

Party leader boasts: German Left Party more pro-business than the CDU

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In our analysis of the coalition agreement struck between the Social Democratic Party, Left Party and Green Party to take over the Thuringian state government, the WSWS wrote that Left Party leader Bodo Ramelow would set “new standards for welfare cuts”, should he be elected state premier on December 5.

If anyone felt that the WSWS was exaggerating, they should read the interview with Ramelow in the business section of last Sunday's FAS (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*) newspaper, titled “The Pope is more critical of capitalism than I am.” In his interview with the conservative paper, Ramelow, a devout Christian, made quite clear what can be expected in the future from the Left Party.

At the beginning of the interview, the FAS came right to the point, asking Ramelow whether business circles should fear “a Left Party premier”.

Somewhat offended, Ramelow responded, “You only ask the question because you do not come from Thuringia. ... for years there has been a relaxed working atmosphere there between business and the Left Party.” Ramelow personally played a major role in this. He was a “union president for ten years” there during “turbulent times.” He proudly declared, “I was more concerned with restructuring enterprises than with contract struggles. I retain these links up until today.”

As a union bureaucrat from West Germany who went to the east, Ramelow played an active role in the restoration of capitalism and the dissolution of the Stalinist regime in East Germany. The social consequences were disastrous. The breakup of former state-owned industries led to high unemployment, dire poverty and massive social inequality in East Germany.

Nonetheless, Ramelow remains an outspoken supporter of the capitalist system. He described the free

market system as “basically good” and boasted of his close links with entrepreneurs: “They hold me in esteem. And they still come to me if they want to solve a problem.” Ramelow claimed that from the standpoint of his business partners, his is, firstly, “very adept” at dealing with problems, secondly, a good “salesman”, and thirdly, “very reliable”.

Somewhat taken aback by Ramelow's reactionary tirade, the FAS asked if it was not the case that the Left Party program states that “the Left Party would not be submissive to powerful business interests?” Evidently grateful for the question, Ramelow then made clear that the left-sounding phrases employed by the Left Party are utterly worthless. “The basic program of the party is one thing, our concrete Thuringian state election program is another.” In addition, he was not a “representative of the Left Party in the state, but rather premier of a coalition of three”.

Asked for his opinion on the “anti-capitalism of the Federal Party”, Ramelow let his anti-Marxism run wild. “With a smile on my lips, I ask you, what really threatens companies more: [Left Party leader] Sarah Wagenknecht or uncontrolled financial flows, which destroy the market?” He did not entirely like such “turbo-capitalism”, but that's got “nothing to do with Karl Marx”.

Then Ramelow went even further, insisting that the Left Party is even more “pro-business” than the conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU).

“I can only say: in the election campaign I spoke to all investors. I listen to them all. The least I can do is give a clear message to ensure that things finally happen. When the going gets tough the CDU always bows down to each and every citizen's initiative hostile to investors,” he said.

Not so Ramelow and the Left Party! They want to

open up the state for investors and make concrete plans. Ramelow wants the Swedish state-owned energy company Vattenfall to buy the dams in the Saale region and turn them into a tourist area “which is interesting for investors”. In five years, he could double the number of tourists “and make good money in the process”, he boasts. His argument is: “regional before global”.

Ramelow presents the Left Party for what it is: a right-wing bourgeois party, which increasingly functions as a nationalist and regional mouthpiece for German big business. In one passage, he warns that Thuringia should “not be just dependent on the decisions of global corporations like General Motors, functioning as an extended workbench”.

From the standpoint of the Thuringian economy, Ramelow also expressed criticisms of the US and EU sanctions against Russia. He was “neither a friend of Putin or Russia”, but he knew that Thuringia was a “transformation zone” with “both excellent links to Russia and Ukraine”. The task is “to be the hub—and not just line up with one side”.

As a representative of German imperialism, Ramelow does not want to line up with just one side when it comes to foreign policy. On the issue of economic and social policy, however, he firmly came down on the side of big business. He made clear a so-called “red-red-green” (i.e. Left Party-SPD-Green) government under his leadership would be even more aggressive in advancing the interests of entrepreneurs and investors in close cooperation with the unions against workers, than the outgoing CDU-led state administration.



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