

Germany: Left Party bangs the drum for military action against the Islamic State

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On Tuesday, 14 leading Left Party members issued a statement titled “Save Kobani!”, demanding a massive military intervention against the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS).

The signatories include 12 members of the parliamentary party, including the group’s vice chairs Dietmar Bartsch and Jan Korte, Bundestag (parliament) Vice President Petra Pau, and the Left Party representative on the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, Stefan Liebich.

The Left Party statement attacks the government from the right. While the government is supplying weapons to the Kurdish Peshmerga in northern Iraq, it has so far rejected direct participation in the US-led air strikes against ISIS, or sending ground troops. According to the Left Party, this has to change.

The statement reads, “The barbaric campaign of the terrorist militia in the region, the murders and tortures that are causing thousands of people to flee, cannot be tolerated any longer....The correct call for an expansion of humanitarian assistance to the victims and those affected by the war in Iraq and Syria, which the Left Party supports, is not enough to stop the IS terrorist militia.”

And further, “Against this background, [providing] military support and cooperation for the Kurds in and around Kobani is unavoidable. The Kurdish self-defence forces need urgent support in the fight against the IS terrorist militia.”

The UN Security Council must “now finally unite together behind Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and meet without delay to discuss and decide a joint response under the UN Charter for the maintenance of international security. It is the responsibility and duty of the Security Council ‘to take effective collective measures to prevent and overcome the threats to peace,

to suppress acts of aggression and other breaches of the peace.’”

At the end of the statement, the Left Party politicians demand the German government address the situation at the United Nations, “with the goal that the Security Council adopt the necessary measures in accordance with the UN Charter”.

This is an unmistakable call for a massive military intervention under the guise of the UN proviso, the “responsibility to protect”, as was used in the NATO war against Libya in 2011. Until now, the Left Party had rejected such interventions, at least officially.

The party newspaper, *Neues Deutschland*, which published the statement, stated: “Therefore it functions to open the floodgates when 14 Left Party politicians from the so-called reform wing of the party now demand military intervention under a UN mandate. Without this being clearly stated, this concerns a demand for intervention under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, previously a taboo for the Left Party.”

Cynically, the paper added: “The programmatic principles of the Left Party on the subject of military operations prevents what this means from being formulated in any precise manner.”

The official programme of the Left Party, which isn’t worth the paper it is printed on, states, under the heading “Imperialism and War”: “Imperial wars arise from struggles over geo-political power, economic, political and cultural domination, profits, markets and raw materials....They lead to further military, ethnic and religious conflicts, the disintegration of states, to fundamentalism and terrorism, and environmental destruction.”

And further on: “In defiance of the Charter of the United Nations, violence and wars are also political means. Often, this is done under the pretext of fighting

terrorism, or against ‘rogue states’. The justification of military intervention in the name of protecting human rights is particularly fatal.”

But this is exactly what the Left Party is now doing. It is justifying “military intervention” and an “imperial war”, involving “geopolitical power, economic, political and cultural domination, profits, markets and raw materials” by citing the “protection of human rights”.

With its call for war, the Left Party is showing its true colours. Like all other parliamentary parties, it is a right-wing bourgeois party that aggressively represents the interests of German imperialism. A military intervention under Chapter VII in the Middle East would not be a peace mission to protect the Kurds, but a massive escalation of the imperialist war offensive in Syria and Iraq, in which, unlike the invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the war in Libya, Germany is an active participant.

The Left Party was from the start a party of war (see: “The German Left Party's pursuit of war in Syria”). For more than three years, it has supported the brutal civil war in Syria, which is fueled by the imperialist powers and their regional allies, to topple the Assad regime and install a pro-Western puppet regime in Damascus. It has supported systematically building up the pro-Western opposition and the war against Syria. In April, five Left Party parliamentary deputies voted for a Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) mission to destroy Syrian chemical weapons.

In recent weeks, the warmongering of the Left Party has become increasingly more visible. In early August, parliamentary group leader and party figurehead Gregor Gysi was one of the first German politicians to demand arms be supplied to the Kurds. As a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Left Party member and Greenpeace activist Jan Van Aken was present as the first arms shipments arrived in Erbil. He published a very revealing travelogue about this on his web site.

While leading Left party members utilise their close ties to the Syrian opposition and the Kurdish organizations for the benefit of German imperialism, the party's newspapers run the necessary war propaganda. *Neue Deutschland* bangs the drum almost every day for military intervention, publishing editorials with headlines like: “For UN action against atrocities”, “Responsibility to Protect? Dithering is not

a strategy”, or “We are not a party of peace if we argue while others die.” *Junge Welt*, the house organ of veteran Stalinists and fake lefts inside the party, is not to be outdone, and has published “Pleas for German arms deliveries” and a “Thank you letter to President Obama”, among others. On Wednesday, under the headline, “We cannot close our eyes”, it advertised a fundraising campaign for the military buildup of the Kurds.

In its resolution “The return of German militarism”, the Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (Socialist Equality Party) writes of the role of the Left Party: “Fifteen years ago, it was the Greens who played the crucial role in organising the return of German militarism on the world stage and whitewashing it with ‘humanitarian’ platitudes. Today it is the Left Party. While Stefan Liebich, the party’s representative on the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Bundestag, was helping draw up the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik’s new foreign policy strategy, a new consensus was struck in the party. Since then, the Left Party has backed the aggressive foreign policy of the German government.”

After its call for war over Kobani, the Left Party has put the German government in the shade on the question of war.



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