

German Green Party election conference endorses the use of armed combat drones

Johannes Stern**16 June 2021**

Were any proof needed that a federal government including or lead by the Greens would exacerbate the militarist policies of the present grand coalition of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats, the recent Green Party conference supplied it.

At the end of their gathering, the former pacifists decided to include a passage in their election manifesto that would, in principle, allow the procurement of armed drones for the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces). By a narrow majority of four votes, the federal delegates' conference approved a corresponding motion by former Federal Environment Minister Jürgen Trittin.

The motion justifies the planned procurement of combat drones on the grounds that, "these systems can better protect soldiers in certain situations." This is nothing but propaganda. Everyone knows that combat drones, like no other weapon, are brutal tools of murder that are linked to the imperialist powers' illegal interventions in Central Asia, North Africa and the Middle East.

According to the London-based Bureau of Investigative Journalism, the US military alone carried out 14,040 drone strikes between January 2004 and February 2020, killing between 8,885 and 16,901 people. Among the victims are many civilians (910 to 2,200) and children (283 to 454), participants of birthday parties, weddings and other family celebrations repeatedly targeted for attack.

The Greens are aware that their decision paves the way for regular use of this murderous means of warfare by the German military. "Armed drones are primarily used in anti-terrorist missions and often for killings that violate international law. The availability of armed drones threatens to change military deployment scenarios," read a counter-motion that was rejected by delegates.

The conference decision to leave criticism of NATO's two percent target in the manifesto also has nothing to do with pacifism. "We're talking about an extra 15 to 20 billion euros a year," said National Executive Secretary Michael Kellner. "Let's reject the arbitrary two percent target and at the same time make an offer on how Germany can play a

stronger role in the world."

Earlier, Annalena Baerbock, who was officially elected as the party's candidate for chancellor at the conference with 98.5 percent of delegates' votes, had attacked the infamous two percent target from the right. An abstract fixation on defence spending amounting to two percent of gross domestic product was not enough to ensure the necessary rearmament, she said. Perhaps, "more spending on our security" was needed, she declared in a joint TV discussion with the two other candidates for chancellor, Armin Laschet (CDU/CSU) and Olaf Scholz (SPD).

The Greens know what they are talking about. When they first participated in the federal government between 1998 and 2005, they helped organise Germany's first combat operations since the Second World War, in Kosovo and Afghanistan, together with the SPD. Now they want to further intensify the war policy.

The election manifesto adopted by the Greens leaves no doubt about this. Although the grand coalition has massively rearmed in recent years, launched numerous interventions in Africa and the Middle East and increasingly openly harkened back to the disastrous traditions of German militarism from the last century, German foreign policy is still far too hesitant for the Greens.

"For years, however, Germany has at best moderated in Europe and the world, has often hesitated, has gone into hiding." It was "time to pursue an active foreign policy again and to lead the way as a shaping force," it says in Chapter 6 of their election manifesto on international politics. In the style of a lobby group for the arms industry, the Greens plead for massive rearmament of the Bundeswehr, NATO and the European Union. Here are some examples.

In the section "Modern Bundeswehr" it says: "The mission and tasks of the Bundeswehr must be oriented towards the real and strategically significant challenges for security and peacekeeping. We want to securely equip the Bundeswehr with personnel and materiel per its mission and tasks. It is unacceptable that soldiers go on missions with

inadequate protective equipment.”

The EU must also “live up to its responsibility for its own security and defence.” To develop the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), “enhanced cooperation between armed forces in the EU should be developed” and “military capabilities should be pooled and generally recognised capability gaps closed.” What was needed is “appropriate equipment, the expansion of EU units and a strengthening and consolidation of the joint EU command structure.”

Regarding NATO, the Greens call for a “strategic reorientation” so that “strategic interests can be jointly developed and cohesively and more convincingly represented based on European values such as multilateralism, democracy and the rule of law.” What this means is clear. The Greens are playing the leading role in Germany in the escalating war preparations of the imperialist powers against Russia and China.

The election manifesto contains numerous threats against these two nuclear powers. “The German and European economy” was “under great pressure” and had to “hold its own in global competition with authoritarian state capitalism and largely unregulated tech giants,” it says at one point.

The Nord Stream 2 pipeline project was “geostrategically harmful—especially for the situation of Ukraine,” and must “therefore be stopped.” At the same time, the sanctions “imposed on Russia because of the annexation of Crimea in violation of international law and the military action against Ukraine” must be maintained and “tightened if necessary.”

Again, the Greens do not shy away from military escalation. Before the party conference, co-chair Robert Habeck visited the war zones in eastern Ukraine and demanded that the right-wing, anti-Russian government in Kiev be supplied with German weapons and given greater military support.

The Greens played an active role in the Maidan coup in early 2014, supporting extreme right-wing forces in the name of democracy and human rights to bring a pro-Western regime to power in Kiev. Now, they are pushing the same strategy regarding Russia and Belarus.

On Russia, the Greens’ manifesto announces they would “support and intensify exchanges with the courageous civil society that stands up to the Kremlin’s increasingly harsh repression and fights for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.”

Significantly, Belarusian opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya appeared at the party conference on Sunday. She said that Germany must play a “key role” in resolving the political crisis in her country because Europe can “only be secure if Belarus is secure.” She explicitly thanked Habeck and Baerbock for their commitment to Eastern Europe and for “giving Belarus a voice in Germany.”

In domestic politics, too, the Greens are positioning themselves as ruthless representatives of the interests of German capitalism. In the speeches by Habeck and Baerbock, the dangers posed by the still rampant COVID-19 pandemic played almost no role. The same applies to the election manifesto. Over 137 pages there is not a single demand or concrete measure to fight the virus. Words like “lockdown,” “coronavirus protection measures” or “vaccination programme” do not appear.

This is not surprising. Wherever the Greens govern in the federal states, together with the CDU, FDP, SPD and Left Party, they put into practice the murderous “profits before lives” policy that has already led to almost 90,000 deaths in Germany alone. When reference is made to the coronavirus, it is only to argue that the German economy needs to be restructured and made fit for international competition. “After the coronavirus pandemic, our country needs a new economic awakening,” it says, for example, in the chapter titled “We promote entrepreneurship, competition and ideas.”

Against this background, the few social promises in the manifesto are not worth the paper they are written on. After the federal elections, the ruling class is preparing to recover from the working class the debt created as hundreds of billions were handed to big business and banks through the so-called coronavirus bailout packages.

Here, too, the Greens and the affluent upper middle-class layers they speak for are prepared to walk over corpses. For example, the party conference decided to leave the “debt brake” (a legal cap on public spending) in the manifesto. With this, the Greens explicitly back the most important instrument of the austerity policies of recent years. In 2003, when they were in a federal coalition government with the SPD, the Greens had helped initiate the “Hartz laws,” which have plunged millions of workers and their families into abject poverty.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact