

The Left Party: A party of German imperialism

By Johannes Stern
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The class character of political parties and tendencies finds sharpest expression in foreign policy. Based on this criterion, there can be no doubt that the Left Party is a pro-imperialist party. Along with all other bourgeois parties it supports German imperialism in its increasingly aggressive pursuit of its geo-strategic interests.

This is made abundantly clear in a foreign policy statement drawn up by leading politicians of all parties represented in parliament, entitled “More European foreign policy: seven members of parliament from the Left Party to the Christian Social Union formulate a bipartisan consensus”, and recently published in the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.

The statement lays down “cornerstones” for the pursuance of German imperialist interests within the framework of “European foreign policy”. The paper states: “It remains the case that the EU framework increases the influence of Germany in international politics far beyond what is possible at an exclusively national level”.

The authors of the paper consider a European foreign policy dominated by Germany to be a means to increase German influence in competition with its rivals. They state, “If the EU is not prepared to help shape the international order, it leaves it up to others to design the world”.

The paper is remarkable for how frankly it lists potential competitors and promotes German and European spheres of influence.

On foreign policy issues, it refers to the “cooperation and occasionally critical engagement with partners such as the United States, emerging powers such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and others”. As regions “of particular significance”, in which the European Union is to play a “stabilizing and shaping role”, the paper names North Africa, Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the Western Balkans, the Far North, the Black Sea and “unregulated

global spheres” such as cyberspace, outer space and the oceans.

Behind the numerous euphemisms that run through the entire document is the military defense of German economic and geo-strategic interests—not only on land, but also at sea, in space and even in cyberspace!

The statement continues: “The EU has a unique mix of different instruments for crisis management in Europe’s neighborhood. Unfortunately, European capitals have often lacked the political will in the past to use them in time and over time”.

This is a blatant appeal for more wars. What the authors cynically describe as a “unique mix of different instruments for crisis management”, actually refers to the armed forces and arsenals of European states which are to be deployed “on time and over time”. The authors of the appeal are outspoken supporters of military operations, regarding the current Christian Democrat-led coalition government’s decision to abstain from supporting and participating in the NATO war on Libya in 2011 as a major error.

Lars Klingbeil, who was involved in drafting the appeal for the Social Democratic Party, described the abstention of Germany as a “disgrace”. Agnieszka Brugger, another co-author who sits for the Greens in the Bundestag Defence Committee, was of the same opinion. She criticized the fact that “the federal government categorically ruled out any military participation”.

Speaking of the war against Libya, Stefan Liebich, a co-author from the Left Party, said such foreign missions should not be “completely rejected”.

A few weeks after the brutal murder of the former head of the Libyan government, Muammar Gaddafi, CSU deputy Reinhard Brandl, who also authored the paper, described the role of Germany in the Libya war as a mistake.

In a speech on the role of the German army, Brandl declared: “It was wrong in any case, to abstain in the Security Council and oppose our traditional allies. This is contrary to the national interests I mentioned before. In retrospect, the use of NATO was correct”.

After the “Libya debacle”, all parties represented in the Bundestag are now closing ranks on the war question. They support the imperialist intervention in Syria aimed at overthrowing Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and replacing him with a pro-Western puppet regime.

Unlike Libya, this time the German ruling class does not intend to be left out from the division of the spoils.

The common foreign policy statement underlines that the Left Party is a driving forces behind the return of German imperialism to the world stage. It considers an increasingly aggressive German foreign policy as an opportunity to win increasing favour with the bourgeois political establishment.

Last December, the Left Party together with leading representatives of the SPD, the Greens and the CDU, issued an appeal titled: “Syria: Freedom needs assistance”, calling for intervention in Syria (see: Germany’s Left Party mobilizes for war against Syria).

Speakers at its meetings include representatives of the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood and other opposition groups calling for increased arming by NATO of the Islamist-dominated militias (see: German Left Party supports imperialist intervention in Syria).

The Left Party has always been a pro-imperialist, bourgeois party with close links to German foreign policy committees. Four of its deputies sit on the Bundestag Defence Committee, which meets in secret and advises and implements foreign military deployments. Leading Left Party politicians regularly participate in cross-party government delegations representing German political and economic interests internationally.

Ideologically, the Left Party plays a central role in the plans of the German bourgeoisie to rehabilitate German militarism, which is widely despised following the catastrophes of two world wars and the crimes of National Socialism. The purpose of its propaganda is to mobilize sections of the middle class in support of brutal imperialist wars and broadly to poison public opinion.

The statement reads: “Europe can and must be a force for peace; the task is to expand and strengthen the skills to achieve peace. This includes strengthening the skills and tools for crisis prevention, crisis management and post-crisis situations”.

This is the Orwellian language of German and European imperialism in the 21st century. Far from being apostles of peace, European nations are increasingly embroiled in war. Over the past 15 years they have been involved in wars against Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Mali. The manner in which illegal wars, brutal occupations and the setting up of puppet regimes is cynically packaged as “crisis prevention, crisis management and post-crisis situations” speaks volumes about the reactionary nature of the German ruling elite.

The authors of the joint statement are equally duplicitous when it comes to describing their plans to further expand German militarism after the federal election and in defiance of broad public opposition. They explain that it is necessary “to highlight certain bipartisan similarities that are essential for German foreign policy orientation beyond the current parliamentary term. These key points should be adhered to irrespective of which parties constitute the next government. In addition it is necessary to increase public debate about German foreign policy and arouse much more interest in it”.

The working class must not be fooled by the attempts of the German bourgeoisie to play down its program of dictatorship and war. The same applies to the lies of the Left Party, which occasionally tries to pose as a political alternative.

The joint foreign policy statement shows that the Left Party differs from the CDU/CSU, Free Democratic Party, SPD and the Greens only in name but not in policy. It is a right-wing bourgeois party, prepared to defend the interests of German industrial and finance capital with military means and in alliance with other parties.

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