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Greenland

For a free and demilitarized Arctic – Defend Greenland's independence – Defend the Greenlandic people and nature

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With Donald Trump's repeated demands that the US take over Greenland and his vice president J. D. Vance's comments on the number of US military personnel in Greenland, the imperialist competition for Greenland has taken a decisive new step.

The long struggle to protect the Arctic and the Inuit peoples from war and militarization is in a fundamental crisis. The threat of an arms race at the top of the world and yet another unbridled hunt for the population's natural resources threatens not only the existence of the Greenlanders, but the entire world. The greatest guarantee of peace and the sole stewardship of the Arctic lies with the indigenous peoples' organizations and representative bodies, including the Greenlandic parliament, Inatsisarsut, and the Inuit Circumpolar Council.

Trump says outright what “polite” Danish imperialism has tried to hide: that under the logic of capitalism, countries, people, and peoples are, at best, commodities—at worst, spoils of war. For the same reason, Trump's demand for a renegotiation of the nearly 200-year-old alliance between the Danish and American bourgeoisie has sent Denmark into full-blown colonial hysteria. The height of the hysteria is, of course, the censorship of the documentary about Danish cryolite mining, which was removed from the internet this week as a result of obvious political pressure involving the top levels of government. This censorship was deeply biased, and with the removal of source material, it is now difficult, if not impossible, for many citizens to orient themselves in a crucial social debate.

The significance of cryolite

The bourgeois panic in Denmark must be seen in light of the enormous wealth that Danish capitalists managed to plunder from Greenland through the extraction of cryolite. Despite the fact that the Danish state charged Danish capitalists for allowing them to steal Greenland's minerals, Weber's [Theobald Weber, founder of the Øresund cryolite factory, ed.] heirs each received a return of no less than 40% of the one million they had each received upon their father's death. Such income does not arise from normal business operations, but solely from monopolies and colonial rents. The reinvestment of this income has built the Denmark we know today. C. F. Tietgen, the godfather of the modern Danish capitalist class, was the man behind the construction of the mine in Ivittuut. The extraction of cryolite must therefore be seen as a decisive part of the primitive accumulation that allowed Denmark's transformation into an industrial society.

Without cryolite, aluminum would most likely never have become a widely used metal, and its far-reaching capabilities would not have benefited humanity. Denmark and the US have shared the profits from the exploitation of cryolite more or less equally between them. For the US, it allowed the rapid build-up of the air force, which since World War II has ensured the US a decisive influence on the world market. The derived wealth and value of that destiny cannot be measured in numbers. What it was worth to have a completely unique place in the world where these rare minerals lay freely on the ground and were used by the local population for tanning skins is lost in questions of historical ethics. Like other colonized peoples, the Inuit of Greenland are left with a hole in the ground where the foundations for centuries of development of their own society and economy could have been laid.

Colonialism in the US – and Denmark

Trump's brash demand for control over Greenland is merely a continuation of the colonial, imperial, and racist

thinking that has defined Danish and American policy toward Greenland. Through a long and arduous political struggle, the Greenlandic people have won the legal and formal rights to independence. But American imperialism views the formation of states by indigenous peoples with the deepest mistrust. That is why, even under Democratic leadership, they have worked purposefully to gain influence among the Greenlandic elite and tie them to the US.

The simple fact that this exploitation has come to light has created colonial hysteria in Denmark, where colonial racism against our Greenlandic fellow citizens has been given free rein – for example, with ideas that Greenlandic independence should have consequences for Greenlanders in Denmark. It must be categorically rejected that decisions about Greenland's status should have any bearing whatsoever on Greenlanders living in Denmark and who are part of Danish society. It is also deeply criticizable that the Danish government, which has otherwise upheld the Greenlandic slogan “Nothing about Greenland without Greenland,” has simultaneously traveled around Europe—WITHOUT Greenland—to garner support for the defense of the “Kingdom”! The Greenlandic government is perfectly capable of negotiating security – they already do so when negotiating concessions and trade.

Our tasks

The Danish working class and the left have a special responsibility towards the Greenlandic people. It is unfortunately true that a marked complacency has characterized large sections of the Danish labor movement in relation to the Greenlandic people. With important exceptions, far too many of us have believed that it was sufficient to “leave the question to the Greenlanders” and thus, in practice, avoid having to deal with the complex historical and contemporary issues that affect Greenland. This needs to be remedied.

First and foremost, by participating in the organization of debates on Greenlandic history and the present day and by inviting Greenlandic activists and people in Denmark to contribute their understanding and perspectives—not only in Greenland, but throughout Danish society. We can do this in all the circles in which we are active. At the same time, we want teaching about Greenlandic history and Danish colonialism to be integrated into the school curriculum. No child should see the Marble Church without knowing that, when it was completed, it was also called the Aluminum Mine.

At the same time, there is a need to learn more about post-colonial conflicts and the blind spots faced by the colonizers' population, especially the working class. A monstrous example of this is when “economic experts” are allowed to thunder, virtually unchallenged, against the emphasis on the total value of a raw material (cryolite) as a measure of what the colonial power has taken from the colonized country. Even though researchers on colonialism point out the relevance of this figure in the documentary, when virtually all of this value is transferred from Greenland's GDP to Denmark's. There should also be a special focus on the issue of reproductive rights and on the Danish state's active efforts to prevent the birth of half a generation of Greenlandic children.

Demands that can support the Greenlanders' struggle for independence

While we fully support Greenland's desire for independence and understand that Greenlanders do not trust the possibility of equal treatment, we want to maintain the best possible relations with the Greenlandic people. We are bound not only by history, but also by family and friendship ties. However, this desire is only meaningful if Greenland is supported in gaining full control over its own territory, and we must demand that no economic coercion be used to pressure the Greenlandic people's political choices. At the same time, we demand that travel between Denmark and Greenland be made affordable for everyone who has family in Greenland. We will work to ensure that Greenlandic

independence does not pressure Greenland into granting destructive concessions or force Greenland to give in to any form of military pressure. At the same time, we reject any process that does not aim to involve the entire Greenlandic people, but instead focuses on small elites.

We therefore also demand that Greenland be given full and unhindered access to all studies of the Greenlandic subsoil and that all military agreements concerning the Arctic be presented to the Arctic population. When the Danish state and the Danish bourgeoisie continue to claim how hard it has been to make money from the plundering of the Arctic, we demand that all accounts be presented, including payments of share dividends.

The development of a proper program for the relationship between Greenland and Denmark, as a former colonial power, requires the full involvement and independence of Greenland. We are therefore pleased with the contribution of the Danish left wing to Inuit Ataqatigiit, and we wish them a successful election.

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Translated by SAP from **[Socialistisk Information-Å»**

<https://socinf.dk/for-et-frit-og-afmilitariseret-arktis-forsvar-groenlands-selvstaendighed-forsvar-den-groenlandske-befolkning-og-natur/>.

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