

Left Party in Germany supports the French president's call for a European army

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The Left Party (*Die Linke*) supports the plan by Germany and France to build a European army.

In a press statement issued Monday, the leader of the Left Party's parliamentary fraction, Dietmar Bartsch, stated he had "listened with interest to the speech by [French president] Emmanuel Macron on the occasion of the Day of Mourning [*Volkstrauertag*, a public holiday in Germany to commemorate members of the armed forces and civilians who died in armed conflicts]." Macron had "made a plea on behalf of Europe," and the remarks made by the French head of state were "quite reasonable."

In his speech to the German parliament (*Bundestag*) November 18, Macron reiterated his demand for the creation of a "real European army" and spoke out in favour of a European world power policy under German-French leadership in order to compete with the US, China and Russia. To the applause of the vast majority of members of parliament, he declared: "Europe and the Franco-German duo have a duty to prevent the world sliding into chaos." Europe must take more responsibility for its defence and security. It must become stronger and more independent, and needs greater sovereignty, he said.

The French president left no doubt that this would mean a massive increase in military spending and preparations for interventions in wars. "This fight is not won, this fight will never be won," Macron said. "Everyone of us" will have to "share an increasing part of their budget, or even tax revenue, to effectively defend Europe."

It is evident that the construction of a European military union and the preparations for war are also directed against growing social and political domestic opposition. Significantly, in his Berlin speech, Macron sought the support of the German bourgeoisie as

hundreds of thousands protested in France against higher petrol taxes. Protesters blocked roads and demanded the resignation of the "president of the rich."

The fact that Macron's appeal has been applauded by the Left Party speaks volumes about the pro-imperialist and anti-worker character of the organisation. "We have to take note of the fact that someone here is calling for discussion, for a debate on a perspective for Europe, with Europe as a union for peace towards the top of the agenda," Bartsch explained. That is "something we expressly welcome as lefts."

He then went on to attack from the right the grand coalition led by chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU), who had issued her own appeal for "a real European army" last week. Bartsch stated that he believed that "the German government had delayed far too long and that it was urgently necessary for Europe to fulfil its responsibility in the world in a different way." Now it was important to "not only to talk, but rather take genuine action. I expect the government will take up this request, which he [Macron] made once again on Sunday."

The nature of the Left Party's demands on the government were spelt out by the party's founding father, Oskar Lafontaine, in a post on his official Facebook page. In his speech to the *Bundestag*, the French president had declared: "We have to defend ourselves, with a view to China, Russia and even the United States of America." In response, Lafontaine wrote that the French president has "come up with something right: if Europe wants to live in peace it must, together with other countries, push back US imperialism, which wants to rule the world and ruthlessly enforces its interests. The US is waging trade wars, covert wars and bombing wars, destabilising many countries and permanently endangering world

peace.”

Lafontaine’s rhetoric reveals the hypocritical face of German and European militarism. The warlike and destructive character of American foreign policy is very evident, but German and European imperialism are no better. The European powers have long been involved in the US wars of aggression in the Middle East, and are now seeking a more active military role to “ruthlessly enforce their own interests.” The German elite showed its true face 85 years ago with the transfer of power to Hitler. It is now massively rearming, seeking the favours of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) and, with its plans for a European army, drawing on the traditions of German super-power politics developed in the course of the German Empire and then by Hitler.

Macron himself clarified the murderous tradition of his call for a European army. On the occasion of the commemoration of the end of World War I a century ago, he stated it was “legitimate” to honour First World War general, fascist dictator and Nazi collaborator Philippe Pétain.

The unity supported by the Left Party and the strengthening of European militarism to “push back” US imperialism will not bring “peace” to Europe and the world, but rather prepare the way for a catastrophic Third World War. This has been confirmed by history. Growing conflicts between the major powers, coupled with demands for massive military rearmament and an aggressive foreign policy by all sides, formed the prelude to war in the last century.

As in the past, there is only one way to stop war today: by building an international anti-war movement based on the working class and fighting for a socialist program. This requires the revolutionary unity of European and American workers against the capitalist warmongers in Washington, Brussels, Paris and Berlin. The recent statements by Bartsch and Lafontaine have once again underlined that the Left Party has lined up with the latter camp.



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