

Green Party organises police violence against climate activists in Lützerath, Germany

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In NATO's proxy war against Russia in Ukraine, the Greens have proven to be the most aggressive party of German imperialism. Not a day goes by without their leading representatives banging the drums for a more aggressive war course and demanding further German tank deliveries to Ukraine.

The former pacifists play the same role in domestic politics. The current forced evacuation of the village of Lützerath in the Garzweiler brown coal mining area in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) is being organized by the self-proclaimed "environmental party." For this purpose, the NRW state government, a coalition of the Christian Democrats (CDU) and Greens, has mobilized thousands of police officers from all over Germany, who have been brutally cracking down on the climate activists since Wednesday.

Reports on social media give an idea of the massive scale of the police violence. Videos show hundreds of police armed with shields and batons—accompanied by armoured police vehicles—entering the village and attacking the mostly peaceful protesters. Medics had "to treat many head injuries" because "the police hit people on the head," one activist reported on Twitter. Police also blocked medics from carrying out their procedures, he said.

Another tweet reads, "Terrible #policeviolence against tripod activists [who use bamboo structures] in #Lützerath! They are screaming in pain and the police seem to be deliberately torturing activists here!"

The person directly responsible for the brutal action is Aachen police chief Dirk Weinspach—also a member of the Green Party. Even before the start of the operation, which could drag on for weeks, he justified the violent action to the media. "It is not my role and not our role as police not to implement or correct democratically reached decisions [...] of the responsible authorities."

This is hard to beat in terms of cynicism. In fact, the

eviction of Lützerath has not the slightest thing to do with democracy. It is about the enforcement of a policy that was concocted behind closed doors, which will further aggravate the climate catastrophe and flush millions of profits into the coffers of the energy giant RWE—and the whole thing in the name of the aggressive war policy against Russia.

The eviction of Lützerath is based on a dirty deal between the NRW state government, the federal government and energy company RWE. Last October, at a joint press conference with NRW Economics Minister Mona Neubaur (Greens) and RWE CEO Markus Krebber, Federal Economics Minister Robert Habeck (Greens) announced that Lützerath was to be mined for coal. Other villages were to be preserved in its place and the phase-out of lignite-based power generation pushed forward to 2030.

In doing so, Habeck, Neubaur and Krebber justified their plan explicitly on the basis of the NATO war offensive against Russia. "Putin's war of aggression is forcing us to temporarily make greater use of lignite so that we can save natural gas in power generation," Habeck declared, adding cynically, "That's painful, but necessary in view of the gas shortage." He said the agreement reached was "a good way to go."

In other words, the Greens' climate and environmental goals are not worth the paper they are written on and are completely subordinate to German war and great power interests. As recently as the NRW state election campaign, the Greens, as the opposition party, were advocating the preservation of all villages and the swift winding down of lignite mining. Once in government, all this has been junked—with dramatic consequences for people and the environment.

In the region, the damage is already immense. More than 20 villages have already had to make way for the Garzweiler open cast mine, which covers an area of over

48 square kilometres. Tens of thousands of residents have been resettled and extremely fertile agricultural land has been destroyed. The residual mine workings this leaves, the volume of which theoretically comprises the mass deficit from raw production and usable production, is already 200 meters deep. Moreover, the mining of lignite beneath Lützerath will contribute to Germany falling far short of the environmental targets of the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement.

When leading Greens like co-chair Omid Nouripour now publicly declare that the destruction of Lützerath is “a significant step forward on the issue of climate protection,” this is just as much Orwellian “Newspeak” as the claim that arms deliveries “save human lives” (also Nouripour). In reality, both concern death and destruction. While the constant escalation of NATO’s proxy war in Ukraine against Russia conjures up the danger of a third world war, the German government’s energy policy leads directly to climate catastrophe.

The aggressiveness with which the Greens are acting in both war and climate policy springs from the class interests of the social layers for which they speak. The wealth of the upper middle classes is directly linked to the defence of capitalist profit interests and an aggressive foreign policy, so they fear the growing opposition among workers and youth. Like the racist “law and order” campaign following New Year’s Eve in Berlin, the increasingly brutal crackdown on climate activists serves to build an authoritarian police state.

The hypocritical criticism of lignite mining in Lützerath by some Left Party politicians cannot hide the fact that the party essentially supports this reactionary course. Police forces from the federal states in which it co-governs are also on the ground in Lützerath. The “red-red-green” (Social Democrat-Left Party-Green) Berlin Senate (state executive) has even sent a three hundred-strong police unit to Lützerath. “As the capital’s police force, we are a welcome guest because of our expertise and operational experience,” boasted Benjamin Jendro, press spokesman for the Berlin police union.



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