Germany: Marriage equality bill used to promote Red-Red-Green pro-war policy

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Germany's parliament (Bundestag) adopted a so-called marriage equality bill by a wide majority on Friday. A total of 393 deputies voted in favour and 226 against a draft law that had already passed in the upper house, the Bundesrat, with the votes of the Social Democrats (SPD), Left Party and Greens.

Earlier in the week, German Chancellor Angela Merkel of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) had declared the highly contentious issue to be a vote of conscience, thereby lifting party discipline. The SPD, which is in coalition with the CDU and its sister conservative party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), at the federal level, decided to effectively break coalition discipline, placing the bill on the parliamentary order of business with the support of the Greens and the Left Party.

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP—Socialist Equality Party), like the majority of the population, unequivocally supports legal marriage equality for homosexual couples. According to a poll by the Insa Institute, three quarters of the population declared their support for marriage equality and only 20 percent opposed it. Nobody should be discriminated against because of his or her sexual orientation.

But behind the Red-Red-Green (SPD-Left Party-Greens) shower of confetti, other calculations are involved. None of these parties is concerned with fighting for the enforcement of democratic rights. Two months prior to the federal election, they are exploiting the issue to conceal their real policies and mobilise a base of support for German militarism among privileged sections of the middle class.

It is significant that the SPD's parliamentary group leader Thomas Oppermann was the first speaker on Friday to advocate for marriage equality. The previous day, he sharply attacked the civilian-led Defence Ministry from the right in a speech that made clear the militarist agenda being pursued by the SPD.

"The defence ministers of the past twelve years have allowed the army to be mined as a source for budgetary consolidation," he declared. "They have rammed through the army reform and the suspension of military service without a plan. Our armed forces have to combat a lack of personnel and poor equipment to this day." He promised that his party would "ensure that this changes during the next parliament."

Oppermann and the SPD are of the opinion that they are better placed than the CDU/CSU to transform the European Union into a military power led by Germany capable in the future of confronting the United States. "We have to make Europe stronger," the SPD politician proclaimed. One "consequence of Donald Trump's unpredictability," he added, is that "Europe must take more care of its own security."

The Left Party and the Greens fully support this reactionary agenda and are playing a key role in seeking to transform popular hatred for Trump into support for German and European great power policies with propaganda about "peace," "human rights" and "climate protection."

The Greens' election site states: "A peace policy for us does not mean the complete abandonment of all military interventions. There are situations when forceful military interventions are necessary to prevent or stop serious violations of human rights or genocide. Internationally, politics is confronted with growing foreign policy challenges. No state can resolve them alone. We support the development of a joint European Union security and defence policy."

The Left Party stands for the same programme. In a post on his Facebook page, Oscar Lafontaine, the founding father of the Left Party, described former

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French President Charles de Gaulle as a model. “It is a long time since Charles de Gaulle recognised that France had to decide for itself if it would participate in a war,” he wrote. “That’s why he did not integrate the French army into the military structures of NATO—that is, the US.” He concluded that a “change in the chancellor’s Office” was “the precondition for a more independent European foreign policy.”

Dietmar Bartsch, the Left Party’s parliamentary group leader and lead candidate in the upcoming federal election, said in a recent interview: “The enforcement of an independent policy against the administration of Donald Trump is long overdue. The G7 format has finally failed. We have to reorganise international relations.” It was Bartsch who spoke in parliament for the Left Party to call for “the right for people of the same sex to marry.”

Significantly, Defence Minister Ursula Von der Leyen was one of the few CDU members to vote in favour of marriage equality. Von der Leyen is working, by means of identity politics, to mobilise support for the military among sections of the pseudo-left that orbit the Left Party.

Last May, in tandem with the development of the army’s White Paper 2016, Von der Leyen established the office of “equal opportunities, diversity and inclusion” within the Defence Ministry. Christina Buchholz, the Left Party’s defence policy spokeswoman and a leading member of the pseudo-left Marx 21 group, immediately expressed her enthusiasm. “I am certainly in favour of the struggle against discrimination, racism and sexism being conducted within the army,” she declared.

The SGP is the only party that refuses to be drawn into supporting German imperialism in the name of “identity politics.” Instead, it subjects to a thoroughgoing analysis the class basis and reactionary policies of the Red-Red-Green tandem and their pseudo-left hangers-on.

David North, in the foreword to his book *The Frankfurt School, Post-modernism and the Politics of the Pseudo-Left*, wrote: “The pseudo-left promotes ‘identity politics,’ fixating on issues related to nationality, ethnicity, race, gender and sexuality in order to acquire greater influence in corporations, the colleges and universities, the higher-paying professions, the trade unions and in government and state institutions, to effect a more favorable distribution of wealth among the richest 10 percent of the population.”

These forces do not represent the interests of the working class, but privileged sections of the middle class that are moving ever further to the right under the pressure of sharpening class tensions, and are already deeply integrated into the institutions of German imperialism.

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