

German election campaign: Green Party on the war path

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When the ruling class in Germany prepares an offensive for war and rearmament it can rely on the Green Party. That was the case in 1998, when then Green Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer organised Germany's first post-war international military intervention, sending the German army (Bundeswehr) off to war against Serbia, and so it is again today.

At the same time as the German government is drastically increasing military spending, NATO is organising one of its biggest-ever manoeuvres since the end of the Cold War directly on the Russian border ("Defender Europe 2021"). And as German police are being equipped to suppress resistance to the government's coronavirus policy and attacks on social rights, the Greens are promoting militarism and preparations for war in their campaign for this year's federal election.

Since Annalena Baerbock was appointed the Green Party's choice as potential chancellor, the warmongering of the Greens has taken on outright hysterical forms. There is hardly a more repulsive spectacle than a talk show or an interview featuring Baerbock, in which the 40-year-old talks about her childhood on a farm, her early participation with her parents in human chain protests against the arms race, only then to announce, with a smile on her face, that it is urgently necessary to put a stop to Russian aggression, provide Ukraine with more military support and support its admission into NATO and the EU.

One asks: has she lost her senses? Has she ever considered what this means?

Accepting Ukraine into NATO would be tantamount to a declaration of war against Russia and would immediately set off alarm bells in Moscow. It would raise the prospect of an armed conflict with the world's second-largest nuclear power, a conflict which could cause millions of deaths in Europe and threaten all of humanity.

It is this combination of aloof complacency, ignorance

and aggressiveness that makes the Greens so valuable to the ruling class in promoting their imperialist aims and interests. This is why the Greens are currently being praised to the skies in the German and international media. Baerbock and her co-chair Robert Habeck are currently rushing from one interview to the next.

Sunday was a big day for Baerbock with a long interview in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* (FAS) and an appearance on the "Anne Will" TV talk show the same evening.

The FAS sums up its interview with Baerbock, writing, "Green candidate for chancellor pleads for cooperation with America, containment of China and a tougher stance on Russia."

Asked how, as chancellor, she would react to "Russia's blackmail of Ukraine" and whether she would support Kiev's request for the delivery of anti-aircraft guns even though Moscow is currently withdrawing troops, Baerbock replied, "The threat to Ukraine from Russia remains considerable."

The most important thing, she said, was to ensure the implementation of the Minsk Agreement. The unrestricted access of an OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) observer mission "to all parts of Russian-occupied territory" must be enforced with the necessary force. This would urgently require "more resources for aerial reconnaissance," she added.

Asked whether she would also support military intervention by the Bundeswehr in any region of the world even if a member of the UN Security Council vetoed such an intervention, Baerbock replied that the choice between military "action and inaction is sometimes a choice between plague and cholera." She added, "There are moments when military action can prevent the worst taking place."

In earlier interviews, the Green candidate for chancellor had already advocated better staffing and material

resources for the Bundeswehr. In an interview with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, under the headline “Baerbock wants to strengthen the Bundeswehr,” she pleaded for an increase in defence spending, the creation of a well-equipped European army and a German-European military policy to better prepare for war.

She once again emphasised in the FAS, “Germany and Europe must take more responsibility for their own security. But strategically on the cutting edge.” That is why she considers “a European cyber defence centre an important contribution to burden sharing on the part of us Europeans.”

The demand for two percent of GDP to be spent on the army, she said, was not helpful and did not create more security. Her objection was based on the fact that GDP is currently declining as a result of the pandemic-related economic downturn. “According to this logic, our expenditure planning would have to be reduced.” That is absurd, Baerbock explained.

Asked by the FAS whether the call in the Green manifesto for “EU units” with a joint command structure was the blueprint for a European army, Baerbock answered in the affirmative: “These are steps in that direction. From my point of view, we have to centralise our capabilities as Europeans. Europe’s military expenditure is three to four times higher than Russia’s, but our capabilities are limited because we duplicate many things. That’s not efficient.” The European Security and Defence Union urgently needed to be developed and expanded, she said.

Baerbock also gave a positive answer to the question of whether Ukraine and Georgia, which have been pressing for years, should be admitted to NATO. Pressure on Russia to comply with the Minsk Agreement and stabilisation had immediate priority, but “Sovereign states decide on their alliances themselves. This also includes the perspective of Ukraine in the EU and in NATO.”

Baerbock complained that the current sanctions against Russia were being “permanently countered” by the German government’s adherence to the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline. “I would have withdrawn political support for Nord Stream 2 long ago.”

In a *Spiegel* interview, Green former foreign minister Fischer also advocated a definitive halt to the construction of the pipeline and an increase in sanctions against Russia. The “sabre rattling” from Moscow could no longer be accepted, he declared.

The claim by the Greens and the media that Russia is an aggressive and expansionist power is a grotesque

distortion of the facts. June 22 marks 80 years since the German Wehrmacht invaded the Soviet Union and killed 25 million civilians and soldiers in a planned “war of extermination.” These atrocities are vividly remembered in Russia. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union 30 years ago, NATO has been advancing ever closer to Russia’s border. Almost all Eastern European states that were once allied with the Soviet Union, as well as the former Baltic Soviet republics, have joined the Western military alliance.

The crisis in Ukraine was also deliberately provoked by the Western powers. Washington and Berlin organised a coup against the pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich in Kiev in early 2014, in close cooperation with fascist forces, and replaced him with the pro-Western oligarch Petro Poroshenko. The Heinrich Böll Foundation of the Greens played a leading role in the coup. Since then, the country has sunk deeper and deeper into civil war and corruption. Conditions for the population have deteriorated drastically.

Support for the coup in Ukraine was part of a deliberate campaign for a more aggressive foreign and great power policy. Germany is “too big and economically too strong for us to merely comment on world politics from the sidelines,” declared the then foreign minister and current federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD, Social Democratic Party) at the Munich Security Conference.

One year previously, the Greens participated in the drafting of the SWP paper “New Power, New Responsibility,” which served as a blueprint for the return of German militarism. Now they see their primary task as imposing this policy for war and militarism in the face of enormous popular opposition.

The interviews with Baerbock and Fischer make one thing clear above all: a new federal government with the participation of the Greens—whether in alliance with the CDU/CSU (Christian Democrats), SPD, Free Democratic Party or Left Party—will only intensify the policy of militarism, domestic rearmament and social cuts.



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