

# What can be expected from a red-green federal government in Germany?

Christoph Vandreier  
22 September 2021

At the last three-way debate between the candidates for German Chancellor on Sunday, Olaf Scholz (Social Democrats) and Annalena Baerbock (Greens) went to great lengths to promote a government coalition made up of the SPD and the Greens as a progressive alternative. Both politicians spoke out in favor of such an alliance and engaged in friendly back-and-forth exchanges on the minimum wage and tax increases.

But a coalition between the SPD and Greens, a so-called red-green government, would be nothing of the kind. It would continue and exacerbate the hated policies of social spending cuts, mass infection with COVID-19 and militarism. This can already be seen in the absurd election promises. After all Bundestag parties forked over hundreds of billions of euros to the super-rich at the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, the SPD and the Greens are calling for a marginal increase in the top tax rate of just 3 percent, and only for extremely high incomes. They promise to raise the minimum wage by €2.40.

The last time there was a red-green change of government in 1998, the two parties rolled out far bigger guns in the election campaign. The SPD advertised en masse for health care, the protection of social welfare systems, an action program for jobs, higher pensions and against poverty. The Greens called for the “demilitarization of international politics.”

In reality, the red-green government of Gerhard Schröder then carried out the most violent social attacks in postwar German history in every single political area. With Hartz IV and the Agenda 2010 reforms, the red-green government created a massive low-wage sector. With the so-called Riester pension, it lowered pensions and privatized provision, and with the deregulation of the financial markets it organized a veritable orgy of enrichment on the stock exchanges.

In addition, the former pacifists of the Greens and their

Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer waged the first German war of aggression since the Second World War with the bombing of Serbia. This was followed by the barbaric war of occupation in Afghanistan and countless other war missions in which German soldiers again committed atrocities all over the world.

Since then, the SPD and Greens have shifted even further to the right. For the past 16 years, with the exception of four years, the SPD ruled the country together with the conservative Christian Democrats/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU). The party made the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) the official opposition in parliament, organized a massive rearmament drive, strengthened the regime of refugee deportations, and implemented the “profits before life” policy in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Greens not only supported the billions gifted by the government to banks and corporations, they implemented deportations and the policy of mass infection in 11 of the 16 federal states in which they are involved in the government. On foreign military interventions, they regularly criticized the government from the right and called for participation in the wars against Libya and Syria.

A new edition of the red-green coalition would implement policies that would eclipse anything adopted by the previous federal government and the Schröder red-green government.

Like the Left Party, the SPD and the Greens have ensured that an unprecedented redistribution of wealth from the bottom to the top has taken place during the coronavirus pandemic. Because hundreds of billions of euros were handed over to the banks and corporations, the 10 richest Germans alone were able to increase their wealth by \$178 billion in 2020. At the same time, 40 percent of the population were affected by a loss of income.

A red-green federal government would aim to squeeze out the money to pay for the corporate bailouts from the working class. Even the measly campaign demands are not worth the paper they are written on. Real wages are already being massively reduced due to the horrendous inflation of up to 5 percent. A red-green government would also slash social welfare spending and attack all workers' rights.

The pandemic policy of the SPD and the Greens provides particularly clear confirmation of this. For the last year and a half, the federal government, in cooperation with all state governments, has pursued a policy that tramples corpses under foot in order to guarantee the profit interests of banks and corporations. Instead of carrying out life-saving lockdowns, businesses were kept open, producing one wave of the pandemic after another. In the three-way debates between the chancellor candidates, both Scholz and Baerbock spoke out repeatedly against limited lockdowns in order to break the fourth wave of infections.

The politics of death go hand in hand with the politics of war. During a debate on RTL television in August, Scholz emphasized that international military operations by the German army would also be necessary in the future. He boasted, "the greatest increase in the military budget had taken place" since he became Minister of Finance. "We are now over 50 billion (euros). I worked very hard to make this possible, and I will continue to do so in the years to come," he said. Without a social democratic finance minister, such a large increase would not have taken place.

Baerbock attacked this policy from the right. She accused the grand coalition of constantly ducking out of the way when things get difficult and placing domestic political motives above foreign policy responsibility. "I would change that," she declared. "As Germans, we have a responsibility in the world." The NATO target of spending 2 percent of GDP on defence is not enough, she continued, adding, "If economic power declines, then we have no more security, but nominally we have achieved our goal."

With this outrageous rearmament policy, the SPD and Greens are reacting to the Western powers' debacle in Afghanistan and the growing conflicts between the great powers. They want to enforce German economic interests militarily across the globe and are thus heading for a third world war. This will result in levels of brutality that far exceed those witnessed during the Afghanistan war.

A red-green government would implement a reactionary

program in domestic and foreign policy and is therefore increasingly being promoted. Since the SPD and the Greens currently enjoy the support of only between 25 to 26 percent and 15 to 17 percent respectively, according to the latest polls, they would probably have to rely on another coalition partner to form a government.

On Sunday, Free Democrats (FDP) leader Christian Lindner extended an olive branch to the Greens. After avoiding any concrete coalition statement at the FDP party congress, he had a friendly exchange with the Greens chairman Robert Habeck on Sunday evening on the talk show "Anne Will." The FDP, which represents the interests of the financial oligarchy most openly, is predicted to secure 10 to 13 percent of the vote.

The Left Party has also been offering its services to secure a majority for a red-green federal government for weeks. Their involvement would not change the character of the alliance in the least. This is already evident in Berlin, Bremen and Thuringia, where the Left Party is in coalitions with the SPD and the Greens and is implementing the same ruthless policy in the interests of the financial oligarchy. Over the past few weeks, the leaders of the Left Party have repeatedly emphasized that they support NATO, the German army and missions abroad.

That is why even the house organ of the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, the *FAZ*, finds such a government constellation attractive. "It's not just cynics who say: If in doubt, social cuts can be implemented better and more credibly by left-wing governments—see the red-green agenda reforms from 2003 to 2005," the newspaper stated with regard to a possible red-red-green federal government.

Regardless of which color constellation prevails in the end, workers must prepare for far-reaching attacks on social services, an aggressive "profits before life" policy and the growth of militarism. This can only be prevented if the working class intervenes in political events on the basis of a socialist program. This is why the Socialist Equality Party (SGP) is running in the federal elections. Only a vote for the SGP is a vote against mass infection, fascism and war.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**