

SPD leader Lars Klingbeil calls for faster mass deportation of refugees from Germany

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1 February 2024

The German government is responding to the mass protests against the Alternative for Germany (AfD) by increasingly openly adopting the fascists' programme itself.

On Wednesday, Social Democratic Party (SPD) leader Lars Klingbeil called on the states to implement the offensive on the deportation of refugees decided by the federal government. "The federal states now have the possibilities, and they must utilise them," Klingbeil demanded in an interview with the *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung*. "The state must function when it comes to repatriating people who cannot stay with us."

On January 18, the Bundestag (federal parliament) passed the so-called "Repatriation Improvement Act" with the votes of the three coalition parties—SPD, Liberal Democrats (FDP) and Greens—which massively intensifies the attacks on refugees. Asylum seekers without the right to remain who have been living and working in Germany for years can now be picked up without warning, detained for almost a month and forcibly deported. The police are not only allowed to search their accommodation and mobile phones, but also the accommodation of neighbours without permission.

The law also criminalises anyone who helps refugees. In the future, those performing rescues at sea could also be prosecuted directly in Germany for aiding "illegal entry," even when it comes to rescuing minors. According to the human rights organisation Medico international, two expert reports have concluded "that the planned expansion of criminal liability would cover the rescue of children, of all things, with the draft law that has been passed."

With this new law, politicians are putting the far-right's deportation plans into practice. "Unlike the AfD, the German government does not need a secret meeting to discuss the mass disenfranchisement of people, it is simply proposing this as a law," commented Sea-Watch

spokesperson Oliver Kulikowski on the government's decision. "Threatening the rescue of children from distress at sea and the securing of basic needs at the borders with imprisonment" was "simply despicable," he said.

This amounts to the systematic enforcement of AfD policies. Just one month before the secret far-right meeting in Potsdam which triggered mass protests in January, Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) had already demanded on the front page of *Der Spiegel*: "We must finally deport people on a grand scale."

At European level, the ruling class is also implementing the refugee policy of the extreme right. On December 20, representatives of the EU member states, along with the European Parliament, agreed on a massive tightening of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The WSWS commented on the measures, praised by the AfD as "more decisive action against illegal migrants":

The day will indeed go down in history as the day on which the EU and its national governments openly adopted the anti-refugee programme of the far right. The implementation of the "solutions" approved by the EU means the abolition of the right to asylum, the extension of Fortress Europe, mass deportations and the detention even of women and children in deportation facilities similar to concentration camps.

The government is also preparing to legalise the deportation of German citizens with a migration background, which is being discussed by right-wing extremists. The Potsdam meeting was also about deporting "non-assimilated" Germans. For example, the government's new citizenship law demands a

commitment “to Germany’s special historical responsibility for the National Socialist [Nazi] reign of injustice and its consequences, in particular for the protection of Jewish life.” Citizenship can be revoked within 10 years in the event of any offences.

This has far-reaching consequences. By “special historical responsibility” and the “protection of Jewish life,” the government does not mean the fight against fascism and antisemitism, but rather unreserved support for Israel and its genocide against the Palestinians. In other words, the law creates the basis for depriving opponents of this genocide of their citizenship under the false accusation of anti-Semitism, and deporting them in line with the “remigration” plans of the far right.

These stricter laws and Klingbeil’s demand that they be vigorously implemented expose as pure hypocrisy all expressions of sympathy by government politicians for the mass protests against the right.

This also applies to the Christian Democrats (CDU), which had representatives at the Potsdam secret meeting and has particularly close political and personal ties to the AfD.

And the same applies to Klingbeil’s SPD and to Social Democratic head of state Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who warns against “extremist pied pipers” in his Sunday speeches, but in reality plays a key role in strengthening right-wing and fascist forces in Germany and throughout Europe.

Particularly notorious are Steinmeier’s meetings with the then-AfD leaders Alexander Gauland and Alice Weidel in Bellevue Palace in 2017, which are well documented, and his meeting as the then-foreign minister with the leader of the fascist Svoboda party and avowed anti-Semite Oleh Tyahnybok in the German embassy in Kiev during the pro-Western coup in 2014.

Moreover, the same applies to the Left Party and the Greens. The fact that they now try and present themselves as champions against the AfD does not change the fact that they actually support the government’s pro-war policy—or aggressively promote it in the case of the Greens—and implement the fascists’ anti-refugee programme wherever they share government responsibility at federal and state level.

Parallel to the secret meeting in Potsdam, the Greens held their party conference in Karlsruhe at the end of November, which advocated more deportations and the further dismantling of the right of asylum. The Left Party—especially in Thuringia, where its Minister President Bodo Ramelow used his own vote to appoint

AfD man Michael Kaufmann as vice president of the state parliament—is responsible for brutal deportations and high deportation rates.

In its New Year perspective, the *World Socialist Web Site* writes that, unlike in the 1930s, the rise of fascist parties and politicians is “far less a mass movement from below than the result of a universal shift to the right of the ruling class.”

This is also evident in Germany. In his book *Why Are They Back?* published in 2018, Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) Chairman Christoph Vandreier wrote, “Whereas in 1933 the conspiracy of the ruling elites was based on an existing fascist movement, today it is the other way round.” The growth of the AfD “is the result of such a conspiracy. It cannot be understood without analysing the role of the government, the state apparatus, the parties, the media and the ideologues at universities who are paving the way for it.”

The book not only demonstrates in detail how all bourgeois parties, from the CDU/CSU to the Left Party, have systematically created the social, political and ideological conditions for the rise of the AfD in recent years. It also explains that the revival of German militarism and fascism by the ruling class ultimately has the same objective causes as in the 20th century.

“Global capitalism has not solved any of the problems that led to the catastrophe in the 1930s. All social, economic and geopolitical contradictions are resurfacing with a vengeance,” writes Vandreier. Under these conditions, the ruling class, which brought Hitler and the Nazis to power in 1933 in order to arm Germany and prepare it for war and to brutally oppress the working class, is once again pursuing fascist policies.

The mass protests against the far-right in Germany show that workers and young people are not willing to accept this. But this opposition needs a clear perspective.

The decisive lesson from history is that the fight against fascism and war requires a fight against their cause in capitalism—and against all parties that defend this bankrupt system. What is needed is an independent revolutionary movement of the working class on the basis of an international socialist programme.



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