

# German Green Party program endorses militarism and social cuts

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The national party conference of the German Greens took place in Dortmund at the end of January. Its main objective was to adopt a party programme and a list of candidates for the forthcoming European Union elections. The conference proceedings, however, were completely overshadowed by the international economic crisis.

The Greens are reacting to the most devastating crisis in capitalism since the 1930s by doing everything they can to return to power and make their services available to the ruling class for the implementation of a programme based on social cutbacks and militarism.

The European programme adopted by the party conference expressly supports the European Union (EU) and calls for its strengthening in the interest of German big business and banking interests. “We Greens are a European party”, is the claim in the nine-page preamble to the election programme.

In 2005, the European Constitution was rejected by the French and Dutch electorates. A slightly changed version of the Constitution—the so-called Lisbon Treaty—met the same fate in Ireland last summer. The Greens are now determined to push ahead with the Lisbon Treaty contrary to the will of the general population. In their programme they write: “It has not yet been concluded that the constitution will not be ratified by all member states in a second round of voting. Despite all the criticism of the constitution, we hope it will be ratified”.

The European Union is an economic, political and military bloc of European business interests directed against its competitors on a world scale and also against the interests of the population of the continent. The Green Party is well aware of the class nature of the EU, but seeks to disguise it with a mixture of pacifist and

ecological phraseology.

In their election program, the Greens refer to the EU as a “Peace Project” and demand that the EU become “an attorney for world wide peace, human rights and disarmament”.

To this end the EU must speak with a single voice, the program notes. It goes on to advocate majority decision making for the body in its foreign and security policy. The current policy of the EU is that all 27 member states must agree measures relating to foreign and security policy. When the Greens speak of majority decision-making, it is clear they are seeking to increase the specific weight of the continent’s major powers, first and foremost Germany.

At the same time, they combine their demand for a more powerful EU with calls for a more aggressive military policy. The party’s European election program openly advocates military deployments under the command of NATO, in which the EU should play a bigger role: “Decisive for the future of NATO is the ability of the European NATO partners and the US to operate on a level playing field.”

The section of the program dedicated to ecological issues takes a similar stance. The Greens and the media have aggressively publicised the party’s “Green New Deal”, aimed supposedly at “harmonising jobs and environmental protection”.

The reality behind such pretentious claims is the Green Party’s desire to strengthen the position of European companies on the world market. The program states: “With the Green New Deal we are assuring European companies the best chances on the markets of the future”.

While in the federal government in 1998-2005 in a coalition with the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the Greens already demonstrated they were prepared to undertake enormous attacks on the rights and living conditions of workers and the employed. All this in order to assure “German companies the best chances on the markets of the future”, they wrote in justification. They share responsibility for the introduction of the Hartz IV anti-welfare laws, which have led to the creation of a huge army of low-paid workers in Germany.

In particular, the party proved to be crucial in allowing the German army to return to the world stage. Against a widespread anti-militarist sentiment within the German population, the intervention of the Greens in 1998 made possible the dispatch of German troops to the Balkans in the first full-fledged foreign military deployment by the country since the Second World War. It was on the basis of this political intervention that Green Party leader Joschka Fischer won sufficient credibility with the German ruling elite to allow him to assume the post of foreign minister.

Since then the Greens have constituted a bulwark for German imperialism and have supported all of Germany’s international deployments. The Greens also supported Israel’s recent brutal invasion of Gaza.

In its eagerness to return to power the party is prepared to support any type of policy. This was evident last year when the party formed for the first time a coalition with the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in the state of Hamburg. In so doing the party ditched its two main election campaign promises. The party has most recently demonstrated its political cretinism over the issue of the German government’s latest “stimulus program”.

In parliament and at its conference in Dortmund, Green Party leaders lashed out at the government’s stimulus package of €50 billion, declaring it to be a “declaration of bankruptcy” (chairperson Claudia Roth); “voodoo economics” (parliamentary chairperson Fritz Kühn), and a “shambles” (former federal Environment Minister Jürgen Trittin).

All this despite the fact that the party has already decided to vote in favour of the stimulus package in the second house of the German parliament (Bundesrat). In

the states of Hamburg and Bremen, where the Green Party shares power, it has agreed to support the government program in the Bundesrat. The organiser of this coup is party leader Jürgen Trittin, who is motivated entirely by the desire to re-enter government office. To this end he is prepared to go to any lengths in order to out-manoeuvre the Green Party’s closest political rival, the pro-business Free Democratic Party.

The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* wrote recently: “Trittin himself confirmed that the main issue for his party was to out-manoeuvre the FPD.” In the Bundestag, where the governing grand coalition (CDU-SPD-Christian Social Union) have a controlling majority, the Green Party votes against the government’s stimulus measures; while in the Bundesrat, where their vote is decisive, the party supports the government.

The continuing shift to the right by the Green Party is a social phenomenon. The party, which represents like no other the interests of the upper middle class in Germany, stands foursquare in the camp of the ruling elite. The international financial crisis threatens the profits and fortunes of those at the top of society. The reaction of the Greens is to intensify its activities aimed at attacking the incomes and rights of the working population.

In Dortmund, conference delegates loudly applauded the remarks made by one speaker, the former East German rights activist Werner Schultz, when he declared, “In the meantime, people are more afraid of their financial advisors than of Al Qaeda.” In fact, the vast majority of the German population are not in a position to afford the services of a financial advisor. In Dortmund, however, Schultz’s remarks struck a nerve with delegates who selected him to represent the party in the European elections due in June—in the face of a large number of rival candidates.

The message from the Green Party conference in Dortmund could be summed up as follows: When it comes to defending the interests of the banks and big business, we are the most cooperative and flexible party.



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