mentality prevails above all. For Germany, which is responsible for two world wars, any war must be rejected. Sapper rejects a limited nuclear war by Russia against Ukraine, since Russian territories would also be hit by the nuclear fallout. Russia's security stipulates that nuclear bombs may only be used if the state is threatened. It is wrong to believe that a state like Ukraine must necessarily lose against a nuclear power like Russia. The decolonisation wars against France and Great Britain prove the opposite. The states of Central and Eastern Europe are not affected by Russia's nuclear threat because they are familiar with the Russians' policy of intimidation.

Furthermore, to this day there is an overriding functioning agreed deterrence between the Americans and the Russians that prevents the nuclear mutual destruction capability. Even if Ukraine does its utmost to draw the West to its side militarily, economically and politically, this will never lead to NATO intervention. Russia's attack on Ukraine has so far cost the lives of tens of thousands of Russian soldiers. There are conflicts about this in the Russian elite leadership, which is usually considered closed in the West. For Sapper, a possible end to the war may be decided at the elite level, where a split may occur if the sacrifices for this war are no longer borne by these elites.

Behind Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine are not, as some Europeans believe, the interests of the arms industry and imperial America, but it is Russia's imperial thinking that does not accept Ukraine's independence and self-responsibility. It is in the interests of the Russian regime, which since 2011/2012, when Putin returned to the presidency, has systematically destroyed any form of civil society autonomy.

Just as a war is no longer imaginable today between France and Germany, it was thought that this applied to the whole European area. It may be that this war will lead to a refounding of the self-understanding of the European Union and NATO and that Europeans will realise that freedom and self-determination cannot be taken for granted, especially with regard to their neighbour Russia.

The understanding of the European Union and the basic principles of what Europeans learned from the Second World War ("Never again shall states invade other states; never again shall territories be illegally annexed; never again shall borders be moved by force") has been destroyed with this war. This is the reason why a radical pacifist, ethicist stance on the Ukraine war is wrong. Only if Russia ends the war can peace negotiations take place. The United Nations remains powerless in its efforts to bring about an end to the war.

The eastward expansion of NATO over the last decades is a pretext for Putin, who fails to recognise the real conditions of entry into this military alliance. Stopping the supply of arms to Ukraine will lead to the abandonment, the fall of this state.

At the moment, a special tribunal is being worked on in several countries, as Ukraine has collected an incredible amount of evidence documenting Russian war crimes. This war is completely different from other wars because many Ukrainians are recording the injustice with their smartphones.

Nobody knows at the moment what relations with Russia will be like after this war. For Ukraine, it is certain that it will tighten its security policy towards Russia and that this will have top priority.

Moreover, it will take at least a generation before a new peace order, including Russia, will be possible.