

German Green Party campaigns for war

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The German government's confrontational approach towards Russia is supported by all parties represented in the federal parliament. But none are doing so as aggressively and hysterically as the Greens.

Fifteen years ago, the Greens jointly oversaw the first foreign deployment of the German army since World War II in NATO's war against Yugoslavia. Now they are supporting fascist forces in Ukraine and foaming with war propaganda against Russia. On the television programme "Menschen bei Maischberger" there was virtually nothing to differentiate Green Party politician Werner Schulz from the president of the revanchist League of Exiles (BdV) Erika Steinbach on this issue.

Schulz described Russian President Vladimir Putin as a "criminal," "aggressor," and "war-monger," who represented an "expansionist nationalism." Because Putin was an "unscrupulous power politician," the situation was more dangerous today than in the Cold War.

Schulz received special praise from Steinbach when he questioned the legitimacy of Russia's claim to Crimea by referring to the deportation of Crimea's Tatars under the Stalinist regime 70 years ago as the cause of ethnic Russians being in the majority. It was not actually a state which broke apart when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, but Europe's last colonial empire had fallen, according to Schulz. Putin's new colonialism had to be countered by the eastward expansion of the NATO alliance.

In an interview with Deutsche Welle at the beginning of March, Schulz explicitly spoke out in favour of using military threats over the Ukraine conflict. "Ultimately, the only really effective method is the guarantee of assistance," the European Parliament deputy said. "It is fully in conformity with international law that these countries are given a guarantee that their territorial integrity will be maintained. And this will also warn Russia of its limits."

Whenever voices are raised in the German media and by politicians, who, while supporting the aims of German imperialism, call for diplomatic activity or verbal de-escalation, Green Party propagandists respond with extreme aggression.

When former social democratic Chancellor Gerhard Schröder relativized Russia's actions in Crimea by explaining that he had also violated international law as German Chancellor during the Yugoslavia war, Green Party lead candidate for the European elections Rebecca Harms put a motion to the European Parliament, in all seriousness, to ban Schröder from speaking.

In their support for the German government's confrontational course towards Russia, the Greens have no qualms about defending the fascist party Svoboda, whose sister party in Germany, the NPD, the Greens wish to ban. Svoboda formed part of the shock troops who contributed to the escalation of violence on the Maidan, and is represented in the new government, which is recognised by the German government, with six cabinet members and three ministers.

Green Party chairwoman Katrin Göring-Eckhardt defended Svoboda during a recent debate in the German parliament in an angry speech. The call from Svoboda leader Oleg Tyagnibok, "grab your arms, fight the Russkies, the Germans, the yids and other undesirables," was already 10 years old and therefore could not help in understanding the current situation, claimed Göring-Eckhardt. Instead one had to ask, "Why was it that right-wing populists were invited from across Europe to monitor the vote in Crimea?"

Svoboda's ministers did not have the upper hand in the Ukrainian government, she went on. Therefore there was no reason to take action. "Democracy and freedom in the Ukrainian constitution would certainly be over in that case."

This defence of, and downplaying of fascists is in

direct contradiction with the Greens' own sources. In November, Kyryl Savin, head in Kiev of the Heinrich Böll foundation—the Greens' think tank—commented: “unfortunately the right and right-wing radicals dominated the rhetoric among the protesters.” At the same time, according to Savin, “many of our partners in civil society” had taken part in the demonstrations.

The foundation was actively involved in the organisation of the demonstrations from the beginning. Leading Green politicians like Harms and parliamentary deputy Marieluise Beck travelled to Kiev on numerous occasions to participate in the Maidan protests and to exercise influence. The permanent presence of Svoboda leader Tyagnibok, who was hailed by leading representatives from the EU, and the German and US governments, was of no concern to them. Just this week the Heinrich Böll foundation hosted a discussion between billionaire speculator George Soros and former Green Party minister Joschka Fischer, who have declared their unanimity on all major questions regarding developments in Ukraine—in particular their support for the aggressive policy of the German government against Russia.

The cooperation with fascists and calls for war with Russia are the sharpest expressions to date of the rightward evolution of the Greens. In 1998, the former pacifists played a key role in mobilising their petty-bourgeois followers in support of the first intervention by the German army since the Second World War. At that time it was foreign minister Fischer who argued for war on the basis of preventing a repeat of Auschwitz. Since then the Greens have developed into the party that is the most aggressive advocate of military intervention.

During their time in government, they also supported the colonial campaign against Afghanistan. In the Libyan war, the Greens attacked the then Christian Democratic Union/Free Democratic Party government for not participating in the bombardment of the country. Last year, they were the strongest advocates of military intervention in Syria.

This militarist foreign policy was connected from the outset with massive attacks on the working class in Germany. The association agreement with the EU, which the German government sought to enforce with the overthrow of Yanukovych, also plans major attacks on the wages and living standards of Ukrainian

workers.

The Greens' ruthless advocacy of the interests of German imperialism arises from the social and political roots of the party. More than any other, the Greens represent a privileged layer of the middle class and are extremely hostile to the demands of working people.

Figures like Schulz and Göring-Eckhardt played a central role in the restoration of capitalism in the GDR (East Germany). Both of them joined citizens' movements in 1989 which would later come together to form Bündnis 90 (Alliance 90). Schulz sat personally at the round table discussions as a representative of the New Forum, collaborating closely with the Stalinist state party (SED) to prepare reunification and introduce capitalist property relations.

Their contempt for the social achievements of the working class in the GDR, expressed by Schulz's description of the Soviet Union as a supposed colonial power, was coupled with the desire for career advancement in a reunified Germany. Bündnis 90 ultimately brought those elements of the movement together which emerged as the most hostile to the interests of the working class.

In 1993, they merged with the west German Greens, who for their part were representatives of a social layer which, after briefly flirting with Stalinism in its Maoist form in the 1970s, retained only its hatred of the working class while moving continuously to the right as its wealth grew.



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