

Left Party leader supports sending German soldiers to Ukraine

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In its megalomaniacal plan to defeat Russia militarily, NATO has no more “red lines,” warns the WSWS in a perspective on the Kursk offensive. “If it is permissible for Ukraine to attack Russia using NATO weapons, it is also permissible for NATO troops to attack Russia directly,” it states.

It says a lot about the thoroughly militaristic character of the Left Party that the first leading German politician to advocate the deployment of German troops in Ukraine comes from its ranks. A few weeks before state elections in Thuringia, Saxony and Brandenburg, Thuringia’s state Prime Minister Bodo Ramelow (Left Party) gave a series of interviews in which he fully supported NATO’s war against Russia and even brought the deployment of the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) into play.

“My position on Russia’s war against Ukraine was and is clear,” he told *Tagesspiegel*. “It was Putin who ordered his army to invade another country. These are the realities. What remains, despite all the longing for peace, is that a state must be able to defend itself. For me, the strength of the law applies, not the law of the strongest.”

Who is Ramelow trying to fool? Of course, he knows full well that the imperialist powers—above all Germany and the US—are not on the “side of the law.” In the Balkans, the Middle East and Central Asia, they have laid whole countries in ruins and killed millions over the past three decades.

And NATO is also the main aggressor in the Ukraine conflict. With the systematic military encirclement of Russia and the anti-Russian coup in Kiev in 2014, it has literally provoked the Russian invasion. Since then, it has escalated the conflict further and further in order to force Russia into a full-scale war. This is not about “peace” and “democracy,” as claimed, but about annexing Ukraine and subjugating Russia, which is rich in raw materials and geostrategically central.

These plans are actively supported by the Left Party. In mid-June, leading Left Party politician Dietmar Bartsch took part in the so-called “Ukraine Reconstruction Conference”

in Berlin, which was explicitly about the escalation of the NATO war against Russia and the division of the spoils of war among the imperialist powers.

In an interview with *Tagesspiegel*, Ramelow called for increased pressure on China and Russia and even for the deployment of German troops in Ukraine. “China could create an impulse that would force Russia to accept a ceasefire,” he declared, and, “If a ceasefire is reached, we Europeans would have to be prepared to send blue-helmet soldiers to Ukraine.” When asked, he emphasised, “Germany should also be open to sending Bundeswehr soldiers under a UN mandate in the event of a ceasefire.”

What Ramelow is proposing would not be a “peacekeeping mission,” but the realisation of far-reaching NATO plans to intervene in the war even more directly and actively. French President Emmanuel Macron had already repeatedly called for the deployment of European troops in Ukraine at the beginning of the year, thus revealing the long-term war plans that the NATO powers are forging behind the backs of the population.

At the NATO summit in Washington in July, the military alliance finally decided to set up an office in Ukraine and a NATO command centre in Germany in order to organise the war offensive against Russia more effectively. It is obvious that the Ukrainian advance into the Kursk region, which is being led by American, British and German tanks, is being coordinated by NATO.

It is above all German imperialism, which twice in the 20th century tried to subjugate Russia and, in the process, committed the worst crimes in human history with the Holocaust and the war of annihilation against the Soviet Union in the Second World War, that is driving the escalation of the war. Just last week, the entire executive board of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the party of the German chancellor, backed the government’s plans to station US long-range missiles in Germany. Berlin sees the war as an opportunity to realise long-held plans for rearmament and to become a great power.

Ramelow supports this course of action. In another

interview with the *Berliner Morgenpost*, the state prime minister of Thuringia boasts that NATO is building a combat brigade in Lithuania “led by Thuringian soldiers.” He also calls for Moldova and Georgia to be “admitted to the EU” and for a reorganisation of European defence.

Germany needed “an army for national defence that deserves the name,” Ramelow demands. That is why he was “strictly in favour of equipping the Bundeswehr well.” This is also unmistakable: Under the mantra of national defence, the SPD defence minister and the Bundeswehr leadership are working intensively to make Germany “war-ready” again and prepared for a major “land war” with Russia.

When Ramelow says that Russia is also part of Europe and must be included in the new order, he ties this to the overthrow of Putin and the installation of a pro-Western regime in Moscow. “Of course” there would be no new order “with a dictatorship, an apparatus of repression,” he stresses. But one must “keep an eye on the country—and strengthen those who want change in Russia.” The “ongoing war” and the “massive repression in the country can release forces in Russian society.”

By this, Ramelow does not mean a revolutionary offensive against the Putin regime, which represents the interests of the ruling oligarchy that emerged from the restoration of capitalism by the Stalinist bureaucracy. Ramelow supports the aim of the imperialist powers in winning over some of the oligarchs so that they turn against Putin and establish a regime subservient to NATO. Such a regime would be no less reactionary than Putin’s when it comes to the democratic and social rights of the workers.

The reason for the Left Party’s militarism is not simply its right-wing leaders, such as Ramelow and Bartsch, but the political and social orientation and history of the entire party. Despite its name, the Left Party has never been a left-wing or even socialist party but has always been a bourgeois organisation that represents the interests of the state apparatus and the wealthy middle classes. Its predecessor organisation, the Stalinist party of state, reintroduced capitalism in East Germany and thus paved the way for the return of German militarism, which it is now pushing forward so aggressively.

The Left Party is therefore increasingly hated among workers and young people—and also because of its policy of social austerity, the stepping up of police state powers and the attacks on refugees and immigrants. In the European elections at the beginning of June, its vote collapsed, receiving only 2.7 percent.

In Thuringia, where Ramelow is the state prime minister, and where it received 31 percent of the vote in the last state elections in 2019, the party is now polling at only 15 percent. The SPD and the Greens, with whom Ramelow

heads a minority government and who are also pushing for war at federal level, are polling at just under 6 and 3 percent respectively.

In conditions in which the nominally left-wing parties are hated as the biggest warmongers, even the fascist Alternative for Germany (AfD) manages to exploit the anti-war sentiment among the population to a certain extent. It criticises NATO’s war against Russia from a nationalist-militaristic point of view. The party, which is being deliberately built up by the ruling class to implement the programme of militarism and dictatorship, is also putting up posters for “peace” alongside its inflammatory slogans against refugees and immigrants. It is currently polling around 29 percent.

The Left Party splinter group Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW), which is polling at around 19 percent, is particularly keen to exploit and suppress the anti-war mood.

When Wagenknecht criticises NATO’s war course against Russia, she does so from the standpoint of German imperialism. She articulates the interests of a section of the ruling class that sees closer relations with Moscow as necessary for greater economic and military independence from Washington. In doing so, she essentially agrees with the arms build-up. “The Bundeswehr must be able to fulfil its constitutional mandate and be adequately equipped to do so—its adequate equipment ... must be the goal of defence policy,” reads the BSW’s election programme.

Workers and young people who want to fight against imperialism, fascism and war must consciously break with the Left Party and its BSW offshoot, just as they must break with the parties of the federal coalition and all other capitalist parties. This requires the building of the Sozialistisch Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party). It is the only force that fights against the return of German militarism and the threat of a world war on the basis of an international socialist perspective.



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