

After Trump's attack on Venezuela: Germany's Left Party supports European imperialism

Johannes Stern
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The Left Party's reaction to the illegal US attack on Venezuela and the abduction of President Nicolás Maduro once again exposes it as an openly pro-imperialist force. Although the party formally condemned Trump's actions as "state terrorism" and a violation of international law, this criticism is not aimed at mobilising the international working class against US imperialism on the basis of an independent socialist perspective. Rather, it expresses the role of the Left Party as an aggressive apologist for German and European imperialism.

Like the Greens and large sections of the bourgeois media, the Left Party criticises Chancellor Merz not from the left, but from the right. Its reproach is not that Berlin supports Trump's illegal actions and pursues imperialist interests of its own, but that the federal government is not positioning itself decisively enough against Washington. At a press conference on Monday, party chair Jan van Aken demanded "a very clear and strong reaction from Europe." Anyone who now "reacts cowardly" and "ducks away" encourages the United States to continue in the same way. After Venezuela, "Greenland could come, after Greenland the Panama Canal."

Van Aken deliberately drew parallels with Russia's annexation of Crimea, which in reality was provoked by NATO's encirclement policy and the pro-Western coup in Kiev in 2014, in order to legitimise an aggressive European counter-strategy. The conclusion is clear: Europe must assert its own great-power ambitions more resolutely. Criticism must not be confined to words. The Left Party is calling for sanctions against the United States and for a concrete European plan to prevent Trump's threatened annexation of Greenland.

The imperialist character of these demands emerged particularly starkly when van Aken declared: "Why not hold an EU summit in Greenland to make it clear: the United States has no business here, Greenland belongs to Europe and to nobody else." He supplemented this with demands for

"targeted sanctions against the criminals, against the wrongdoers, against the violators of international law," that is, against Trump and his entourage. Europe must also "concentrate on itself in security policy terms."

Van Aken attempted to rhetorically conceal the fact that he was advocating an aggressive European great-power policy by adding that Europe should not become a "fourth world power" that acts just as brutally as the United States or Russia, but rather a "power for peace." This invocation is pure hypocrisy. German and European imperialism are in no way inferior to the United States in terms of brutality and criminality.

As the statement by the editorial board of the *World Socialist Web Site* against the attack on Venezuela emphasises, all imperialist powers are responding to the deepest crisis of capitalism since the 1930s and to the growing resistance of the working class by turning to militarism, war and authoritarian forms of rule.

"And while it is expressed most violently in the US, the same basic tendencies exist throughout the world. All the imperialist powers are now engaged in a global redivision of the world," it states. And further:

In Europe, the major capitalist governments are undertaking the most massive rearmament campaigns since the Second World War as they clamor for war against Russia and destroy social programs. For Britain, France and their imperialist partners in NATO, Trump's onslaught against Venezuela is seen as a signal to recover their old colonial empires. The German ruling class, engaged in a massive military buildup, is nurturing dreams of a Fourth Reich, asserting its military power across the continent and beyond.

The Left Party supports this policy. When Gregor Gysi, figurehead and founding father of the party, opened the Bundestag last year as its most senior member, he expressed this orientation openly. The European Union, Gysi said, could become “a kind of fourth world power” alongside the United States, China and Russia, and this was something that one had to “work towards.”

The Left Party also has no fundamental problem with Trump’s methods, as long as they serve the interests of German imperialism. As recently as last year, van Aken and the party leadership openly supported Trump’s illegal attack on Iran as well as his so-called “peace plan” for Gaza, which aims at the completion of the genocide of the Palestinians and the colonial reorganisation of the Middle East—a project in which Berlin itself is involved.

In the current case, however, the Left Party fears that Trump’s actions will not only undermine European interests in Latin America but also endanger NATO’s war strategy against Russia in Ukraine. This concern emerges particularly clearly in an interview van Aken gave to broadcaster Deutschlandfunk on Tuesday. Although he spoke out against the deployment of armed NATO troops to Ukraine, as this would entail the danger of a “really big war,” instead of drawing the only consistent conclusion from this—the immediate halt to NATO’s escalation and the withdrawal of all Western weapons and troops—he advocated another form of intervention: a UN blue-helmet mission.

Van Aken presents this as a “classic peace mission.” This portrayal is deliberate eyewash. The history of UN missions—from the Balkans to Africa to the Middle East—shows that so-called peacekeeping forces always secure the interests of the imperialist powers that deploy them. In a serious crisis they become direct parties to war. That van Aken knows this is demonstrated by his entire line of argument.

With regard to security guarantees for Ukraine, he said, “I think Europe has to be clear about this: this is a European solution. The Americans have said they will not take part in it, or hardly at all.” He said he has “seen the danger for nine months now” that “Trump will hand the country over to Russia.”

The call for security guarantees to push back Russia is nothing other than a demand for a massive expansion of war support for Ukraine—up to and including the deployment of European troops. In doing so, the Left Party does not oppose imperialist war plans but supports them. Its peace rhetoric serves solely to conceal the escalation and make it politically enforceable.

Van Aken is fully aware of the bloody historical tradition to which Berlin is linking its renewed drive eastwards. When asked whether he supported German participation in a UN

force in Ukraine, he declared that the “political signal” was difficult, because “then German soldiers would once again be just outside Stalingrad.” Nevertheless, he considered UN blue helmets “in principle” to be the right approach.

In the First World War, control over the resource-rich and geostrategically central Ukraine was among the core objectives of German imperialism. In the Second World War, it played a key role in the war of annihilation against the Soviet Union, which culminated in the Holocaust and cost at least 27 million Soviet citizens their lives. Today, too, Berlin is not concerned with peace, but with tearing Ukraine and other Eastern European states away from Russian influence and bringing them under the control of an EU dominated by Germany.

It is necessary to understand that the pro-imperialist policy of the Left Party and its participation in social cuts and stepping up the repressive powers of the state wherever it co-governs at state level arise directly from its social and historical character. In an earlier lecture titled “How the Left Party supports the war policy of the Merz government,” we explained:

The party’s militarism is not the accidental product of individual right-wing functionaries. It is an expression of the social and political foundations on which this party has always stood. Despite its name, the Left Party has never been a left or socialist party. It has always been a bourgeois organisation—a party that defends the interests of the state apparatus and privileged middle layers, supports German capitalism and is rewarded for this with ministerial posts and millions from state party financing.

Workers and young people in Germany, Europe and internationally must draw the necessary conclusions from this. The fight against war requires a socialist strategy. As the WSWS statement on the attack on Venezuela emphasises, the struggle against war is inseparably linked to the struggle against its cause: the capitalist system. It must be led by the working class, with the aim of building an independent political movement, overcoming capitalism and reorganising society on the basis of social needs rather than private profit.



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