

# German Greens incite conflict with Russia

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In a guest comment for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* on May 1, Ralf Fücks, head of the Green Party-aligned Heinrich Böll Foundation, accused the German government of weakness in the Ukraine crisis.

The German government “paints reality in bright colours, rather than recognising the unpleasant challenges,” the former spokesman for the Greens’ federal executive wrote. “The helpless appeals to Russian leaders to avoid a further escalation of the situation; the avoidance of serious sanctions bordering on self-denial; the practical acceptance of the carve-up of Ukraine: all of these are signs that no resistance is to be expected from Germany to Putin’s primitive power politics.”

Fücks’ comment confirms that the Greens are in the front line of those campaigning for the revival of German militarism. Not only Fücks, but other Green politicians have produced hysterical war propaganda against Russia and called on the Merkel government to take tougher measures in Ukraine.

They are not limiting themselves to propaganda. The Heinrich Böll Foundation played a decisive role in the preparation of the February 22 coup that overthrew President Viktor Yanukovich and brought a right-wing, pro-Western government to power. The foundation runs its own office in Kiev. Fücks’ wife, Green MP Marieluise Beck, was personally involved in the anti-Yanukovich Maidan protests and wrote a diary about it.

The Heinrich Böll Foundation previously supported the “Orange Revolution” in Ukraine in 2004. Together with a network of foundations, NGOs, academics, media outlets and politicians, it founded the forum Kiev Talks, which has met regularly in Kiev and Berlin ever since.

Other participants include the German Foreign Office, the Robert Bosch Foundation, all of the foundations linked to Germany’s main political parties, the German Society for Eastern European Affairs, Ukrainian and Polish institutions, and media outlets such as Deutsche Welle and Deutschlandradio.

In close contact with the German government, the forum developed the ideology and propaganda for the

Ukrainian opposition and provided training and financing for leading participants from the student and academic communities.

Since the end of 2012, a central theme in Kiev Talks has been downplaying the influence of the fascistic Svoboda Party, which played a significant role in the coup in Kiev and is represented in the new government.

Although Svoboda praises Nazi collaborators and mass murderers from the period of the Second World War, and cooperates with the German neo-Nazi National Democratic Party (NPD), the political scientist Andreas Unland claimed at a Kiev Talk on February 19, 2013 in Berlin that the party could not be described as neo-Nazi. Svoboda was less of a threat than France’s National Front because it identified its main enemy as “Russian imperialism” rather than the “Jewish-Masonic world conspiracy,” he said.

Two days prior to the coup in Kiev, in which fascist Right Sector and Svoboda supporters acted as shock troops, the Heinrich Böll Foundation published a statement entitled “Euro-Maidan: Not an extremist, but a mass movement for freedom.”

In it, the foundation warned of an “exaggerated emphasis on the radical right-wing elements in the Euro-Maidan in Kiev.” Russia’s “imperialist nationalism” posed “a far greater threat to social justice, the rights of minorities and political equality than all Ukrainian ethno-nationalists taken together,” the statement declared.

This policy of uncritical support for the regime in Kiev met with opposition from broad sections of the German population, as was clear from the comments sections of the Green Party press and the Heinrich Böll Foundation. Fücks responded with a vicious denunciation of the public. He accused it of not being prepared to “make sacrifices” in the fight for “Europe’s common values, while holding secret sympathies for Moscow, the global headquarters of authoritarianism.”

His May 1 piece for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* consists of an eclectic mishmash of historical tidbits and superficial psychology.

Germany had an ambivalent relationship with Russia, shifting “between attraction and opposition, enmity and fascination,” he claimed. Along with the Nazis’ war of destruction and the Cold War, there was also “another tradition deeply rooted in political and cultural memory: the idea of a German-Russian alliance.”

It stretched “from the alliance between Tsarism and Prussia against the revolutionary upsurges of 1789 and 1848 to Gerhard Schröder’s ‘Berlin/Paris/Moscow axis.’” Its cultural basis was “the feeling of a spiritual kinship of two nations which rejected the vile materialism of the Anglo-Saxon world.”

Like many other Greens and leading war propagandists in German editorial offices and history faculties, Fücks is a former Maoist. At the beginning of the 1970s, when Germany was rocked by sharp class struggles, he joined the Communist League of West Germany (KBW) and hailed Stalin.

He joined the Greens in 1982. From 1991 to 1995 he held the post of state senator for the environment in Bremen. He later advanced to become spokesman for the Greens’ federal executive. Since 1996, he has led the Heinrich Böll Foundation, which plays an important role in German foreign policy along with the foundations of the other main parties.

In 2012, the Heinrich Böll Foundation had an annual budget of €48 million, which comes almost exclusively from state resources. Its budget is significantly higher than that of the Green Party, which stood at €38 million in 2012, €15 million of which came from state sources.

The Heinrich Böll Foundation spent almost half of its budget on international activities. It runs over 30 foreign offices, of which eight are located in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.



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