

Germany: Left Party suffers massive vote loss in European elections

Gregor Link
1 June 2019

In last week's European elections, the Left Party scored 5.5 percent of the vote in Germany. Compared to the European elections in 2014, it suffered a considerable loss of votes in virtually every federal state. This applies above all to the states in which the Left Party governs or heads the opposition in the state parliament. The party has received its just deserts for its very right-wing government policies.

The European elections were characterized throughout Europe by a dramatic defeat of the conservative and social democratic parties that have dominated political events on the continent for decades. Neither in Germany, nor in France nor in the United Kingdom did these parties win a majority of the votes. In Germany, the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and Social Democrats (SPD) confronted historically low election results; the SPD alone lost 11.4 percentage points compared to 2014.

The reason for this is the enormous anger millions of workers have for the right-wing policies of militarism, social inequality and authoritarian measures. The Left Party is rightly perceived not as an opposition to these policies, but as part of them.

The numbers speak for themselves: In Thuringia, where the Left Party has been governing with the Greens and the SPD at state level since December 2014, the "left" state premier Bodo Ramelow presides over the second highest deportation rate in Germany.

Just last month it became known that Ramelow's Justice Minister Dieter Lauinger (Greens) had the artist association "Centre for Political Beauty" prosecuted, on the initiative of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), for the alleged "formation of a criminal organization". The AfD, on the other hand, has become the second strongest force in the European elections in Thuringia and almost on a par with the

CDU. It was able to triple its score compared to the last European elections.

The Left Party has been in the state government in the capital, Berlin, since 2002, with only one interruption. Today, Berlin is regarded as the "capital of poverty." In 2002, the then "red-red" senate (state executive) of the SPD and Left Party had agreed the "risk-shielding law", with which it undertook to guarantee the debts of the Berliner Bankgesellschaft to the tune of €21.6 billion. In the following years, the Left Party, together with its coalition partners, carried out a policy of social devastation that is unprecedented in post-war Germany to this day.

During the two terms of office of the red-red Senate, from 2002 to the end of 2011, tens of thousands of public sector jobs were cut, the wages of remaining employees reduced by up to 12 percent, 10,000 student places and 216 professorships wiped out and 150,000 publicly owned apartments privatized. Today, if the Left Party has its way, these same apartments are to be re-purchased using public funds at a seventeen-fold cost.

Most recently, the current red-red-Green Senate made headlines when the Berlin Refugee Council reported a "horrific collective deportation" in which serious human rights violations were said to have occurred. Among other things, the Refugee Council lists "forcibly administering sedative medications" to a mentally handicapped man, "forcible family separations," "police beatings," and "restraining" and transporting a mother with multiple infants.

In Berlin, the Left Party was punished in the European elections by a loss of 4.3 percentage points. Only the parties of the grand coalition federal government of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats saw greater losses there.

In Brandenburg, where the Left Party has governed together with the SPD since November 2014, it lost 7.3 percentage points. The red-red coalition there passed a new Police State Act only a few months ago, which is essentially indistinguishable from the infamous “police task law” in Bavaria. It allows the police to use hand grenades in the fight against “terrorists,” the weeks-long preventive detention of so-called “perpetrators”, secret investigations and the pronouncement of residency and contact bans. In addition, the police have been equipped with body cams, while at the same time the storage periods for surveillance videos were drastically extended.

Now the SPD and Left Party are working on boosting the state branch of the secret service. The bill, approved by the Left Party, envisages increasing the number of intelligence agents from 93 to 120, reinforcing the use of Confidential Informants (CI) and limiting parliamentary control over the agency. At the end of last year, the Left Party mayor of Frankfurt/Oder had threatened Syrian refugees with deportation to the war zone.

The AfD, which was explicitly confirmed by this case, more than doubled its election results in Brandenburg and is therefore, as in Saxony, the strongest political force in the state. The right-wing politics of the Left Party favour the rise of the AfD and paves the way for it.

The Left Party is not a left-wing but a right-wing party. Wherever it is in power, it rescues banks, smashes up the social welfare system, builds up the German state and its security apparatus and brutally deports refugees into war zones. Nothing about its politics is “left-wing”.

In an interview with newsweekly *Der Spiegel* this week, Left Party leader Katja Kipping made clear the party’s intention to continue and expand this policy. Participation in the state executive in Bremen, where the Left Party received 10.4 percent of the votes in the state election held at the same time as the European elections, could be “an important signal for the federal government, too”, she said. On election night in Bremen, Kipping had called for a red-red-green coalition and appealed to the “joint responsibility” of SPD, Greens and Left Party.

The balance sheet of the Left Party shows the antisocial character such a joint government would

have.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact