

German Left Party joins anti-refugee campaign

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Left Party parliamentary group leader Sahra Wagenknecht joined in the far-right campaign of agitation against refugees and called for police state measures on Monday.

After a Left Party meeting in Berlin, she seized on the New Year's Eve events in Cologne as a pretext, declaring, "Whoever abuses the right to hospitality has lost the right to be a guest." This was a "very clear position" of the Left Party, she said.

The word "guest" for people who have fled war, death and hunger is drawn from vocabulary of the far-right. With the racist hysteria whipped up since the New Year, the term has once again become widespread. The implications are clear: refugees are guests, and they should behave as such, and they have no democratic rights. They will be tolerated and, at the next opportunity, will be requested to leave Germany. If they don't leave voluntarily, they will be deported.

Wagenknecht is joining in the chorus of establishment parties and media demanding, "Criminal foreigners out!"

Wagenknecht's co-leader in the parliamentary fraction, Dietmar Bartsch, stated that Wagenknecht's demands reflected existing law. "We have to enforce the laws currently in place with great decisiveness," he demanded. In Germany, there was currently an "enforcement deficit".

Wagenknecht spoke out explicitly in favour of limiting the number of refugees. Just last month in an interview with *Der Spiegel*, she declared, "It is also clear that we cannot accept a million people every year."

Then on Monday she claimed before media representatives, "There are objective limits to capacity. It is very clear that Germany will not manage another million refugees in the coming year, and possibly even

more in future years."

It was necessary to ensure that "the issue of war refugees [does not] overburden single countries," she continued. Otherwise, there would be consequences for asylum seekers, "as well as the willingness to accept them within the population." This limit, in her opinion, had been "almost reached". She therefore understood the worries expressed by "many people" about the large numbers of refugees, stating, "If people now fear that areas are emerging in Germany where laws do not apply, the politicians must do something about it."

What Wagenknecht, as a leading politician of the Left Party, plans to do about it was made clear: more police. "Why have so many police positions been eliminated in this country?" she asked, and answered by noting that the states were suffering under the debt break. Having more personnel in the police is "what we actually need".

The call for more police is now widespread within the Left Party.

Last Thursday, Left Party Chairman Berndt Riexinger warned in a press release that the massive reduction in police jobs was destabilising the country. The savings were reducing "the functional capacity of the state" and leading "to the brink of state failure".

Jan Korte, deputy parliamentary group leader and member of the parliamentary interior affairs committee, declared Monday on the daily news programme "Tagesschau", "It is clear that we have to talk about whether there has been a failure of the state in this country." Korte went on to ask, "In the public sector, are the police actually sufficiently equipped? With personnel and other things?"

The Left Party in Brandenburg, which is in a coalition government in Potsdam, also spoke out the same day. The leader in the state parliament, Ralf Christoffers,

told the press, “The criminals on New Year’s Eve in Cologne must be rapidly investigated and punished using the entirety of legal provisions including the possible loss of their right to reside.” The legal order had to be “enforced without restrictions”.

This is all purely cheap propaganda and has one goal: the support for refugees among the vast majority of the population is to be broken. Wagenknecht says she understands the worries of “many people” about the “large numbers of refugees”. Who are the “many people” she is speaking of? A few thousand right-wing extremists meet weekly in Dresden for the Pegida demonstrations and refer to themselves as “concerned citizens”. Hundreds of thousands of people have engaged in support organisations for refugees or support their work with donations.

It is even more despicable when Wagenknecht seeks to play off refugees against workers, the unemployed and poor. Over recent months, she has repeatedly claimed that refugees could be used as a downward pressure on wages. On Monday, she asserted that refugees would intensify the problems on the property market. “If the politicians don’t finally begin to have affordable housing built on a large scale, rents will continue to increase.” This was not an “irrational, but rather a fully understandable fear.”

Wagenknecht remains silent on the fact that, particularly in eastern Germany, the Left Party has imposed cost-cutting at the state and municipal levels, where it has not shrunk from selling public housing to the highest bidder. The city council in Dresden, with the full support of the Left Party, offloaded the municipal property association with around 60,000 apartments (“affordable housing”) to the Fortress hedge fund. Over the previous 15 years, the council has sold 120,000 city-owned properties to private owners.

Wagenknecht’s proposals are identical to those of her husband Oscar Lafontaine. The founding father and long-term chairman of the Left Party began last November to agitate against refugees. At the time, we wrote, “Lafontaine’s line of argument is entirely right-wing populist. He is seeking to play off the poorest sections of society against immigrants, and accompanies this with a few harmless barbs against millionaires and calls for more police.”

Lafontaine wrote at the time, “Those who are already disadvantaged, namely low earners, the unemployed,

families and retirees, cannot be made to bear the costs. It is impermissible that cuts are made to schools, in the social sector, in public sector and for the police, while Merkel, Gabriel and Co. refuse to make millionaires take part proportionally in the financing.”

Wagenknecht now links her call for increased personnel for the police with criticisms of the lack of personnel in the public sector as a whole, especially in education, her attacks on the orgy of cuts by municipalities with the call for tax increases for the rich, and her agitation against refugees with the “fears of the people”. If the rhetoric is freed from this social demagoguery, two principles remain: against refugees; for more police.

Wagenknecht’s statements demonstrate how right-wing and degenerate the Left Party is. For a long time Wagenknecht, the former spokesperson of the “Communist Platform”, was portrayed as a representative of the alleged left wing of the party, which opposed the right wing led by Dietmar Bartsch and Stefan Liebich. This was always a fraud. On the question of refugees, Wagenknecht and Lafontaine have now gone further than these declared right-wingers.



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