

# Former Left Party leader calls for collaboration with far-right AfD

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Sahra Wagenknecht, a former leading member of the Left Party, who split to form the anti-migrant BSW, is calling for closer political cooperation with the far-right and fascist Alternative for Germany (AfD) and for it to participate in state governments. In several interviews and video statements, she argued that the previous policy of political exclusion and the rhetoric about a “firewall” were “wrong, undemocratic and counterproductive.”

For the upcoming state election in Saxony-Anhalt, Wagenknecht proposed a coalition of the Christian Democrats (CDU) and AfD. She described it as absurd that in the state capital Magdeburg, the CDU was forming a three-party coalition with the Social Democrats (SPD) and Liberal Democrats (FDP)—both of which received less than 10 percent of the vote (SPD 8.4 percent; FDP 6.4 percent)—just to keep the AfD, which obtained 20.8 percent, out of government.

This would not be the first time that the Saxony-Anhalt state government initiated a political transformation. In the early 1990s, the so-called “Magdeburg model” brought the PDS—later renamed Die Linke (Left Party)—into government for the first time in the sparsely populated region along the Elbe, encompassing former industrial centres such as Halle and Bitterfeld-Wolfen.

Now, Wagenknecht is proposing a new Magdeburg model to introduce AfD participation in government. At every opportunity she emphasises her willingness to converse with the AfD, even at federal level. She told the German Press Agency, “If you ask me whether I would speak with Mr. Chrupalla if there were a specific reason—such as the conversation between parliamentary group leaders in Thuringia—then yes, of course.”

At the end of June, Frank Augsten, the leader of the BSW state parliamentary group in Thuringia, held a two-hour conversation with AfD parliamentary group leader Björn Höcke, head of the far-right wing of the AfD and legally permitted to be publicly described as a fascist. Augsten, a former leading Green Party member for over 30 years, only joined the BSW last year.

Both Höcke and Augsten described the meeting as constructive and solution orientated. They reportedly discussed lifting AfD blockades in the appointment of lifetime judges. The dialogue is due to continue after the summer break, although no further details have been disclosed.

In Thuringia, the AfD holds 32.8 percent of the vote, making it by far the strongest party with 32 seats in the state parliament, thereby commanding a blocking minority. The BSW is part of a coalition together with the CDU and SPD. Wagenknecht opposed joining that government after last September’s election, because combined AfD and BSW votes constituted a majority greater than that of the CDU, SPD and Left Party combined. From opposition, AfD and BSW could effectively dominate government policy.

Wagenknecht dismisses reports of collaboration with the AfD as a “phantom discussion” but simultaneously insists that political exclusion of the AfD must come to an end.

Media reports have described the dialogue between the AfD and BSW, alongside simultaneous denials of closer collaboration, as “summer theatre.” It is suggested that Wagenknecht is seeking media attention during the quiet holiday season, having lost her national platform after narrowly failing to clear the 5 percent threshold in the federal election—BSW achieved 4.98 percent.

However, this interpretation is superficial. Wagenknecht’s rapprochement with the AfD is real and reflects a rapid shift to the right across all parties and the entire political establishment.

Since the federal government adopted the largest rearment programme since the Nazi era and aligned all aspects of its policy around preparations for war and military support for Ukraine in NATO’s conflict with Russia, announcements of massive social cuts and austerity measures across all areas of society have become daily occurrences. This policy of rearment, financed by social rollbacks, is incompatible with democratic structures and is transforming traditional political relationships.

The AfD was deliberately cultivated, promoted in the media and supported by far-right networks within the state security apparatus and intelligence services, with the aim of steering growing popular opposition to rearmament and social cutbacks into a racist, nationalist channel—and suppressing it. This development was enabled by the right-wing policies of nominally “left-wing” parties—the SPD and Greens—which previously opposed war and advocated social improvements. Today, these parties are the main drivers of war and the Left Party differs only in that it conceals its support for government policy behind rhetorical gestures about diplomacy instead of war and greater social justice.

That the AfD is now being integrated more deeply into government through a splinter group from the Left Party is not as surprising as it originally appears. Collaboration between parties that label themselves left or even socialist and far-right parties has happened before. The Greek sister-party of Die Linke, Syriza, provides the best example.

Ten years ago, in January 2015, Syriza, the “Coalition of the Radical Left,” came to power on mass support, promising to end the EU’s brutal austerity policies—especially those imposed by the German government—implemented by previous PASOK and ND administrations.

Immediately after its election victory, Syriza abandoned any claim to being left-wing, formed a coalition with the far-right “Independent Greeks” (ANEL), and promptly implemented all austerity packages demanded by the European Commission, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund—the “troika.” These included 15 pension cuts, wage reductions, tax increases, job losses and budget cuts in social services, education and healthcare. The catastrophic effects on the Greek working class persist to this day.

At the time, we wrote:

Even in the entire squalid history of “left” petty-bourgeois politics, it is difficult to find an example of deceit, cynicism and truly disgusting cowardice that quite matches that of Prime Minister Tsipras. Certainly, from the standpoint of the time that elapsed between election and betrayal, the Syriza government has probably set a new world record.

Today, the Left Party and its BSW splinter group are playing a similar role, with each focusing on different aspects. While Sahra Wagenknecht and her BSW advocate for the AfD to be more closely involved in government, the

Left Party positions itself as a supposed opponent of the AfD and seeks to channel growing opposition to fascism and anti-refugee agitation into the political cul-de-sac of an imaginary reform of capitalism.

Left Party officials such as Heidi Reichennek, whose political discourse is limited to left-wing platitudes, are attempting to convey the impression that all issues—military rearmament, mass social cutbacks, mass redundancies, environmental destruction, etc.—can be solved within the current capitalist framework.

As though she were trying to disprove the pamphlet *Reform or Revolution?* by the great Marxist Rosa Luxemburg, the Left Party preaches reforming capitalist exploitation and augments the policy of war with calls for more diplomacy, while resolutely rejecting any revolutionary socialist perspective.

Wagenknecht combines her defence of capitalism with extreme nationalism and hysterical xenophobia, and her approach aligns directly with AfD ideology. At her party conference in January, she attacked the parties in the Bundestag (federal parliament) from the right, accusing them of selling out German interests and submitting to Washington. Strikingly, she did not condemn the fascistic programme of the AfD, but rather its close collaboration with Donald Trump and his then-adviser, the multibillionaire Elon Musk.

To applause, Wagenknecht pronounced, “Perhaps the AfD should rename itself from Alternative for Germany to ‘Armament for Donald.’” Because, in essence, “that is roughly what their current programme is: arming for Donald.”

It remains unclear how far the collaboration between the BSW and AfD will extend, but Wagenknecht has already made clear that she is prepared to do whatever is necessary to realise her nationalist agenda. Die Linke, her former party, is not an alternative—it is part of the shift to the right.



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