

Germany's Left Party supports war policy against Russia

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Since the Left Party backed the new German government's war loans of €1 trillion in the Bundesrat (Federal Council), it has taken an increasingly aggressive stance on foreign policy—particularly on the NATO war against Russia in Ukraine.

In a recent interview with Deutschlandfunk (Dlf), co-chair Jan van Aken railed against the Trump administration's move to negotiate a ceasefire with Russia in Ukraine. The US plans are a “betrayal of Ukraine.” The “Americans” were “throwing Ukraine under the bus” or throwing Ukraine “into Russia's mouth” and “basically agreeing to all of Russia's demands.”

Trump is “not interested in peace,” van Aken continued. He is “interested in greater influence for the USA. And he wants, as he has said quite clearly, the Panama Canal.” It's “about power, it's about influence, it's about exploiting other countries. And now you're throwing away Ukraine and saying that's your influence.”

Of course, Trump's policy is not a peace policy. But neither do EU criticisms of Trump's plans, which van Aken and the Left Party share, have anything to do with “peace” or with the defence of “democracy” or “human rights.”

A recent analysis by the *World Socialist Web Site* shows that behind the growing conflict over Ukraine and Russia lie “bitter rivalries between Washington and the European imperialist powers.” This is “over the plunder of Ukraine and more broadly over how to divide the world economy between them amid the accelerating global trade war over Trump's tariffs.”

German imperialism is taking a particularly aggressive stance. Eighty years after the fall of the Nazis, it is once again focusing on great power politics and war against Russia. In the Bericht aus Berlin television programme on Sunday, the current and, in all likelihood, future Defense Minister Boris Pistorius (Social Democrats, SPD) spoke out strongly against Trump's recognition of the Ukrainian territories claimed by Russia. “Ukraine could have done this on its own, by basically surrendering a year ago,” he ranted.

In the same breath, Pistorius assured Ukraine of further

German military aid—even in the event of an end to American support. This was clearly stipulated in the incoming German government's coalition agreement, he commented. “If Ukraine falls, if Putin wins this war in the sense that he occupies Ukraine, or even just large parts of it, then this poses a maximum threat to NATO territory and, incidentally, to neighbouring countries such as Moldova and Georgia,” Pistorius claimed. It must be clear to everyone: “This is not just about solidarity with Ukraine, it is about our security and our peace in Europe.”

This is nothing but propaganda. The warning of a Russian invasion of the whole of Europe corresponds to the lies of German imperialism on the eve of the First and Second World Wars. The same applies to the interests behind it. As early as the First World War, control of the resource-rich and geostrategically important Ukraine—alongside German hegemony in “Central Europe”—was one of the German Empire's war aims. Hitler built on this in the Second World War. The subjugation of Ukraine played a central role in the war of annihilation against the Soviet Union, which led to the Holocaust and cost the lives of at least 27 million Soviet citizens.

Even today, German imperialism is not concerned with “security” and “peace.” It is once again pursuing the goal of removing Ukraine and other countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union or the Russian Empire from Moscow's influence and bringing them under the control of the German-dominated EU. This is what van Aken is talking about when he criticises Trump—almost word for word with Pistorius.

The Left Party supports the German government's goal of developing a European war policy independent of the US. “As the Left Party, we have been saying for a long time that we need to think more and more about security in European terms,” he emphasised. We have to “get ready for defence” in order to “assume a more, so to speak, neutral, great position, as a force for peace.” We must not “throw ourselves at the feet of the US or Russia or anyone else,” but must “act independently.”

Although Van Aken explained in the interview that we should not “play world power” and “arm ourselves to the teeth,” it is precisely this policy that the Left Party supports. When Gregor Gysi, the figurehead and founding father of the Left Party, opened the new Bundestag (Federal Parliament) in his capacity of honorary president for his length of parliamentary service, he declared: “If the European Union really worked,” it could “become a kind of fourth world power” alongside the USA, China and Russia. We would have to “work on this” and perhaps “some states would have to step forward.”

In fact, van Aken's entire interview is a clear commitment to German and European militarism and the escalation of the war against Russia. In response to Dlf's comment that “the reality in Ukraine” shows “that anyone who doesn't arm themselves will be gobbled up by Russia,” the Left Party leader replies: 'Well, we say quite clearly that of course there needs to be a sufficient army in Germany and Europe for EU and national defence. I think we all agree on that.'

In order to achieve his own war aims against Russia, van Aken also advocates increasing the pressure on China. As “strong allies of Russia ... they have an influence on the Kremlin,” said van Aken. “That's why we say we have to involve China. Brussels would not be neutral either. We are of course on the side of Ukraine, which is absolutely right.”

The Left Party's solidarity with the oligarchic regime in Kiev, which is dominated by far-right forces, goes hand in hand with its support for the reactionary government campaign to exclude representatives of Russia from the commemorative events marking the 80th anniversary of the end of the Second World War on May 8. Leading Left Party politician Wulf Gallert, Vice President of the Saxony-Anhalt state parliament, told DPA: “Anyone who wages a war of aggression today, and does so without regard for the civilian population, should not take part in commemorations for peace in the name of this state.”

Russia's war in Ukraine is reactionary. But that does not change the fact that the NATO powers are the main aggressors in this conflict. Through their decades-long policy of encirclement, they provoked the Russian invasion in February 2022. Since then, they have been pushing ahead with the escalation in order to crush Russia militarily and implement long-planned armament and war strategies. The exclusion of Russian representatives from commemorations underlines how directly the ruling class is returning to Hitler's great power policy—and once again waging war against Russia.

A few weeks ago, at an event titled “Why did the Left Party agree to the rearmament madness?”, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) explained what lies behind the Left Party's militarism, which is now

taking on ever more open and repulsive forms:

The militarism of the Left Party is ultimately not simply a product of its right-wing leaders, but is rooted in the party's political and social orientation and history. Despite its name, the Left Party has never been a left-wing or even socialist party. It has always been a bourgeois organisation that represents the interests of the state apparatus and wealthy middle classes, defends German capitalism and imperialism and is rewarded for this with ministerial posts and millions in state subsidies.

All their Sunday speeches cannot hide the fact that:

1. Their Stalinist predecessor organisation, the SED/PDS (Socialist Unity Party/Party of Democratic Socialism), supported the reintroduction of capitalism in East Germany and thus laid the foundation for the return of German militarism.

2. Wherever it sits or has sat in state governments together with the SPD and the Greens, it resolutely supports and enforces the associated attacks on social spending.

Workers and young people who want to fight against militarism, fascism and war must settle political accounts with the Left Party and consciously turn to a socialist perspective. The Socialist Equality Party, together with the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), will present such a perspective at the International May Day Online Rally on May 3 at 9 p.m. Central European time. Register here to take part in this important event.



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