

Defend German peace activist Heinrich Bücker! The real criminals are sitting in the Chancellery!

Ulrich Rippert, SGP candidate for the Berlin House of Representatives
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The Socialist Equality Party (Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei, SGP) strongly condemns the conviction of the antiwar and peace activist Heinrich Bücker and calls on workers and young people to take action against the scandalous verdict.

The Berlin-Tiergarten District Court sentenced Bücker in January for speaking out against Germany's war policy in Ukraine in a public speech. The verdict is an attempt to intimidate and silence the growing opposition to the federal government's insane military rearmament and its waging of war. It must not be allowed to stand.

Bücker runs the COOP Anti-War Café in Berlin, where anti-militarist events regularly take place. Last summer, he gave a speech at the Soviet Memorial in Treptow Park on the 81st anniversary of the invasion of the Soviet Union by Nazi Germany. In his speech, he denounced the cooperation of German politicians with the descendents of Nazi collaborators in Ukraine.

"It is incomprehensible to me that German policy is again supporting the same Russophobic ideologies on the basis of which the German Reich found willing accomplices in 1941, with whom it cooperated closely and murdered together," he said.

"All decent Germans, in the context of German history and the history of millions of murdered Jews and millions of murdered Soviet citizens in World War II, should reject any cooperation with these forces in Ukraine. Never again should we, as Germans, be involved in any form of war against Russia. We must unite and confront this madness together," he continued.

In the course of his speech, Bücker said he could understand the view of the Russian president. The

judge at the district court, Tobias Pollmann, used this to sentence Bücker to a fine of €2,000 or 40 days imprisonment. The penalty order states that Bücker in his speech "approved of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in violation of international law." The court ruled that this support for a "crime of aggression" is likely to disrupt public peace and is a crime.

The verdict turns reality on its head. The real criminals are the warmongers sitting in the Chancellery.

Who gave this government the go-ahead to use the Ukraine war to organize the largest military rearmament since Hitler? When was the population asked if it agreed that main battle tanks and soon fighter jets would be delivered to Ukraine and used against Russia, thereby risking a third world war?

The overwhelming majority of the population firmly rejects the German government's war. Resistance to exploding energy prices, social spending cuts and inflation—the products of military rearmament and sanctions against Russia—is increasing daily. More and more workers and youth are taking action to stop the war madness of the traffic light coalition government.

The verdict against Heinrich Bücker is a desperate attempt to intimidate and silence this growing popular opposition to war.

The reactionary tradition of the German judiciary, in which the verdict of Judge Pollmann stands, is notorious.

Ninety-two years ago, in November 1931, Carl von Ossietzky was sentenced to one-and-a-half years in prison. An opponent of war and editor of the magazine *Weltbühne*, he was framed up for allegedly betraying military secrets. At that time, the Nazis were not yet in

power, but the German judiciary was already playing a key role in suppressing the opponents of war and promoting the fascists.

No wonder this class justice has never been directed against the war criminals!

In 1999, when Joschka Fischer was foreign minister, the Greens broke the taboo of German foreign combat operations and participated, in violation of international law, in the bombing of Yugoslavia, a country where Hitler's Wehrmacht committed some of its worst crimes. Rather than being accused as a war criminal, Fischer was celebrated. Today, the Greens are the most prominent warmongers. Foreign Minister Baerbock and her party ally Hofreiter can hardly wait for German troops to march against Russia again.

Those responsible for the US wars of aggression against Iraq, Libya, Syria, Afghanistan and other countries, which Germany supported within the framework of NATO, were never prosecuted by the German judiciary, although entire countries were devastated and millions were killed.

The verdict against Heinrich Bücker makes clear the importance of the election campaign of the Socialist Equality Party (Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei, SGP) in the Berlin state election. The SGP is the only party opposing the insane military rearmament and escalation of war. All other parties support the militarist and war policy of the traffic light coalition government. The lead candidate of the Left Party, Klaus Lederer, likewise supports arms deliveries to Ukraine.

The SGP is making the Berlin election a referendum against war and military rearmament. It is combining its election campaign with the building of a strong antiwar movement in workplaces, schools, universities and residential areas, basing itself on the growing resistance of workers and young people throughout Europe and worldwide.

The SGP categorically rejects the war that Germany and NATO are waging in Ukraine against Russia. That does not mean we have any sympathy for the reactionary Putin regime, which represents the interests of the Russian oligarchs and fosters Russian nationalism.

But this is not what the verdict against Bücker is about. Rather, it is intended to suppress all resistance and opposition to German militarism. We are not intimidated by this.

When the Federal Ministry of the Interior placed the SGP under surveillance by the secret service by including the SGP for the first time in the Verfassungsschutz Report in 2018, and the federal government declared that “advocating for a democratic, egalitarian, socialist society” and “agitation against alleged ‘imperialism’ and ‘militarism’” were unconstitutional, we went on the offensive. We filed a constitutional complaint and mobilized the international working class.

The answer to the verdict against Heinrich Bücker must be: Strengthen the fight against war and military rearmament! Combine the fight against war with the fight against capitalist exploitation! Come to Potsdamer Platz next Saturday, 4 February, at 11:00 a.m. for our antiwar rally and vote for the SGP on 12 February!



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