

How can the far right Alternative for Germany be fought?

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The European elections on June 9 strengthened the far right, which in future will make up around a fifth of the 720 members of the European Parliament (MEPs). In Germany, the fascistic Alternative for Germany (AfD) became the second-strongest party behind the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU), with 15.9 percent.

The shift to the right is particularly pronounced in eastern Germany, on the territory of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR). Here, the AfD emerged from the European elections as by far the strongest party with just under 30 percent. In Saxony and Thuringia, where the next election to the state parliament will be in September, it was well over 30 percent, while in Brandenburg, where elections are also due, it was slightly lower.

What is the reason for the rise of a party that continues in the fascist traditions of the Nazis?

Pseudo-left cynics are reacting to the election result by insulting the electorate. Arnold Schölzel, an old-school Stalinist, wrote in *Junge Welt*: “The election result is a disaster ... State-ordered murder of other peoples certainly has a mass base in this country. Apparently, the situation is similar in almost all EU countries.”

Former Greek finance minister Yanis Varoufakis, whose MERA25 party ran unsuccessfully in elections in Germany, Greece and Italy, lamented on X/Twitter: “Our sick societies, caught between the radical centre and neo-fascism, cannot help a dying Palestine, a war-torn Ukraine and our own people.”

This voter abuse is intended to distract from these parties’ own responsibility for the rise of the far right. This is not the result of a mass movement from below but of a shift to the right from above. The fascists are needed and strengthened by the ruling elites in order to push through their policies of imperialist war, genocide, social inequality and dictatorship. The entire European election campaign was characterised by this.

It is not the “masses” who support the “state-ordered murder of other peoples,” as Schölzel claims in the *Junge Welt*, but the establishment parties, from the coalition government parties—Social Democrats (SPD), Greens and Liberal Democrats (FDP)—to the CDU/CSU, the AfD and the Left Party. They all fully support the genocide that the Netanyahu regime is committing against the Palestinians in Gaza and denounce, suppress and criminalise any opposition to it.

The censorship, banning and violent dispersal of pro-Palestinian demonstrations characterised the entire European election campaign. Even academic teaching staff who defended the right of students to demonstrate were threatened with sanctions and the cancellation of funding. In this way, an authoritarian police state is being established that suppresses any form of social and political opposition; this strengthens the most right-wing forces and puts the AfD’s programme into practice.

The escalation of the war against Russia in Ukraine was at the centre of the election campaign. NATO is risking a nuclear war in order to bring Ukraine under its control and subjugate Russia militarily. During the

election campaign, French President Emmanuel Macron announced the deployment of French troops to Ukraine. Chancellor Olaf Scholz gave the green light for attacks on Russian territory using German weapons.

Varoufakis’ MERA25 and the Left Party also support the war in Ukraine.

The AfD, which favours rapprochement with Russia against the USA, was even able to present itself as an opponent of the war, although it also advocates aggressive militarism and support for NATO. Its European election manifesto advocates the immediate restoration of Germany’s defence capabilities, an increase in the defence budget, the extensive procurement of new weapons systems, the reintroduction of compulsory military service and the expansion of the German arms industry.

In terms of anti-refugee agitation, the core issue of the extreme right, all other parties sought to outdo the AfD on the right. Repelling asylum seekers was a central theme of the entire election campaign. The German government and the European Union are putting into practice what the fascists are demanding: The hermetic sealing of “Fortress Europe,” even if thousands die in the process.

The supposed “firewall” repeatedly invoked by the establishment parties against collaboration with the fascists is a farce. Giorgia Meloni, long-time admirer of “Il Duce” (Mussolini), is being fiercely courted by all European heads of government—above all by Germany’s Chancellor Scholz and EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

President Macron dissolved parliament after his party’s election defeat and rolled out the red carpet for the far-right Rassemblement National to come into government. In Ukraine, NATO is arming an ultra-right-wing regime that erects monuments to mass murderers and Nazi collaborators from the Second World War and brutally suppresses political opposition.

In the same way, the establishment parties will welcome AfD leaders Chrupalla, Weidel, Höcke and Co. into the ministries and state chancelleries of the federal and state governments. There is no political reason not to do so. Their policies already differ only in nuance.

With their right-wing policies, the establishment parties, especially the so-called “left” parties, have not only paved the way for the AfD, they have also created the conditions for the far-right demagogues to exploit the anger of desperate petty-bourgeois layers, and even workers, for their reactionary purposes.

Above all, the result of the European elections in Germany was a protest against the policies of the SPD, the Greens and the Left Party. With 13.9 percent, the SPD received its worst national election result in 137 years. The Greens fell from 20.5 percent to 11.9 percent. The Left Party lost more than half its share of the vote and ended up with 2.7 percent.

More than half of young voters under the age of 25 voted for parties that have never been in government. Five years ago, more than a third of them had voted for the Greens, now it was only 11 percent. They no longer perceive the Greens as an environmentalist party, but as a party of war.

Millions of workers, the self-employed, small business operators and young people have long seen the SPD, the Greens and the Left Party, and

the trade unions allied with them, as pioneers of social cuts and the enrichment of the wealthy. The Hartz laws, which introduced benefit cuts and worsened labour protections, the raising of the retirement age to 67, the cuts in health, education and social spending, the tax cuts for the rich and the billions in gifts to the banks and corporations all bear their hallmarks.

The federal coalition has supported the war in Ukraine with arms supplies totalling €23 billion and has increased the military budget from €68 to €91 billion since last year alone. It is passing these costs on to working people in the form of social cuts, reductions in real wages, exorbitant energy prices and unaffordable rents.

The opposition to this harbours enormous revolutionary potential. However, this is not finding conscious political expression within the existing institutions and parties. The AfD has been able to capitalise on the social catastrophe in part because the pseudo-left parties and organisations systematically prevent the anger and indignation with this situation from being directed against the entire ruling class and its bankrupt, capitalist system.

Yanis Varoufakis is the prototype of such pseudo-left politicians, who represent the interests of the rich and the wealthy middle-class layers under the guise of left-wing phrases. He became finance minister in Greece in 2015 after the Coalition of the Radical Left (Syriza) surprisingly won the elections with the promise to end the EU's austerity dictates.

Syriza formed a coalition government with the far-right Independent Greeks. Instead of ending the austerity, it reached an agreement with the representatives of the EU and international finance capital on an even worse austerity programme that decimated the living standards of the Greek working class. It prevented resistance to austerity from threatening capitalist property, and its betrayal then paved the way back to power for the right.

Varoufakis tried to repeat this con trick in the European elections. MERA25 presented itself as an opponent of the genocide in Gaza—but at the same time supported the European Union and the NATO war against Russia—although the EU, NATO and the USA are the driving forces behind the genocide.

In Germany, the Left Party, Syriza's political twin, has played a similar role for a long time. It emerged in 2007 as a reaction to the resistance against the Hartz laws, which it immediately began to suppress. In Thuringia, where it has provided the state premier for 10 years in the person of Bodo Ramelow, the social situation is catastrophic. "The issues of poverty and health inequality are omnipresent in Thuringia," according to a study by the Cooperation Network for Equal Health Opportunities.

Arnold Schölzel, a member of the Stalinist DKP (German Communist Party), was editor-in-chief of *Junge Welt* from 2000 to 2016. This publication has played a key role in covering up the rotten politics of the Left Party. It serves as a platform for various Stalinist and pseudo-left tendencies within and around the Left Party, who occasionally criticise one or another aspect of its policies but steadfastly maintain support for the party.

Now, the Left Party is sinking into insignificance. It had previously spat out the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW), a breakaway faction which competes with the AfD in terms of nationalism and hostility towards immigrants.

The fact that the AfD primarily receives protest votes against the war and social policies of the governing parties does not make it any less dangerous. The danger today does not stem from the fact that it is leading a radicalised, violent mass movement, like the Nazis before Hitler came to power. It comes from the fact that the AfD has intimate ties to the state and security apparatus and is systematically supported by the other parties.

Hans-Georg Maassen, who supported the AfD as head of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (as Germany's domestic secret service is called) while placing the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist

Equality Party) on the official list of supposed "left-wing extremist organisations," is just the tip of the iceberg. The growing influence of right-wing extremists and fascists is the result of the rightward development of the entire ruling elite. Massive rearmament, war and social inequality are not compatible with democracy. The suppression of social and political opposition requires fascist methods.

The fight against this is not a question of parliamentary arithmetic but of class struggle. The rise of the AfD cannot be stopped by voting for supposedly "democratic" parties. The policies of the SPD, Greens and Left Party have strengthened the AfD and will continue to do so if no one opposes them.

In France, where the prospect of a far-right government has met with fierce resistance, the pseudo-left La France Insoumise of Mélenchon, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the Greens have formed a "New Popular Front" (Nouveau Front Populaire-NFP). The NFP is a right-wing manoeuvre. It has expressly declared its willingness to continue President Macron's pro-war policy in the event of an election victory, with all the political and social consequences that entails.

The fight against the AfD requires the unconditional rejection of the SPD, the Greens, the Left Party, the BSW and the trade unions allied with them, which themselves advocate an extreme right-wing programme and suppress the class struggle. It requires the development of an independent movement of the working class and youth that combines resistance to war, fascism and social inequality with the struggle against their cause, capitalism.

The conditions for such a movement are developing rapidly. The scale of the social crisis and discontent is enormous. But this movement needs a clear perspective and a political leadership that knows how to unite the international working class in the struggle for a socialist programme. This leadership is being built by the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei and the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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