

German Green Party sets course for government based on promoting militarism and war

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29 November 2020

The German Green Party conference held November 20-22 centred on preparing for possible participation in government after the next federal elections due in the fall of 2021.

To this end the former pacifist party adopted a new program that makes clear a future Green federal government and/or Green chancellor would continue and expand the right-wing militaristic policies espoused by the current grand coalition of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Social Democratic Party (SPD).

The WSWS has already analysed the new program titled "...to respect and protect..." ("Change creates stability"), in a previous article. The party's usual rhetoric about "ecology," "justice" and "public welfare economy" conceals a right-wing program for weaponising the state, new attacks on the working class and German-European great power politics. The party convention adopted the program, with a few cosmetic changes, without any significant opposition.

The entire convention was geared towards promoting the Greens as a willing and effective force for promoting the interests of the ruling class. In their speeches, re-elected party leaders Robert Habeck and Annalena Baerbock presented themselves as defenders of the capitalist order, the bourgeois state and its agencies in the army and police.

In her opening speech on Friday, Baerbock made clear that the Greens would refrain from any measure that could possibly harm the German economy and finance capital, and this included climate policy: "Don't be afraid" Baerbock declared, "this climate revolution is about as crazy as a building society contract. Re-organising the economic system does not mean overthrowing anything, it is purely about self-protection."

Habeck stressed that the Greens were prepared to go to any length to advance the interests of German capitalism and imperialism both at home and abroad. "Power" is no longer a "hands-off term" in the Green cosmos, he said. "We will go as far as we can and as far as is necessary."

Even before the start of the party congress, Katrin Göring-Eckardt, the leader of the Green parliamentary group in the Bundestag, had publicly affirmed that the Greens were not a pacifist, but rather a militarist party.

"The Greens may have pacifist roots, but has never been a pacifist party," she made clear to the *Rheinische Post*. She continued: "Experience has shown that a United Nations mandate can be blocked and that important aid in war zones is then sometimes not possible." In order to protect the "world community" from such "a dilemma," one needed "a working answer in case of a blockade."

The message is unmistakable: Germany and its European allies must, when necessary, be prepared to attack other countries even without a UN mandate to assert their economic and geo-strategic interests—all wrapped up with the party's inevitable humanitarian humbug.

The new program of the Greens does not beat about the bush: "The use of military force in war always brings massive suffering. But we also know that failure to resort to force can lead to greater suffering in individual cases," the program reads. "The guiding principle in international security policy is the expanded UN concept of the Responsibility to Prevent, Protect, Rebuild, which obliges us, the international community, to protect people from the most serious human rights violations and crimes against humanity."

In fact, the international war missions justified on the basis of the "Responsibility to Protect" are not aimed at securing human rights, but rather at advancing imperialist interests. In Libya, under the guise of "Responsibility to Protect," NATO organised massive bombing raids in 2011, fueled a civil war and assassinated head of state Muammar Gaddafi in order to secure the country's raw materials and geo-strategic influence—all at the cost of tens of thousands of lives and the virtual destruction of a society.

In order to advance the interests of German imperialism in its conflicts with other major powers, the Greens argue for a massive rearmament of European imperialism under German leadership.

"The EU must be able to conduct world politics," the party program declares and adds that "the increased cooperation of the armed forces in the EU should be expanded and military capabilities pooled [...]. To this end, they need suitable equipment, the expansion of EU units and a strengthening of

the joint European headquarters.” European foreign and security policy must be “strategic, forward-looking, comprehensive and be able to act quickly.”

Even though the Greens sought repeatedly to conceal their aggressive program with empty phrases and the promotion of identity politics, the message from the congress was clear. In a comment entitled “Consistent in the pursuit of power,” one of Germany’s leading television programs noted: “No more strict rejection of genetic engineering, a clear commitment to the market economy and also recognition that a deployment of the German army without a UN mandate is no longer ruled out ... In addition a clear commitment to the state and the police.”

Professor Dr. Carlo Masala of the German Army University in Munich praised the militaristic orientation of a future conservative-green federal government. He told tagesschau.de: “I believe that if the Greens and the CDU [Christian Democratic Union] enter into coalition, the German armed forces, the tasks of the German army and the financing of the German army will not be a stumbling block in coalition negotiations.”

The ambience of the Green party conference, held online, was revealing—it took place in a living room set up in Berlin and summed up the sharp right-wing development of the Green Party since its foundation in 1980 and the prosperous middle classes it represents.

“The living room typifies how the party works,” *Der Spiegel* magazine summarised. “A little bit stuffy, celebrating the bourgeoisie, having ditched their rebellious past in favour of mementos devoted to their arrival in the bourgeoisie—pictures hanging of the party’s electoral success in Bavaria in 2018 and the European elections in 2019, when the Greens won over 20 percent of the vote for the first time in a nationwide election.”

In fact, the Greens had already completed their entry into the bourgeois camp as coalition partners of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in the federal government that ruled from 1998 to 2005. As part of that government the Greens supported the most radical cuts in German welfare policy in the post war period—the notorious Hartz IV laws—while backing the participation of the German army in the Kosovo war, Germany’s first combat mission since the end of World War II.

Even against this background, the massive armament of the state and the police demanded in the new program must be taken as a warning. It is aimed at suppressing the growing opposition to social inequality, militarism and war and the deadly pandemic policy of the ruling class. The reaction of the Green-led administration in the state of Baden-Württemberg to the so-called “Night of Violence in Stuttgart” and the draconian sentences handed out this month to the young people who took part are a foretaste of what the Greens are planning.

The program chapter “Strengthening Democracy—Rule of Law and Security” asserts in an aggressive “Law and Order” tone: “Police and security organs guarantee security at home. As the visible arm of the state’s monopoly on the use of force,

the police play a special role as guardian and defender of the rule of law and a well-fortified democracy. To this end it needs to be fully equipped and have sufficient personnel—in the city as well as in the country.”

The Greens instinctively sense that the coronavirus pandemic has accelerated the economic, social and political crisis of the capitalist system and fear the outbreak of social struggles. The pandemic acts as a catalyst, Habeck warned. “It amplifies centrifugal forces, widens social cleavages, increases irritation. The public domain is shrinking.” Then he explained: “Covid-19 apparently took us by surprise. In reality, however, it was a pandemic with precedents.” There had been enough studies and warnings.

This is true. But it is also a fact that the Greens ignored these studies and warnings, as did all the other parties in the *Bundestag*. Instead, wherever they (co-)govern on a local or state level, the Greens have forced through severe cuts in critical areas such as health care, education and social welfare. Like all other parties in the *Bundestag*, they are vehemently opposed to the necessary closure of schools and non-essential production.

The class character of this policy is obvious. After the Bundestag passed its billion-dollar “Coronavirus emergency packages” at the end of March with the votes of the Left Party and the Greens, huge wads of money were handed out to big business, the banks and the super-rich. Now these sums are to be squeezed out of the working class. To this end, Habeck, Baerbock and company are prepared to sacrifice the health and lives of hundreds of thousands.

Workers and youth seeking to oppose the prevailing deadly pandemic policy, who reject militarism, capitalism and war and are determined to oppose climate change, must understand that the Greens are not some sort of lesser evil but rather among their fiercest opponents. They must turn to an international socialist perspective and build the Socialist Equality Party as a progressive alternative to the established capitalist parties.



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