

In Germany, Left Party youth group calls for donations to the Ukrainian army

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20 April 2023

Since the beginning of the Ukraine war, the Left Party has supported the German government's prowar course. Leading representatives—including party Chairman Martin Schirdewan, Berlin Senator for Culture (state minister) Klaus Lederer and Thuringian state Prime Minister Bodo Ramelow—openly bang the drum for arms deliveries to Ukraine. At its party conference last June, the Left Party also presented itself as a war party. To the applause of the delegates, it advocated a tougher course against Russia.

Among the Left Party organizations that have been particularly aggressive in supporting the NATO proxy war against Russia is its youth organization, the Linksjugend (Left Youth). On the anniversary of the Russian invasion, Linksjugend posted on Instagram calling for donations to “left-wing” organizations in Ukraine that work directly with or are integrated into the Ukrainian army, under the slogan “Solidarity must become practical!”

The organizations listed include:

·*Solidarity Collectives*: an organization describing itself as “anarchist” whose main goal, according to its website, is to “provide soldiers who have gone to the front with all the necessary equipment that can increase their safety and efficiency in resisting the imperial onslaught of the Russians.” The group explicitly rejects the overthrow of the right-wing regime in Kiev and an end to hostilities. Thus, their manifesto states, “If Ukrainian soldiers lay down their weapons or ‘turn them against their government,’ as some ‘Ukraine experts’ suggest, the Russian army will occupy more territory and commit more war crimes.”

·*Kayfariki*: a group of Ukrainian soccer ultras and hooligans who provide regular units to the Ukrainian army.

·*Radical Aid Force*: a Berlin-based group that, among other things, regularly travels to Ukraine to deliver aid to the front lines. On its social media channels, it promotes German tank deliveries and insults anyone who opposes them as “Putin’s servants.” On its website, it spreads anti-Russian racism and speaks of “ruzzian dogs” and “Putin’s willing enforcers.”

·*LGBTIQ military*: an organization of queer soldiers in the Ukrainian army fighting on the front lines. On its Instagram account, the group regularly calls for the delivery of heavy weapons. It calls May 9 (the day the Soviet Union triumphed

over the Nazis) “the day of the victory of communism and further repressions” and spreads quotes from notorious fascist, antisemite and Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera about the “struggle against Russian Bolshevik imperialism.”

Linksjugend published the contribution together with that of Sofia Fellingner, spokeswoman of Linksjugend Cologne, who became known for a prowar speech at the Left Party Congress. There she attacked as “intolerable” all contributions that were not explicitly in favour of arms deliveries.

Linksjugend’s call for donations to Ukrainian front organizations, some of which are characterized by racist statements and fascist sympathies, underscores that it has nothing in common with left-wing politics, let alone with “socialism” and “Marxism.”

Marxists—in Germany, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party) and its youth organization, the IYSSE—are fighting for the unity of Russian and Ukrainian workers against the escalation of a war that is costing the lives of hundreds of soldiers every day and increasingly conjuring up the threat of a nuclear third world war. They oppose the capitalist prowar policy of both sides with the perspective and program of international socialism and fight to build a mass movement of workers and youth against war. The prerequisite for this is a clear understanding of the war and the forces involved in it.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine is a reactionary but in the final analysis desperate response by the capitalist Putin regime to the imperialist offensive of the NATO powers, which have been waging war almost continuously for 30 years and have reduced entire countries to rubble. Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union by the Stalinist bureaucracy, Russia has been systematically encircled with the aim of completely subjugating the resource-rich and geostrategically central country.

Back in early 2014, Washington and Berlin organized a right-wing coup in Ukraine to bring an anti-Russian regime to power in Kiev. In doing so, they relied on fascist forces, such as the Svoboda Party and Right Sector. Subsequently, army units and militias, such as the Azov Battalion, notorious for their fascist and antisemitic sentiments, were massively rearmed.

By advocating the arming of the Ukrainian army, Linksjugend is making itself a stooge of these extreme

reactionary forces and rabble-rousers of the imperialist war offensive. In doing so, it not only regurgitates the official propaganda of the government and the bourgeois media but attacks anyone who does not aggressively support the prowar policy.

A resolution passed at its federal congress (Linksjugend's highest body) in November 2022 states: "The resistance of the Ukrainian population against the Russian attack, which is articulated in various ways, is correct, and it deserves our solidarity and support. This applies to sabotage, civil disobedience and non-cooperation in the occupied territories as well as to armed struggle against the Russian attacks."

And further: "Demands, sometimes represented in the Left Party, to behave even-handedly in the war and to end all sanctions against the Russian regime as a first step, in order not to endanger the competitiveness of German capital, have nothing to do with left-wing politics, which is why we clearly reject them."

In fact, this resolution is further proof that it is Linksjugend that has "nothing to do with left-wing politics." The German government is intervening so aggressively in Ukraine because it is a matter of the interests of "German capital." German imperialism already tried to annex Ukraine in the First and Second World Wars. Now it is trying a third time.

At the beginning of April, Economics Minister Robert Habeck (Greens) travelled to Kiev together with leading representatives of German big business in order to secure as large a slice of the spoils of war as possible under the guise of "reconstruction." Earlier, the Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations had published a dossier containing "proposals by German business for the reconstruction and modernization of the Ukrainian economy." And in October 2022, the German government organized a conference in Berlin on the "Reconstruction of Ukraine."

When some sections of the Left Party around former parliamentary group leader Sahra Wagenknecht call for an end to sanctions against Russia, they are also doing so in the interests of German capital. They articulate the views of a wing of the ruling class that sees a return to closer economic-political relations with Moscow as a precondition for an independent role for German imperialism, independent of the US, in the struggle to redivide the world.

These are the issues at stake when leading representatives and state associations of Linksjugend are literally falling over themselves with their demands for more weapons and a further escalation of the war.

At the end of January, Jonathan Wiegers, state spokesman of Linksjugend Brandenburg, declared in a tweet that "after tank deliveries," the delivery of fighter jets was now "the next and logical step."

Tweet by Brandenburg Linksjugend spokesman Jonathan Wiegers calling for sending fighter jets to Ukraine

And Linksjugend's Thuringia state association published a

statement that follows the comprehensive war aims of the leading NATO powers: the military defeat of the Russian army and the installation of a pro-Western puppet regime in the Kremlin.

The war can "only end through an immediate withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine" and "previous attempts at negotiation" have failed "primarily because of the Russian leadership," writes Linksjugend, claiming that "lasting peace in the region" can "only come through successfully defending Ukraine" and "an end to Putin's system."

Linksjugend's prowar policy is not limited to Russia and Ukraine. In the past, it had justified Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) missions in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria and defended Israel's war policy against the Palestinians. Moreover, it participates in the imperialist propaganda offensive against China aimed at mobilizing public opinion for a war against Beijing.

The aggressive pro-imperialist character of Linksjugend is not simply a temporary political aberration. It arises from its social and political orientation and history. The Stalinist predecessor organization of its parent party initiated the reintroduction of capitalism in East Germany, laying the groundwork for the explosion of German militarism in recent years.

Since its founding in 2007, the Left Party—an amalgamation of former Stalinists, jaded Social Democrats and trade union bureaucrats, and a few pseudo-left groups—has been a bourgeois party representing the interests of the capitalist state and wealthy upper middle class layers. Wherever it governs at the state level, it carries out fierce social attacks, introduces privatization, increases the state's repressive apparatus and brutally deports refugees.

Under the guise of a few anti-capitalist phrases, Linksjugend has always supported the anti-working class policies of its mother party, and on this basis it has recruited extreme right-wing and pro-militarist elements who now form a new following for imperialism. "General enthusiasm for its prospects, furious defence of imperialism, its whitewashing in every possible way," Lenin wrote of the "social-imperialists" in World War I in his classic *Imperialism*. A fitting characterization of the "left" warmongers of today.



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