

# Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance party conference: A reactionary spectacle for more German nationalism, police state powers and anti-refugee measures

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In the campaign for February's federal election, the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW) is positioning itself as an extremely nationalist force that most aggressively represents German interests against its international opponents—above all, the US under the future US president, Donald Trump. The BSW party conference in Bonn on Sunday presented a particularly drastic picture of this.

Founder and leader Sarah Wagenknecht used her speech to attack the other parliamentary parties for selling out German interests and submitting to Washington. In particular, she directly attacked the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD)—significantly, not for its fascist programme, but for its close cooperation with Trump's billionaire adviser Elon Musk.

The AfD leader and candidate for chancellor, Alice Weidel, looked like “a submissive fangirl when the richest man in the world grants her an audience,” Wagenknecht commented on Weidel's discussion with Musk on his platform X a few days ago. And if Weidel now also adopted Trump's demand to increase military spending to 5 percent of gross domestic product, Wagenknecht would have “a proposal” about that as well; perhaps the AfD should call itself “rearmament for Donald” instead of “Alternative for Germany.” After all, “that would be more or less what their current programme is: rearmament for Donald.”

Of course, Wagenknecht knows full well that the AfD, just like all the other parties in the Bundestag (parliament), is not rearming for Donald Trump and the US, but for German capitalism. The AfD held its own party conference in Riesa at the same time as the BSW conference in Bonn. Among other things, the AfD conference advocated the reintroduction of compulsory military service and a massive arms build-up so Germany can play a leading role in the imperialist redivision of the world in the 21st century.

The fact that Wagenknecht nevertheless calls Weidel a “fangirl” of Washington underlines one thing above all: at heart, she agrees with the fascists' programme. In terms of

foreign policy, hers is geared towards pursuing German interests at least as aggressively as the fascists. And in terms of domestic policy, too, there is hardly any gap between her and the AfD.

First, on foreign policy: Behind Wagenknecht's phrases about “peace” and “diplomacy” lies the goal of German and European imperialism positioning themselves more independently of the United States in terms of security policy and establishing themselves as an independent great power.

“We must represent our interests, we must stand up for our interests,” demanded Wagenknecht in her speech. “Especially in today's world,” she said, “we actually need a European Union that once again stands up for European interests instead of acting as an extension of the US administration.” But “if the EU is a total failure,” then “at least a German government” was needed “that confidently and self-assuredly represents the interests of the people in our country, and when in doubt, also against pronouncements from Washington.”

In fact, the BSW does not represent the interests of working people, but those of German capital. The first part of its election programme adopted in Bonn calls for a “comeback for the German economy.” In the next legislative period, “it will be decided whether Germany will continue to be one of the leading industrial nations in the future or will be irrevocably relegated.” In this context, “export-oriented industry” like Germany's needed “cheap energy and security of supply.”

When the BSW criticises NATO's belligerent course against Russia and China, it is from the standpoint that this plays into Washington's hands in particular, but harms German raw material, energy and economic interests. “A country like Germany, with a strong export sector but poor in raw materials, depends on stable economic relations with as many countries as possible in order to sell its own goods and ensure the supply of raw materials and affordable energy,” the BSW election programme states. Germany therefore had “a fundamental economic interest in not participating in the economic sanctions

pushed by Washington in the interest of the US economy.”

The BSW essentially agrees with the rearmament of the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces). “We want to turn the Bundeswehr back into an exclusively defensive army,” its programme says. The Bundeswehr had “the task of defending our country according to the constitution” and must “be adequately equipped for this task.” One “problem” here was the “dilapidated and non-transparent procurement system.”

Wagenknecht’s commitment to German and European militarism underlines the hypocrisy of even her limited social promises, such as a minimum wage of €15 and slightly higher pensions. In fact, the “sovereign and self-confident Europe” she seeks, which “represents and defends” its own interests, requires the destruction of all remaining social gains. Like the Left Party, from which it split, the BSW is prepared to organise the social cuts wherever it is part of government. In the states of Brandenburg and Thuringia, the BSW formed government coalitions with the parties of war, the Christian Democrats (CDU) and Social Democrats (SPD), taking over the finance ministry in each case, and thus direct responsibility for balancing the budgets through massive austerity programmes.

The more aggressively the ruling class pursues its own imperialist interests and pushes through the associated cuts in social spending, the more openly it relies on police state measures and agitating against refugees and migrants in order to suppress explosive social and political opposition at home and direct it into right-wing channels. In this respect, too, the BSW programme sets standards.

The chapter “Ensuring security. Protecting freedom” is a blueprint for the massive expansion of the state apparatus and its powers. In the section “Safe streets and squares: for a well-equipped police force,” it states, among other things: “We are committed to ensuring that the police are staffed and equipped in such a way that they can ensure security ...” A “visible police presence on the streets and in public places” was “important for the sense of security and for the prevention of crime.” For all this, “sufficient personnel” and “better equipment” were needed. The police must “be put in a position to be able to stop criminals, terrorists and extremists more effectively. We demand that the police be provided with modern equipment and IT.” The focus here is on “excellent training and further education in academies and training centres.”

The section “Secure Borders: Stop Uncontrolled Migration” also reads as if it has been copied from the AfD election programme. The number of refugees was “far too high” and “a security risk,” it says. The “naive admission practice of recent years” had “already led to a disproportionate increase in knife crime, sexual offences and religiously motivated terrorism.” But “even criminals without residence permits are rarely deported.”

The BSW wants to change all that: “We want to end uncontrolled immigration. Germany needs a breathing space for

the coming years.” With immediate effect, the following principle should apply: “Anyone entering from a safe third country has no right of residence. Those who have no right of residence have no right to an asylum procedure and no right to social benefits.”

In order to intensify the war against refugees, the BSW is effectively calling for the abolition of the fundamental right to asylum. “We demand that laws and, if necessary, the constitution be changed so that criminal refugees lose their right to an asylum procedure in Germany and that protection against deportation is limited to cases in which there are clear indications that the person concerned is at risk of the death penalty in their country of origin.”

All of this serves to prepare mass deportations. “According to the Central Register of Foreigners, around 572,000 foreigners without a residence permit or permission to reside were living in Germany at the end of 2023,” the BSW complains, threatening: “It is important to ensure that these people leave Germany quickly. This also sends a signal to potential immigrants that if they are not entitled to protection, they cannot count on staying in Germany permanently.”

The fact that 23,610 of 38,328 planned deportations between January and September 2024 failed meant a “breach of promise by the chancellor, who had pledged a change of course.” In Germany, the right of asylum was “being widely abused” and “law and order must finally be enforced again in the case of deportations.” To this end, “the authorities and courts responsible for asylum procedures must be given priority in terms of staffing, and the procedures must be streamlined so that they can normally be completed in three months.”

The inhumane and anti-working-class character of the BSW culminates in the demand for a “review of the coronavirus period by a committee of inquiry” in the Bundestag. “Political decisions and measures” would have to be “put to the test” and “political decision-makers and their experts ... take responsibility,” the programme demands. The BSW is not concerned with a scientific analysis of the ongoing pandemic, which has claimed more than 183,000 lives in Germany alone, but with the criminalisation of even the most limited life-saving measures, all of which have long since been terminated in order to maximise capitalist profits.

Here, too, the BSW is in line with the fascist AfD, which is also calling for a coronavirus committee of inquiry.



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