

# German Green Party programme: Police-state repression and militarism

Max Linhof and Jan Ritter  
15 July 2020

Germany's Green Party presented a draft party programme in Berlin on June 26 entitled "To care and protect..." It reveals that a future federal government involving the Green Party would continue and expand the current grand coalition's right-wing militarist agenda.

After one wades through and past the typical phrases about "ecology," "justice" and "an economy for the common good," the true essence of the programme comes clearly into focus: police-state repression, attacks on the working class and the pursuit of a great power policy to make Germany and Europe "fit for world politics."

During their first participation in government at the federal level between 1998 and 2005, the Greens implemented savage attacks on the working class with the Hartz IV welfare reforms, and jointly organised Germany's first foreign military intervention since the Second World War, in Kosovo. Now they are banging the drums for sweeping attacks on the working class and the rearmament of Germany, both at home and abroad.

## Domestic state repression and police-state measures

In the sixth chapter, which bears the cynical title "Strengthening democracy—the rule of law and security," the Greens call for the strengthening of the police to maintain control over mounting social opposition to inequality and state repression. "The police and security organs guarantee security at home," declares the programme, remarkably. "As the visible expression of the state's monopoly of power, the police in particular are the protector and defender of a watchful democracy. For this, they need to be well equipped and provided with adequate personnel, both in the cities and in rural areas. They depend on the trust of all citizens."

The reaction of the Green-led state government in Baden-Württemberg to the so-called "night of violence in Stuttgart" provides a foretaste of what the Greens mean with their talk about "strengthening democracy" and confidence-building measures: police in full riot gear patrolling neighbourhoods of cities, and arbitrary checks—including full body searches—24 hours a day.

Stuttgart Mayor Fritz Kuhn (Green Party) and Baden-Württemberg's Interior Minister, Thomas Strobl (Christian Democratic Union, CDU), recently signed a security partnership agreement. The 10-point plan for Stuttgart cements the "law-and-order" policies that have been practiced in the city for the past several weeks.

It declares, "The police in Stuttgart will, depending on the situation, ensure a large contingent of personnel for the 'Stuttgart security concept' (SKS)." In the city centre, police forces should be merged, and increase checks on "entry and exit routes" to Stuttgart. These plans are being augmented by the expansion of video surveillance in the city centre and a

ban on alcohol and spending time at the popular Eckensee.

In addition, the Greens want to extend these methods to as many European Union (EU) member states as possible. To this end, they call for the expansion of the executive powers of the European investigation bureau and the judicial powers of the European state prosecutors. "By expanding cross-border cooperation between police and judicial authorities by means of European policing teams, a European investigative bureau and European state prosecutors, security policy will increasingly be coordinated and cooperatively pursued at the European level," states the document. "The reform of federal cooperation between security agencies will create common standards so that investigations can increasingly be conducted jointly."

## The Greens' anti-worker neoliberal policies

The question that naturally arises is: whose interests does this massive build-up of the state apparatus serve? Cem Özdemir, who responded to a left-wing interjection during an interview he was giving on the Stuttgart events by saying "Shut your mouth," embodies the Greens' aggressiveness. Asked about the possibility of a coalition with the CDU and the Christian Social Union (CSU), he told *Der Spiegel* that the Greens now explicitly and unashamedly advanced the interests of big business and the financial elite. "The reconciliation between ecology and the economy took place long ago within the Greens, as can be seen by the growing support we receive from business," he remarked.

The chapter "Doing business in the future—economic and industrial policy" describes the character of this policy as the maximisation of profit and share dividends for German capital at the expense of the working class. "Regulations should be established to achieve these goals. They should give individuals and businesses the most freedom possible when it comes to the methods they choose. Inappropriate political regulations also limit free competition and inhibit economic development," notes the programme.

To impose these "methods" of intensifying exploitation in the face of mounting opposition, the Greens propose strengthening the trade unions. "The social-ecological market economy is organised on the basis of corporate co-determination, shareholder participation and trade union representation. All this requires strong trade unions," states the programme in the same chapter.

The trade unions are nothing other than a workplace police force within the corporations. They compete with each other to slash wages and jobs. Their officials belong to a privileged layer of society that earns fat salaries for their positions on company supervisory boards. In partnership with big business and the government, they stand up for Germany as an economic location, meaning they do not represent the interests of the workers.

The Greens advocate the same nationalist economic policy in their draft programme. They criticise protectionist measures, before calling three sentences later for the protection of European companies against hostile takeovers.

“Wage dumping, protectionism and lax regulations lead to unfair competition,” the programme says. “Many European companies are struggling with this. The purchasing of stakes in companies, direct investments, market access and the issuing of public contracts by and to third parties should be based on standards and on the principle of reciprocity. Takeovers from outside Europe must, where necessary, be prevented. Critical infrastructure and key industries must be protected.”

The Green document goes on to argue that the state must ensure by means of an “active industrial policy” that Germany “maintain its position as a global industrial player.” In summary, this means subordinating politics entirely to the interests of the financial and corporate elites at the expense of the wages and living standards of the working class. The result of this inhumane class policy is being made clear to millions of people around the world during the current coronavirus pandemic, with the placing of profits before human lives.

Workers confront short-time work benefits, unemployment and a social crisis, and must now risk their lives due to the “back-to-work” campaign to boost corporate profits and repay the coronavirus bailout programmes. This was shown starkly in the district of Gütersloh. After an outbreak in a meat-packing plant belonging to billionaire Clemens Tönnies, 7,000 workers were forced into quarantine. The schools and childcare facilities throughout the district had to be closed once again and a lockdown imposed.

The Greens’ aggressive anti-worker policy is not limited to Germany, but also encompasses its Europe policy. They advocate establishing Germany as a great power and securing its leadership role in Europe.

## **The European Union as an imperialist world power**

In their chapter calling for a nationalist “economic and industrial policy,” the Greens advocate a policy for Europe in the interests of the German bourgeoisie. “As one of the world’s largest economic areas, the European Union can set global standards with its common internal market,” notes the programme. “This should be used to press ahead with transformation, defend human rights, ensure competitiveness, remain as independent as possible from other global players and safeguard citizens’ rights in the largely unregulated global digital marketplace.”

What does this mean in practice? How and by what means do the Greens intend to set global standards and stay competitive? Which transformations do they want to carry out to become less dependent on other global players? They provide answers to these questions in the chapter “International partnerships.” Under German leadership, the EU is to emerge as a leading foreign policy and military great power.

On their plans for the European Union, they write, “The EU must become fit for world politics. It must jointly shape the rules of the global order in the spirit of universal values and interests based on them,” states the document. “A unified European Union can assert itself in a globalised world and unleash democratic power to shape change.” To “deal with global challenges,” the “European Union, as a peaceful power, must ... be conscious of its global responsibility.”

The call for a global role for Europe is a direct challenge to American imperialism and to the other two major economic and nuclear-armed powers, China and Russia.

The Greens demand that Europe and Germany assume greater responsibility within the United Nations. Such “responsibility” means that

they “substantially ... strengthen their engagement financially, in terms of personnel and diplomatically,” and implement “international agreements decisively and coherently in European and national policy.” They speak of “the principle of reform by strengthening,” so as to better enforce German and European interests.

They intend to work on creating a “security union” in order to “do justice to European defence and security.” European foreign and security policy must “be strategic, forward-looking, comprehensive and capable of taking swift action.” To this end, “a joint capacity for analysis and the strengthening of the European foreign affairs service” are necessary.

However, the Greens believe that they and the German bourgeoisie are obliged to determine the course on foreign policy that the EU must take. “The European Union grows through stronger collaboration. Because not every European state wants the same thing at the same time. But European agreement and the blockading stance adopted by some states cannot become excuses for collective inaction. That’s why some states have to move forward further than others on certain things while advancing in other areas together,” argues the programme.

The main issue on which Germany is moving ahead together with other EU states is the military rearmament of the EU. Last year, then-German Defence Minister and current EU Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen signed several agreements with her French and Spanish counterparts to establish a joint air combat system, the Future Combat Air System (FCAS).

Experts estimate that by 2050, total costs will amount to €500 billion [\$US570 billion]! The “system of systems” explicitly incorporates “manned airplanes with unmanned aircraft” and other sections of the armed forces into a single unit. “The air force, navy, and army can cooperate more closely as a result,” notes a report on the Defence Ministry’s official website.

## **European rearmament and war under German leadership**

The drive to transform the EU into a combative military power occupies a central place in the Greens’ draft programme. They write in the section on “global security” that “peacekeeping missions” led by the United Nations are “a central instrument of collective peace and security and should therefore be strengthened.”

The Greens declare their explicit support for militarism and war. “The use of military force always brings with it tremendous suffering. But we also know that the failure to use it in certain situations can lead to even greater suffering,” they cynically state. “In international security policy, our actions [are] guided by ... the expanded UN responsibility to prevent, protect, rebuild, which commits us an international community to protect people from the worst of all human rights abuses,” they add.

The reality is that international military interventions organised under the banner of the “responsibility to protect” serve not to defend human rights, but to pursue predatory imperialist interests. In 2011, NATO bombarded Libya on the pretext of the “responsibility to protect” and organised the murder of Muammar Gaddafi in order to seize Libya’s vast oil reserves.

In order to more effectively enforce the geostrategic and economic interests of German and European imperialism, the Greens also call for the creation of independent military structures. They write that instead of “directing more money into parallel national military structures” they want to “expand the cooperation of the EU’s armed forces” and integrate “military capabilities.” They also demand “appropriate equipment, the increasing of EU units, and the strengthening of the joint European headquarters.”

Additionally, the Greens appeal for a “new strategic orientation” for NATO. “With stronger military cooperation and coordination within the EU and with Britain, common European interests can be represented more decisively and forcefully, especially within NATO,” states the programme. The restructuring of NATO is necessary, because NATO is suffering due to “the divergent security policy interests within the alliance.” The meaning of this is clear: like the entire German bourgeoisie, the Greens are striving for a more independent foreign and military policy from the US to defend the interests of German imperialism, including against Washington if required.

To achieve this goal, the German army in particular needs to be massively strengthened. The Greens state that the army is “a parliamentary army anchored in international alliances,” and that therefore “parliament has a duty to care for the soldiers ... as well as to equip them appropriately to fulfill their tasks.”

The Greens also demand that German imperialism intervene chiefly in the regions where it plundered in the past. They are striving, among other things, for “partnerships and economic cooperation with the regions on Europe’s doorstep. The EU’s eastern partnership, as well as cooperation with countries in North Africa and the Middle East strengthens democracy, human rights and economic development. They should be expanded.”

The right-wing coup in Ukraine, supported by the US and Germany, shows what the Greens mean by partnership and democratisation. Since the crisis in Ukraine triggered by the 2014 coup, the number and scope of military exercises in Eastern Europe have increased considerably. This year, “Defender 2020,” the largest NATO exercise in Europe in 25 years, took place.

The cooperation with countries in North Africa is also aimed at expanding Germany’s power. In countries like Mali and Niger, Germany’s geopolitical interests in Africa are already being enforced with weapons. Access to rare earth supplies and cheap labour and the prevention of so-called “illegal immigration” are among Berlin’s central concerns.

### **A right-wing, bourgeois party**

With its new programme, the Greens are auditioning for a major role in the next federal government, and signalling to the German bourgeoisie that they will unconditionally uphold its reactionary interests in all areas. They have inscribed protectionism, economic nationalism, militarism and war on their banner. “This is a programme that ... bolsters our claim to leadership,” offered Annalena Baerbock, the Green Party’s federal co-leader.

The programme was broadly welcomed by possible coalition partners. Friedrich Merz (CDU) was reassured, saying, “I dare say I could achieve clearly recognisable CDU positions in a constellation with the Greens, and ensure that we not only adopt reasonable measures in economic and financial policy, but also on issues of social policy.” The former pacifists have moved so far to the right that even the most reactionary representatives of the ruling class now applaud them.



To contact the WSWs and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)**