

Germany's interior minister launches new attacks on refugees and migrants

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The Merz government, a coalition of the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and Social Democrats (SPD), is taking substantial action against refugees. On Wednesday, the cabinet approved two legislative proposals by federal Interior Minister Alexander Dobrindt (CSU), which, in the style of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), focus on isolating rather than integrating migrants.

The first law completely halts family reunification for two years for people entitled to subsidiary protection. This mainly affects those who fled years ago from countries ravaged by war and civil war. They have usually been well integrated into working life here for a long time: as doctors or technicians, on the railways or in the catering industry. They were unable to live with their families in their country of origin because they were in danger of life and limb. Now they are being deprived of the last opportunity to bring their spouses and children to join them.

Pro Asyl calls it a “family destruction law” and describes it as a “catastrophe for people who have fled war and persecution.” The Lower Saxony Refugee Council calls the law “terrible and unacceptable in terms of human rights” and comments: “The draft law is suitable for destroying families that have already been torn apart by flight, often over long periods of time, and are now to remain separated for further years by the authorities.”

Dobrindt's second bill is also explicitly directed against the improved integration of migrants. It abolishes a regulation that previously allowed “particularly well-integrated” migrants to apply for naturalisation after just three years instead of five. Both laws still require the approval of the Bundestag (parliament), in which the AfD is the largest opposition party.

Of the 388,000 refugees who have been granted subsidiary protection status by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bamf), many are from Syria. Increasingly, they must now fear their own deportation. On Wednesday evening, in an interview with Dunja Hajali, presenter of the “heute-journal tv news” programme, Chancellor Friedrich Merz (CDU) said, “The Syrians in particular can now go back for the most part. And we want to promote this.”

This is also supported by the SPD, which is part of the Merz government. Dirk Wiese, secretary of the SPD parliamentary group, gave assurances that the social democrats were united behind Dobrindt's domestic policy course. Hakan Demir, an SPD parliamentarian from Berlin Neukölln, expressed understanding for criticism of the proposed legislation in a radio interview “when people say that families are being torn apart.” But nevertheless, concluded, “We have made compromises.” The new coalition had decided to do so.

In reality, the SPD fully shares Merz and Dobrindt's AfD course. In January, former federal Interior Minister Nancy Faeser (SPD) had already threatened to deport thousands of Syrians living here. In addition, the SPD State Secretary for the Interior in Berlin, Christian Hochgrebe, expressly emphasised that the presumption of innocence could not apply in the “legal field of immigration and residence law”—a view that is diametrically opposed to general human rights.

The extent to which social democrats and right-wing extremists have now come closer together politically can also be seen at European level. The social democratic Danish head of government, Mette Frederiksen, has written an open letter together with the neo-fascist Italian government head, Giorgia Meloni, attacking the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg for blocking deportations, and they are also

demanding a review of the European Convention on Human Rights.

In the letter, Frederiksen and Meloni claim that the “protection of their own population” was more important than the individual rights of migrants. The letter has now also been signed by the heads of government of Poland, Belgium, Austria, Estonia, Latvia, the Czech Republic and Lithuania.

What they shared with Meloni was “patriotism,” Frederiksen told a Copenhagen newspaper. The Dane, who has been pursuing an austerity and law-and-order policy in her country for years, has many admirers in the German SPD.

Even the *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, a monthly political magazine whose editors include Jürgen Habermas and Dan Diner, has praised Frederiksen and defended her from accusations of adopting the xenophobic premises of the right-wing populists. Instead, she was safeguarding the welfare state in a reality characterised by global crises, praised *Blätter* author Troels Heeger. Frederiksen was “currently attempting a remarkable experiment: the rediscovery of the broad centre.”

The aim of radical right-wing politics is to divide the working class and to make migrants and refugees the scapegoats for the social deterioration caused by the pro-war policies of those in power and the greed of the super-rich. At the same time, the attacks on migrants serve to prepare attacks on the entire population and to further step up the repressive powers of the state.

The Merz government, which favours war, cannot tolerate any resistance from its own population. Since taking office three weeks ago, Chancellor Merz has been travelling from one war summit to the next, further entrenching the military “new era” initiated by his predecessor Olaf Scholz (SPD). On the same day that the cabinet approved Dobrindt’s migration laws, Merz received the Ukrainian head of government Zelensky and granted him a further €5 billion in war aid.

Merz relies on the fact that as his coalition partner, the SPD fully supports his political course. While CSU Interior Minister Dobrindt is focussing on isolating migrants and the establishment of a police state, it is up to the SPD to carry out the attacks on the working class. Vice-Chancellor Lars Klingbeil (SPD), who is also finance minister, and Labour and Social Affairs

Minister Bärbel Bas (SPD) are tasked with pushing through social cuts, austerity measures and harsher labour regulations, such as longer working hours, etc., in close cooperation with the trade unions. Meanwhile, Defence Minister Boris Pistorius (SPD) is in the process of making the whole of society “fit for war.”

When it comes to migration and refugee policy, all the establishment parties—from the AfD, CDU/CSU and SPD to the Left Party—are moving sharply to the right, while the media is creating the chauvinistic atmosphere needed for imperialist war policy.

The role of the Left Party is to cover up all this. It criticises the new laws wherever its criticism has no effect. But when it comes down to brass tacks, the Left Party proves to be a force for the state, as with its approval of the €1 trillion war package and most recently in the election of the chancellor. Even when Bodo Ramelow was the head of government in Thuringia, the Left Party was already brutally deporting refugees.

Only the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) categorically rejects any tightening of asylum law. Equal rights for all! We defend the right of every worker to live and work with their families in the country of their choice.

We appeal to all workers, students and young people: Defend refugees and democratic rights! Do not let yourselves be divided. The fight against war, fascism and social cuts requires the unity of the working class across all national borders. Take part in building rank-and-file defence committees in the factories! And build the SGP and the International Committee of the Fourth International with us!



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