

Die Linke trade union coordinator's strange call for 'Organised Labour Against the New Cold War'

Monday 14 April 2025, by [NOVAK Adam](#) (Date first published: 14 April 2025).

The head of Die Linke's trade union work blends fake news into her very selective analysis of Germany's militarisation, workers' rights, and public spending priorities. In her recent article, Ulrike Eifler, the chair of Die Linke's trade unionist working group and a member of the party executive, presents a leftist critique of the Social Democratic Party's turn towards increased military expenditure and a defence-oriented economy, the so-called *Zeitenwende*. While she succeeds in highlighting real pressures on labour organisations and public services, she unfortunately weakens her case through speculative claims, selective framing, and a glaring absence of geopolitical context.

Eifler explains current developments without mention of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, except when she explains the increased German ammunition production since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 as a proof of German preparation for war, rather than a response to Russia's actual war.



Context Matters

The most striking shortcoming of Eifler's article is its near-total omission of the geopolitical reality driving the *Zeitenwende*: Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The article fails to acknowledge that *part* of German military spending and arms production enable Ukraine to defend itself from an illegal war of aggression. This absence distorts the reader's understanding, framing West European military responses exclusively as spontaneous elite ambitions.

Moreover, the article ignores real and credible security concerns expressed by Ukraine, Moldova, as well as Germany's eastern EU neighbours—Poland and the Baltic states in particular, who face a credible threat of Russian hybrid war or even direct aggression.

Without this context, the critique of rearmament collapses into an ahistorical abstraction.

Ammunition Production: Misrepresented Intentions

The article criticises the rapid scale-up of artillery shell production by German manufacturers like Rheinmetall, suggesting this as evidence of "concrete war preparations" by Germany itself. This is

misleading. A significant portion of this production relates to deliveries to the Ukrainian armed forces, who face chronic shortages of ammunition due to the intensity of the biggest war in Europe since 1945.

To equate production for support to the poorest country in Europe, invaded and partially annexed by its imperialist neighbour as German preparations for an aggressive war betrays the internationalist ethos that Die Linke stands for. On Ukraine and for different reasons on Palestine, the party struggles to live up to its members expectations.

In fact, Germany has not supplied Ukraine with sufficient ammunition to protect its people, and gradually push back the invaders. Unfortunately, Germany's proclaimed remilitarisation does not offer much comfort to the Ukrainians, but that seems well outside the author's concerns.

Ignoring the EU-wide and NATO-coordinated frameworks for supplying Ukraine paints a false picture of unilateral German militarism. Die Linke should abandon its fake pacifism and support arms deliveries to Ukraine, including the necessary ramp-up of ammunition production, on the condition that such production is directed exclusively towards Ukraine's defence against Russian aggression. On that basis, its opposition to the real risks of indiscriminate expansion of military-industrial influence in civilian sectors and erosion of democratic protections would be more credible.

The Grenade-Throwing Myth and Disinformation

One of the more concerning claims is the reference to "grenade-throwing drills in PE lessons," which appears to echo a false and debunked rumour circulating in some Russian-financed conspiracy-leaning leftist corners of German social media. There is no credible evidence that German schoolchildren are engaging in military drills. Unlike their Russian counterparts and children in Russian occupied Ukraine, many of whom now have several hours of military studies every week.

Emergency Laws and Authoritarian Drift

The article raises concerns about emergency laws and the potential suspension of labour rights in crisis scenarios. It is true that Germany has contingency legislation that allows for continuity of critical infrastructure during national emergencies, including armed conflict. However, these laws are not new, and their activation is bound by constitutional safeguards and democratic oversight.

To frame these as signs of an "authoritarian reshaping" of society ignores the long-standing existence of such legal tools in most west European countries. Eifler's extrapolation from readiness to authoritarian intent is not backed up with evidence. Except where she makes a selective presentation that confuses more than it informs. For example, she critiques plans to integrate Bundeswehr resources into civil healthcare infrastructure during crises, suggesting a militarisation of medicine. Yet in reality, such measures have been standard crisis preparedness steps for decades. The Bundeswehr played a constructive role during the COVID-19 pandemic by supplying logistics and field hospitals.

Far from a covert power grab, the new "Healthcare Security Act" aims to coordinate resources in case of hybrid threats, cyberattacks, or future pandemics. The article misses an opportunity to differentiate between reasonable crisis planning and actual subordination of civilian sectors.

It is of course essential to scrutinise the ruling SPD's effort to integrate trade unions into its Zeitenwende agenda. Eifler highlights the real risk of subordinating collective bargaining to national security goals. The exemption of defence-related contracts from new labour protections should concern workers and their advocates.

Conclusion

Eifler could have made a powerful case against domestic militarisation, social austerity, and creeping securitisation—but she undermines her credibility by omitting the very conflict that spurred these policies. It is possible, indeed necessary, to defend Ukraine's right to resist, support arms transfers aimed exclusively at that resistance, and simultaneously reject the expansion of military influence in civilian life.

But conflating all armament spending with warmongering, repeating disinformation, and ignoring the existential stakes of Russian aggression does not advance peace. It confuses the left's strategic clarity at a time when moral and political clarity is most urgently needed. The article presents no plan for peace beyond rhetorical opposition to war.

Trade unions should not fall silent—but nor should they lend their voice to narratives that, intentionally or not, obscure the realities of imperial aggression and democratic solidarity.

Adam Novak was until March 2025 the Coordinator of the [European Network for Solidarity with Ukraine \(ENSU\)](#).

P.S.

See <https://www.rosalux.de/en/news/id/53247/organized-labour-against-the-new-cold-war>