

WikiLeaks and Germany's Left Party

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Germany's Left Party has been remarkably restrained in its comments about the revelations on the WikiLeaks web site and the persecution of its founder Julian Assange.

Although the parliamentary party did issue a press release dated December 15 in which it condemned "attempts to censor information from WikiLeaks and put pressure on the platform", at the same time it clearly distanced the party from WikiLeaks.

The same press release calls for "a broad debate around issues of confidentiality" and states: "Political documents should not be published if this endangers the life, health or freedom of people." It accuses WikiLeaks of becoming "a political player, for example, when it decides which documents are published, at what time, and which mainstream media are given exclusive access to the documents in advance."

It has now become clear that there are also very specific personal reasons for the Left Party's ambiguous attitude. The chair of its parliamentary group, Gregor Gysi, is one of the politicians sought out by the US Ambassador to Germany Philip Murphy to acquire "gossip" about the internal politics of his party. This was reported by *Spiegel Online* from a secret telegram published by WikiLeaks.

Gysi is in good company. Before the revelations about him, Helmut Metzner, chief of staff to Free Democratic Party (FDP) leader Guido Westerwelle, was also revealed as a secret informant for the US ambassador. Unlike Gysi, however, Metzner had to clear his desk.

Apparently, Gysi reassured the official representative of the US government that he should not worry about the attitude of the Left Party towards NATO. The party's draft programme currently under discussion calls for "the dismantling of NATO and its replacement

by a collective security system involving Russia".

Gysi told the US ambassador how the official party position calling for the dissolution of the Atlantic military alliance should really be understood as a commitment for Germany to remain in NATO!

According to *Der Spiegel*, Gysi explained the dialectic of this discrepancy to the ambassador as follows: The demand was a tactical manoeuvre to keep the left wing of the party quiet. Otherwise, they would demand Germany quit NATO, which was much more dangerous. In contrast to German withdrawal, the dissolution of NATO was unrealistic because it would mean gaining the consent of France, Britain and the US. As long as NATO exists, however, it follows from Gysi's argument that the Left Party would support German membership.

Challenged by *Der Spiegel*, Gysi did not deny he had met with the US ambassador. He claimed that he could no longer remember the exact wording of the conversation, and suggested a translation error, because the conversation had been conducted in German. But this certainly does not amount to a denial.

Representatives of the so-called party left have expressed indignation. If the conversation in November had happened as reported, "it would be adventurism and an affront to the party left," parliamentary deputy Ulla Jelpke told *Spiegel Online*. In the daily *Junge Welt*, commentator Werner Pirker expressed outrage that Gysi had entrusted the US ambassador with information about the "dirty tricks used against the party rank and file".

What a farce! Three and a half years after the official founding of the party, it should now be clear to every member how the Left Party works. It is not merely in the sphere of foreign policy that the Left Party does the very opposite of what it officially proclaims in its programme and election campaigns. It does the same in every other policy area, whether the dismantling of

public sector jobs, the privatisation of housing and public facilities, or the local implementation of the attacks on the unemployed and welfare recipients embodied in the “Hartz” laws.

The party “left” tries to cover up these right-wing policies with leftist-sounding phrases. The WikiLeaks revelations have exposed the nakedness of their attempts to cover for Gysi’s reactionary politics.



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