

The Left Party justifies the US-Israeli war of aggression against Iran

Johannes Stern**25 June 2025**

In a statement, Jan van Aken, co-chair of the Left Party, called the US-Israeli attack on Iran what it is: an “illegal war of aggression under international law.” Yet this seemingly unequivocal condemnation serves merely as a rhetorical fig leaf for the party’s unconditional backing of the imperialist war aims pursued through the attack. In reality, the Left Party stands firmly behind the aggression against Iran, once again exposing its inherently pro-imperialist character.

Van Aken states that military attacks were not a solution to preventing an Iranian nuclear bomb, yet he simultaneously affirms that such an outcome “must in any case be prevented.” Thus, he echoes precisely the propaganda Washington, Tel Aviv and the European great powers invoke to justify their illegal attack on Iran.

Significantly, in his statement, he criticises that even the dropping of the largest conventional bombs may not have sufficed to destroy Iran’s nuclear programme. “Perhaps the US’s illegal attack has damaged some of Iran’s nuclear facilities today,” he writes, lamenting. “But that does not prevent an Iranian bomb—it merely delays it by a few years at best. The next facility will simply be built even deeper beneath rock.”

Van Aken’s simultaneous insistence on “negotiations” and “on-site inspections” is the height of cynicism. It was the US that unilaterally abandoned the Vienna Agreement on Iran’s nuclear programme, despite Iran’s full compliance with all agreed “inspections.” And the most recent “negotiations” were then used by the US and Israel as a cover to prepare and carry out massive attacks on Iran.

Against this backdrop, van Aken’s purported opposition to war is nothing more than a tactical nuance within the imperialist camp over which methods to deploy. The objective—subjugating Iran—is shared

unreservedly by him and the Left Party. In adopting imperialist war aims, they align themselves just as closely as they portray Iran—following the official propaganda—as a “threat to world peace.” In fact, Iran is a long-oppressed country, caught in the crosshairs of imperialist war policy due to its geostrategic position and rich natural resources.

In a recent analysis, the WSWS outlines “the actual aim of the war” as follows: “American imperialism, via its proxy Israel, seeks direct control of a resource-rich region and its transport routes on the Persian Gulf and Caspian Sea. The ruling class sees this not only as vital in itself, but also as essential preparation for an envisaged war with China.”

Berlin does not intend to stand aside in this imperialist redivision of the world—yet it fears that the criminal, illegal escalation in the Middle East undermines the propaganda NATO uses to justify its war campaign against Russia. “If the West itself violates international law,” warns van Aken, “it becomes all the harder to win global support for Ukraine and the fight against the international-law violator Putin.” For Putin, he adds, “then once again it’s been a good day.”

Once more, the Left Party leader lays bare how aggressively both he and his party support NATO’s war against Russia. This, of course, has as little to do with defending “international law” and “democracy” as does the campaign against Iran. It serves the goal of bringing Ukraine—and ultimately Russia itself—under direct imperialist control and exploitation. And the Left Party cannot push for that fast enough. Notably, van Aken reproaches Trump for failing to take a sufficiently aggressive stance towards Moscow.

In an interview with broadcaster Deutschlandfunk, he recently attacked Trump’s plan to negotiate a ceasefire

in Ukraine with Russia. The US proposals were a “betrayal of Ukraine,” he thundered, claiming the “Americans are pushing Ukraine under the bus”—or rather, “into Russia’s arms”—and “in essence acceding to all of Russia’s demands.” Trump’s concern “is not peace,” van Aken insisted; it was “greater influence for the USA.”

Of course, Trump’s policies have nothing to do with “peace.” Nor does the European criticism of Trump’s plans, which van Aken and the Left Party share, have anything to do with “peace,” let alone defending “democracy” or “human rights.”

The WSWS has analysed how behind the escalating conflict between Ukraine and Russia lie “bitter rivalries between Washington and the European imperialist powers,” centered on the plunder of Ukraine and, more broadly, the global trade war-driven redivision of the world economy in the wake of Trump’s tariffs.

That the Left Party aggressively defends Germany’s imperialist interests on all war fronts is no accident. Despite its name, it has never been a left-wing or socialist party. From its inception, it was a bourgeois project intended to channel social discontent into the existing capitalist system. It represents the interests of privileged middle class strata, state functionaries and academic milieus whose political orientation is tightly bound to German imperialism.

This has become ever clearer in recent months. While the federal government advances its war and rearmament policies and cuts social spending, the Left Party underpins this offensive. It voted in the Bundesrat (upper house of parliament) for the trillion-euro war credit and helped the Christian Democrat Friedrich Merz to become Chancellor in the Bundestag (lower house of parliament).

Many—especially young people who voted for the Left Party in the federal election thinking they were signaling opposition to fascism and war—must draw the lessons from this. The belief that one can pressure the government “from the left” via the Left Party—or that it serves as a vehicle for social resistance—is an illusion. The Left Party is a thoroughly bourgeois-capitalist formation, playing a central role in weakening, misdirecting and politically suppressing resistance to militarism, war and social inequality.

Its support for war policy lays bare the reactionary character of the Left Party. It does not fight

imperialism; but defends it. It legitimises wars with “humanitarian” arguments and adopts the war aims of German imperialism each time it calls for diplomatic initiatives instead of military escalation.

And it is richly rewarded for doing so with ministerial posts, millions in state funding for the party and privileged access to media and public institutions. Its political personnel—from Berlin to Bremen to Brussels—are part of the capitalist machinery and defend it vigorously. At the state level, it implements social cutbacks and expansion of the police, while at the federal level it backs the Merz government.

Anyone serious about fighting war, social inequality and authoritarian rule must make a political reckoning with the Left Party and build a genuine socialist alternative.

Such an alternative can only be international and revolutionary. It must rely on the independent mobilisation of the working class against both capitalism and imperialism—against all factions of the ruling class, including its pseudo-left supporters. It must link the struggle against war with the fight against the system that produces it: capitalist private ownership of the means of production that divides the world into rival great powers, blocs and corporations.

The battle against war begins with political clarity about who is friend and who is foe. The Left Party stands with the warmongers—it is not part of the solution but part of the problem. The solution lies in building the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party) and the Fourth International as the revolutionary leadership and mass party of the working class.



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