

# German Left Party leader outlines campaign against Russia

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Christine Buchholz, a leading member of Marx 21, the German offshoot of Britain's Socialist Workers Party and a parliamentary deputy of the Left Party, was recently treated to a reception buffet at the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP). If there was a critical visitor to the event—and there were none, since it was “invited guests” only, along with members of the press—they might have been reminded of the saying, “He who pays the piper, calls the tune.”

The mere fact that the defense spokesperson for the Left Party delivered a lecture at the DGAP on German foreign and defense policy exposes how deeply the organization and its pseudo-left factions are integrated into German imperialism. In fact, the Left Party is playing a central role in the revival of an aggressive German foreign policy.

The DGAP is one of the largest and oldest foreign policy think tanks in Germany. It was founded in 1955 by the influential bankers Hermann Josef Abs and Robert Pferdmenges, both of whom had made their careers under the Nazis.

The DGAP today has more than 2,500 members, including major figures in the economic and political establishment. In its presidium can be found Wolfgang Ischinger, the head of the Munich Security Conference. Its managers are CEO Arend Oetker and diplomat Paul Freiherr von Maltzahn. One of its most well-known active members is the current German finance minister, Wolfgang Schäuble (CDU, Christian Democratic Union).

Buchholz spoke within the framework of a series of talks at the think tank, organized under the headline, “German defense policy and a new responsibility—parliamentary group speakers explain their positions.” The spokesmen of the government parties had already explained their “positions” at

previous events.

The stated aim of the DGAP is to promote discussion of a new defense and military strategy for Germany. The text announcing the series of meetings reads, “2014 was a year of major security policy crises in Europe and its periphery ... Germany must and will take on more responsibility in this conflict-ridden world. At the same time, the deficiencies of the Bundeswehr [armed forces] are striking.”

It continues, “German defense policy is being put to the test: What should a stronger German engagement look like in practice? Do we have the right defense mindset to tackle the threats? Where do we stand in the reorientation of the Bundeswehr? Does it have the right skills? How can the necessary changes be better conveyed to the German public? Can we fulfill our treaty obligations?”

Buchholz came to the DGAP not as an opponent, but as an ally and strategy consultant of German imperialism. Even before beginning her actual contribution, she stressed that cooperation with the Left Party was possible in foreign policy issues.

“I do not see this so narrowly, that there are no points of overlap at all,” she said. Rather than making absolute statements, she said, the question is, “How to conduct oneself with regard to specific points.” These remarks were made to an audience comprised of representatives from the world of politics and the media, senior ministry officials and a whole detachment of the military in civilian clothes and in uniform.

Buchholz was received with warm applause. The moderator of the event, Henning Rieke, head of US/Transatlantic Relations at the DGAP, praised Buchholz's biography as “one of engagement in numerous projects of the peace movement,

globalization movement and other alternative political fields.” Rieke said Buchholz, a founding member of the Left Party, could be described not only as a defense politician, “but generally as an influential foreign policy politician.”

Buchholz’s lecture, titled “New responsibility instead of old interests,” revealed the specific role that the Left Party and Marx 21 are playing in the change in German foreign policy. She justified the return of German militarism with “humanitarian” arguments, calling for a German role more independent of the US and NATO. Such arguments are playing an important role in mobilizing an entire petty-bourgeois layer for the return of German militarism. She also offered the Left Party’s services to foreign policy elites in Germany in the campaign to install pro-Western governments in strategically and economically central regions of the world.

This was particularly evident in Buchholz’s remarks on Russia. In condemning Russian “imperialism”—a term she did not employ in relation to Germany—and the alleged Russian aggression in Ukraine, Buchholz plainly stood behind the aggressive attitude of the German government.

“While Western imperialism remains quagmired in Iraq and Afghanistan,” she lectured, “Russian imperialism has awakened again.” In 2008, Russia had inflicted “a defeat upon a NATO ally, Georgia.”

Specifically, she said she agreed with the defense minister, Ursula von der Leyen. “Frau von der Leyen said the day before yesterday [at the opening event White Paper 2016]: the ‘new policies of the Kremlin began long before the Ukraine crisis.’ That is true.” Russian behavior corresponds to “a great power that imposes its interests by means of force.”

Then Buchholz presented the strategy of the Left Party: “It is obvious that Putin is relying on the use of military force. The Left Party has no sympathy with this. However, the escalation of the conflict—and this is what the response of NATO amounts to—is no more an answer. The solution can only come from within.”

Buchholz added, “Anti-militarism in Russia is the answer to Putin’s militarism. But these voices are marginalized so long as Putin can justify his policy of escalation by pointing the finger at NATO, the EU and their allies.”

In other words, Buchholz advises the German ruling

class to break up Russia from the inside in order to pursue their imperialist interests, rather than relying primarily on a military confrontation. Her demand for support for “anti-militarism” in Russia is merely another expression for the promotion of a “color revolution,” as the Western powers have already organized and financed in Georgia, Ukraine and elsewhere.

Marx 21 and other parts of the Left Party played a central role in the putsch in Ukraine a year ago, together with the Greens, the government parties and their respective think tanks. They celebrated the right-wing coup as a “democratic revolution” and defended the collaboration with the fascist forces that drove elected President Viktor Yanukovich from office.

During the clashes in Kiev, Marx 21 published an interview on its web site with Ilya Budraitskis, a member of the pseudo-left Russian Socialist Movement, who praised the fascists as the “bravest and literally most militant sections of the movement.” No one went on such an “offensive against the police as the ultra-right.” When asked whether he wanted to “discuss with Nazis,” Budraitskis replied, “Maybe with some.”

With her proposal for a regime change in Russia in the name of “freedom and democracy” and the “struggle against Russian imperialism,” Buchholz stands in the anti-Russian traditions of German imperialism and the DGAP. Shortly after the attack on the Soviet Union by Hitler’s Wehrmacht in June 1941, Hermann Josef Abs—who founded the DGAP after the war and was the spokesman for the Deutsche Bank from 1957 to 1967—described the war against the Soviet Union as a struggle “against the greatest enemy of freedom and humanity.”



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