

As US-German rift widens

Left Party campaigns for German imperialism

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The Left Party is playing a critical role in misdirecting the widespread public disgust with the right-wing policies of US President Donald Trump behind a campaign for an independent German imperialist policy. Leading Left Party representatives have praised the speech given by German Chancellor Angela Merkel (Christian Democrats, CDU) in Bavaria Sunday, which called Germany's alliance with the US into question.

In an interview with the *Nordwest Zeitung* (NWZ) Tuesday, Dietmar Bartsch, the Left Party's parliamentary group leader in the federal parliament (Bundestag), stated, "It is right for her [Merkel] to distance herself, but it is remarkable that she is only doing so now. Obviously she has domestic political reasons for doing it. Here in this country, the people oppose Trump, that's why Merkel met with his predecessor Barack Obama at the church conference. Foreign policy cannot be done in this way. Trump is a militarist, a sexist and racist, that was clear to everyone."

While millions of people oppose Trump because of his right-wing policies—the same applies, by the way, for the policy of drone assassinations associated with his predecessor—the Left Party's propaganda has absolutely nothing to do with opposition to militarism and war. Instead, it serves to mobilise support for German imperialism.

Responding to a question from the NWZ on how the federal government should deal with Washington, Bartsch answered, "The implementation of an independent policy against the administration of Donald Trump is long overdue. The format of the G7 has finally failed. We must reorganise international

relations."

Left Party Chairwoman Katja Kipping adopted a similar tone at a Monday news conference. Faced with Trump's performance at the G7 summit, she said "it should finally be clear to everybody that now is the time to establish a new relationship with the United States, and that it be one between equals." It is "high time to stop being a yes-man to the US." That meant "firstly and very concretely: a clear stance against Donald Trump and NATO's dictates on rearmament. Secondly: the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons from Germany and thirdly: an end to the participation in drone warfare."

Kipping is formulating these demands not as a pacifist, but as a strategist for German imperialism, which increasingly views the US-led wars in the Middle East as a threat to Europe's stability and its own economic and geostrategic interests.

"I am convinced that we live in times in which security policy cannot be conducted based on what one sees immediately ahead," explained Kipping. It is necessary to begin "to think beyond the next day," and not shift "from one military intervention to another, from one bombardment to the next bombardment." NATO represents "this unstable policy, which leads us only to get bogged down in the wars in which we are currently engaged." To make the world "more secure," an "alternative to this, a collective security system" is required, she added.

The Left Party's claim that after its horrific crimes in two world wars, German imperialism can play a "peaceful" and "stabilizing" role today is pure propaganda. The past 25 years have already disproven such claims.

Since reunification, Germany has repeatedly taken part in the illegal wars of aggression led by the United States and has been implicated in war crimes in Afghanistan and Syria. Germany is now using Brexit and the conflict with Trump to strengthen German militarism so that it can assert itself independently of, and if necessary in opposition to, the United States.

The Left Party knows perfectly well the disastrous consequences of the policies it is perusing. A programmatic volume entitled “Germany’s new foreign policy,” which included contributions from German President Steinmeier, Finance Minister Schäuble, Defence Minister Von der Leyen and Dietmar Bartsch, complained that in Germany, the “neurotic desire to remain ‘morally clean’” dominated almost all debates on foreign and domestic policy.

“Whoever goes to war must generally accept responsibility for the deaths of people. That includes the deaths of non-combatants and innocents,” it states in the book. Precisely “in times of new strategic uncertainty,” it is necessary to “particularly [again] emphasise the military, not only because it subjects societies to such a stern test, but also because it ultimately remains the most consequential and therefore the most demanding, to some extent the crowning discipline of foreign policy.”

The conclusion of the author, Jan Techau, who has just published a book with the revealing title “Germany: a Leading power,” can only be interpreted as a threat: Germany must “achieve significantly more politically and militarily” in the years to come and be confronted by “foreign and security policy issues ... which the country has not even begun to dream about today. Perhaps not even in its nightmares.”



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