

Germany's Left Party's "Peace Plan": NATO warmongering in pseudo-pacifist garb

Johannes Stern
27 December 2022

Under conditions in which NATO is escalating its proxy war in Ukraine, Germany's Left Party is desperately trying to present itself as a party of "peace" and "diplomacy."

On the weekend of December 17 and 18, the party's executive committee passed a resolution entitled "Stop arms supplies – disarmament instead of escalation," which calls for "a perspective for negotiations" and "steps towards de-escalation in the war in Ukraine." On Monday December 19, party leader Martin Schirdewan presented the so-called "peace plan" at a press conference. He claimed that "this is all about preventing the suffering of the civilian population."

In fact, the plan has nothing whatsoever to do with "de-escalation," saving lives, or even an immediate end to the war. It serves essentially two purposes: first, it is intended to assert the interests of German imperialism. At the same time, the Left Party is endeavouring to conceal its own support for the imperialist war offensive against Russia and thus to absorb and divert the growing anti-war mood among the population into safe channels.

This project is doomed to failure. The party's warmongering is too blatant. From the outset, it attacked the Russian invasion, which was provoked by NATO but no less reactionary for that reason, from the right—that is, from the standpoint of imperialism—and backed the NATO war.

Leading party representatives, among them Thuringia's Minister President Bodo Ramelow and Berlin mayoral candidate Klaus Lederer, openly advocate arms deliveries to Kiev. At the Left Party congress in Erfurt in mid-June, numerous speakers also called for sanctions against Russia and for arms deliveries to the Ukrainian army, which is full of far-right forces.

On closer inspection, the current "peace plan" follows this same line. Its content corresponds to the leading NATO powers' essential war aim: to defeat Russia in Ukraine. The Left Party resolution states: "An end to the war through a complete military defeat of Russia is not to be expected in the short or medium term. Peace negotiations are therefore urgently needed, even though they will be very difficult."

This is unambiguous: the negotiations proposed by the Left Party are intended to impose on Russia the "victors' peace" which NATO hopes for but is still far from being achieved

militarily. The Left Party resolution demands de facto the complete surrender of Russia: "The Russian military" must "withdraw to its (official) positions of 23 February." And "the 'People's Republics' of Donetsk and Luhansk, which are contrary to international law, must be demilitarized for the duration of the peace negotiations."

In return, the European powers would commit to "lifting all EU sanctions adopted after 24 February," it continues. In addition, there should be a "mutual guarantee not to use nuclear weapons...as well as the exclusion of a military extension of the war to other countries by Russia and the non-entry of NATO into this war."

This is a transparent attempt to throw dust in peoples' eyes. It is obvious that NATO is de facto waging war against Russia and is fuelling it, up to and including the risk of nuclear escalation. Last week, the US announced that it would supply Ukraine with Patriot missiles capable of attacking targets deep within Russia. In return, Putin announced the deployment of hypersonic nuclear missiles on Russian warships.

The escalation is also supported by the European NATO powers, especially Germany. German government spokesman Steffen Hebestreit described Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky's trip to Washington as "a very good, hopeful sign" and welcomed the Patriot delivery on behalf of the traffic light coalition government. The delivery was agreed upon with "close allies" such as Germany. The training of Ukrainian soldiers in the system could "possibly happen in Europe and even more likely in Germany," Hebestreit concluded.

Germany has long been a leading war party. It floods Ukraine with weapons and has supplied its own anti-aircraft systems, howitzers and tanks. At the same time, the ruling class is using the war to re-establish itself as a military leader despite its historical crimes in two world wars. Long-developed plans to massively rearm Europe and bring it under German military leadership are now being implemented aggressively.

There is not a word in the Left Party's resolution about NATO's aggression, which has systematically encircled Russia since the dissolution of the Soviet Union and provoked the Russian invasion. Instead, the official propaganda portrays Russia as the sole aggressor and source of evil.

The whole appeal is to the imperialist warmongers to increase

the pressure on Russia. “We demand diplomatic initiatives from the Federal Republic of Germany and the EU vis-à-vis countries such as China and India that can exert influence on Russia,” it says. At the same time, the resolution calls for “the enforcement of sanctions that intentionally affect Russia’s ability to wage war.”

When the Left Party criticises the Federal Government, it does so due to a supposed failure to enforce German and European interests confidently enough. At his press conference, Schirdewan demanded that the German government should work for debt forgiveness for Ukraine “in order to enable reconstruction independent of international lenders.”

In other words, Germany must position itself more strongly when it comes to the division of the spoils of war among the imperialist powers. To this end, the German government already organised a conference on the “reconstruction of Ukraine” in Berlin in October—significantly without the participation of the US.

When representatives of the Left Party, like the former leader of the parliamentary group Sahra Wagenknecht, criticize NATO’s war on Russia, they do so from the standpoint of German imperialism. They speak for a faction of the ruling class that sees a return to closer economic and energy relations with Moscow as a prerequisite for greater political and military independence from Washington.

Both factions are mouthpieces of German imperialism and capitalism, which are linked to the social and political orientation and history of the party. The Left Party is not a leftist or even a socialist force, but a bourgeois party that represents the interests of the state apparatus and the wealthy middle classes. The Stalinist predecessor organization of the Left Party, the SED/PDS, co-organized the restoration of capitalism in East Germany and thus paved the way for the return of German militarism, which it has actively supported ever since.

Especially in the last decade, this has become increasingly clear. The Left Party’s foreign policy spokesman at the time, Stefan Liebich, was directly involved in the preparation of the paper “Neue Macht – Neue Verantwortung” (New Power – New Responsibility) in 2013. The paper was the blueprint for Germany’s return to an aggressive foreign and great power policy, which was then publicly announced by Foreign Minister Steinmeier, German President Gauck and Defence Minister von der Leyen at the 2014 Munich Security Conference.

When Washington and Berlin, based on fascist forces such as the Svoboda Party and the Right Sector, organized a coup in Ukraine in February 2014 to install an anti-Russian regime there, this was supported by the Left Party. Sections of the party, such as the pseudo-left network Marx 21, where co-chairman Janine Wissler began her career, celebrated the right-wing overthrow as a “democratic revolution.”

The Left Party went on to back the aggressive foreign policy course of the grand coalition. At the beginning of 2015, for

example, party leader Bernd Riexinger “expressly welcomed the diplomatic offensive of Chancellor Merkel and French President Hollande.” Merkel has since admitted that the Minsk Agreement was meant to buy time to rearm Ukraine. The current “diplomatic offensive” of the Left Party has the same military character.

Workers and young people who want to fight against war must settle accounts with these policies and join the Socialist Equality Party (SGP). It is the only party to condemn the war from the standpoint of the international working class and to arm the resistance to it with a socialist perspective. In its statement for the 2023 Berlin state election, which calls for the vote to be turned into a referendum on the war policy advocated by all the established parties, the SGP writes:

The only social force that can prevent another world war is the international working class—that is, the vast majority of the world’s population, which today is larger and more interconnected than ever before. Together with its sister parties in the Fourth International, the SGP is building a worldwide socialist movement against war and its cause, capitalism. The war cannot be stopped without breaking the power of the banks and corporations and placing them under democratic control.

- Stop the NATO war in Ukraine! No sanctions and no arms deliveries!
- Two world wars are enough! Stop the warmongers!
- €100 billion for kindergartens, schools and hospitals instead of for rearmament and war!



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact