

German Left Party voices support for military rearmament and war

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As the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Christian Democratic Union (CDU) work to form a new grand coalition government, whose central aim will be the rearmament of Germany in pursuit of neocolonial war and great power conflict, the Left Party has expressed its categorical support for German rearmament.

Last Monday, Stefan Liebich, a Left Party representative in the parliamentary foreign affairs committee, enthusiastically greeted the speech of Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel (SPD) at the Munich Security Conference.

“That’s long overdue; I honestly said that and that’s what our party advocated when we had much friendlier governments there [in the US] because we’re no longer living in the Cold War era,” he said on the political talk show “Unter den Linden.” Germany is “a sovereign country with its own interests, which very often coincide with the interests of the United States, but sometimes not.”

In Gabriel’s war speech in Munich, the Social Democrat blustered about foreign policy “carnivores” and a common European “power projection in the world.” He made it clear that a new edition of the grand coalition with the Christian Democrats will massively upgrade the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) and develop an independent great power policy.

This garners Liebich’s full support. “I think Germany has to make its decisions alone and sovereignly. Where we pursue common interests [with the US], we should do that, but where it does not fit, you have to be able to say no,” he said. He added it is “overdue and correct that this is now being said to government officials in the Trump administration.” Now they must “just do it.”

Liebich left no doubt that what he means is military intervention. Asked by the presenter what had been “the biggest mistakes of the West” in the Syrian war,

he replied, “The biggest mistake of our country was that we have been looking away for too long. Germany only got involved in this conflict when Syrians reached our country. In other words, when the wave of refugees came to Germany, there was also the sensibility that we had to get involved there. And then Germany demonstrated a lot of commitment, but we are not the big player there.”

The Left Party had already supported the pro-imperialist Syrian opposition before the official start of the German war effort in Syria in December 2015 and campaigned for a more aggressive German intervention.

In April 2014, several Left Party parliamentary deputies—including Liebich and parliamentary group leader Dietmar Bartsch—voted to send a German frigate to the Mediterranean, nominally to destroy Syrian chemical weapons.

In October 2014, 14 leading Left Party politicians issued an appeal entitled “Save Kobani!” which called on the government to launch a massive military intervention against Islamic State in Syria and Iraq.

Four years later, Liebich, Bartsch and the Left Party present themselves as the “better” advocates of German imperialism and the Bundeswehr. In a press statement last Tuesday, Bartsch demanded that the current report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces—which called for a massive expansion of military spending—be taken “very seriously... All alarm bells” should “be ringing at the federal government” now. For years, “spending on armaments would rise annually, and increase significantly.” But the “big question” is, “where does this money end up?”

It is “invested in many high-profile projects,” but “these often do not work,” Bartsch said angrily. It was “remarkable when Mr Bartels [the Social Democrat

Parliamentary Defence Commissioner] says today that out of six submarines, six are not operational.” That was “really sensational” and “maybe one should sink the submarine fleet completely,” he added ironically.

On the other hand, it is said that “the ordinary soldier must pay for his equipment.” This situation is “really untenable.” The acting Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen (Christian Democrat) should not have “spent so much on advertising and ... on underage soldiers,” but “really should invest in the force.”

The Left Party was “against rearmament,” but “as long as we have the Bundeswehr in this form, the soldiers must be shown consideration in other ways.” He hoped “in this sense, that the defence report reaches the responsible persons.”

The militaristic tirades of a Liebich or Bartsch are not lapses, but show the core right-wing and pro-imperialist character of a party that has been deeply integrated into the structures of the capitalist state and its intelligence and military apparatus for many years.

This also applies to the pseudo-left tendencies within and around the Left Party. For example, Christine Buchholz, a member of the Marx-21 tendency, the sister organisation of the British Socialist Workers Party, has been sitting on the parliamentary defence committee for nine years now, a committee that meets in secret. According to the official website of the German parliament, this committee “plays an important role in the development of the defence budget and in the procurement of equipment and materiel for the Bundeswehr.”



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