

German Left Party on a war footing for participation in federal government

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The Left Party has reacted to the recent Berlin state election with a sharp shift to the right. While it is preparing to participate in an administration with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Greens in the capital, its representatives are beating the drum for a “red-red-green” government at federal level.

Most recently, it is the party’s federal parliamentary leader, Sahra Wagenknecht, who has made clear that the Left Party does not differ from the parties that imposed the Hartz IV welfare and labour “reforms” and have supported Germany’s increasing militarism. She is contributing to the anti-refugee hysteria, demanding more police officers, and supports the government’s aggressive foreign policy.

In an interview on Saturday with the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), Wagenknecht emulated the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) in their anti-refugee tirades. “Every mayor is saying that capacity [for refugees] has reached its limit, this has nothing to do with stirring up fear. ...The problems cannot be solved by bringing more and more people to Germany, or by just enticing the better educated, who are then lacking in their own countries.”

Wagenknecht accused the federal government of “never making any arrangements to solve our urgent problems” in recent years. By this, she does not mean the social misery for which the Left Party is responsible from its previous period in office in the Berlin Senate or in East Germany, but “parallel worlds from which the state has increasingly withdrawn and where radical Islamists now seek to occupy the free spaces.”

Questioned by the FAZ, Wagenknecht said that the Left Party differs “fundamentally from the AfD and all the other parties.” Her comments, however, once again underline that the Left Party is indeed part of a right-wing front of all bourgeois parties, which extends from

the AfD to the Left Party, and is increasingly hated by the population.

If the Left Party differs from “all other parties” then it is in the sense that it advocates more aggressively the construction of a police state. “We have always criticised the cutting of police jobs,” Wagenknecht proclaimed. Then she affirmed: “We are not the party of the weak state, but want a state that is well enough equipped to fulfil its tasks. This includes ensuring the security of its citizens.”

Wagenknecht’s plea for a powerful state goes hand in hand with her support for an aggressive German foreign policy. In another interview with the German weekly *Die Zeit*, she responded unequivocally to the question, “Can you imagine a red-red-green coalition agreement in which Bundeswehr [armed forces of Germany] missions abroad continue to be possible?” as follows: “According to the constitution, the Bundeswehr has one objective: That is defence. Germany is not being defended in Syria or Afghanistan. Therefore, we should talk about such missions in the coalition negotiations.”

Last Wednesday, in an interview with the RedaktionsNetzwerks Deutschland, Wagenknecht said she saw “movement” in the SPD’s foreign policy. Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier had “expressed concern about the aggressive NATO policy towards Russia, and placed more importance on talks than military solutions,” as the pro-Left Party *Neues Deutschland* summarised Wagenknecht’s views.

Wagenknecht chose to express her support for the SPD foreign minister just as he was calling for the establishment of a no-fly zone over Syria when speaking in New York. “The situation today in Syria is on a knife edge,” said Steinmeier. “If the ceasefire is to have any chance whatsoever, the only way is to have a time-limited but complete ban of all military aircraft

movements over Syria, at least for three, or even better, seven days.”

On Friday, in his speech at the UN General Assembly, Steinmeier went even further: “Assad’s air force must stop its attacks. I also see Moscow’s responsibility here. If we fail in this, all efforts for a political solution will go down in a hail of bombs. For this reason alone, we must continue our efforts for a ceasefire, which failed in the ISSG [International Syria Support Group].”

In reality, a no-fly zone, which would be enforced by the US, Germany and other NATO powers, would not be an “effort for a ceasefire” but, as in the NATO bombing campaign against Libya in 2011, a massive escalation of war for regime-change in Syria fuelled by the Western powers. In his speech to the General Assembly of the United Nations on Friday, Steinmeier called for the violent overthrow of the Syrian government. “While the world struggles for a cease-fire in New York, Assad continues bombing Aleppo to rubble. This shows once again that the Assad regime cannot and should not determine the future of Syria.”

By explicitly supporting Steinmeier, Wagenknecht is signalling to the ruling class not only that the Left Party supports the installation of a pro-Western puppet regime in Damascus—in the organization of the Syrian opposition in Berlin it has long played a decisive role—but that the Left Party fully supports the return of German militarism to the world stage.

Since Steinmeier spoke at the Munich Security Conference in 2014 together with German President Gauck and Defence Minister Von der Leyen (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) to announce that Germany must “be willing to become involved in foreign and security policy earlier, more decisively and more substantially,” he has driven German foreign policy systematically in a militarist direction. The SPD-led foreign ministry elaborates strategy papers whose goal is the militarization of Europe under German hegemony, and in articles, Steinmeier himself boasts about “Germany’s new global role.”

The Left Party has been involved in the new offensive of German imperialism from the outset. Stefan Liebich, the party’s representative in the parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee, was among the 50 leading politicians, journalists, academics, military and business leaders who, under the auspices of the pro-

government Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) and the Washington think tank German Marshall Fund (GMF), elaborated the strategy paper “New power, new responsibility,” which formed the basis of the speeches of Steinmeier, Gauck and von der Leyen.

The statements by Wagenknecht and other leading representatives of the Left Party in recent weeks—e.g., Bodo Ramelow, the Left Party’s first minister president in the East German state of Thuringia, recently proclaimed that the “Lefts” are “not pacifists”—make clear how much the entire party has lined up behind Germany’s war drive. In a possible red-red-green federal government, the Left Party’s specific task would be to enforce the increasing military pursuit of German imperialism’s geostrategic and economic interests with “humanitarian” arguments, against the growing opposition to war among the population.

A 2014 anthology published by the Left Party calling for a “left-wing” foreign policy, titled “In a world falling apart at the seams,” claims that the majority of Germans would be prepared “to support the armed forces ... for exclusively humanitarian purposes” and in order to “prevent genocide.” But there was no majority, however, for “giving troops their marching orders to ensure access to raw materials and for trade wars.”



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