

Oppose austerity, war and fascism!

## Berlin state election: Socialism, not war

**Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei**

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The Socialist Equality Party (Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei, SGP) is standing in the Berlin state election in September. We oppose the all-party coalition for war and social spending cuts. Together with our sister parties in the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), we are building a worldwide movement to stop the madness of war, mass layoffs and wage cuts.

The social misery in Berlin—growing poverty, skyrocketing rents, crumbling schools and hospitals, job losses—is part of a global crisis of capitalism that can only be ended by all workers joining together in struggle around the world, especially in the United States.

We counterpose the international unity of workers to national unity with the capitalists and their parties. We reject the capitalist logic of profit and fight for the expropriation of the big corporations, banks and billionaire fortunes in order to organise the economy under democratic control according to the needs of society.

### No Third World War! Stop the war in Ukraine and the genocide in Gaza!

The world is on the brink of catastrophe. American imperialism threatens to devastate the entire globe. US President Trump no longer even bothers to conceal his predatory actions. He openly declares that he has invaded Venezuela and could bomb Iran in order to plunder their oil reserves and weaken China. Meanwhile, Trump is also threatening his former European allies, imposing punitive tariffs and seeking to annex Greenland.

His war policy is accompanied by brutal violence against the American people. Trump is attempting to establish a dictatorship, deploying the army domestically and terrorising entire cities with his ICE Gestapo. ICE not only hunts down immigrant workers but also executes US citizens in broad daylight and is building a massive surveillance apparatus. This cannot be explained solely by Trump's madness. He represents the interests of the fabulously wealthy financial oligarchy, whose greed for profit is no longer compatible with the needs of the people and with democracy.

The ruling circles in Germany and Europe are following the same path. Their answer to "Make America Great Again" is "Deutschland über alles." According to Chancellor Merz, Germany must learn to speak "the language of power politics" again. To this end, over a trillion euros are being poured into rearmament and the expansion of military infrastructure, conscription is being reintroduced and the war in Ukraine is being continued by hook or by crook.

Eighty years after the Nazis' war of extermination, the government is proclaiming that Germany must be in a position to defeat the nuclear-armed power Russia within three years. To defend the profits of German

corporations, it will stop at nothing: from unconditional support for the genocide of the Palestinians to alliances with the bloodthirsty rulers of the Gulf states.

War is incompatible with democracy. As in the United States, Germany's powers that be are also establishing a police state and strengthening the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) by implementing their inhumane migration policy to the letter and preparing for their participation in government. Opponents of the genocide in Gaza are being censored, persecuted and imprisoned. The Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Germany's main domestic spy agency, is being expanded into a new Gestapo. At the European Union level, conservatives, social democrats and Greens have long been working closely with the fascists.

The war policy is supported by all parties in the Bundestag (Federal Parliament). The AfD was the first to call for an increase in military spending to 5 percent of GDP; the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats are rapidly implementing this goal; and the Greens do not think it goes far enough. They are calling for a more aggressive course against Russia and the US. The Left Party has also approved war credits in the Bundesrat, Germany's upper chamber of parliament, and supports the Merz government whenever it needs their votes.

When it comes to German economic and great power interests, the Left Party and the Greens unreservedly support the government. In his speech opening the current parliamentary session as the longest-serving member of the Bundestag, Left Party founder Gregor Gysi demanded that Europe must "become a kind of fourth world power." During the Greenland conflict, Left Party leader Jan van Aken demanded that the federal government "make it clear to the US who's boss." Green Party leader Felix Banaszak calls for "European sovereignty, European resilience, European strength," including military strength.

The unity among all the established parties shows that the madness of war is an inevitable result of the blind alley of the capitalist system. In their hunt for raw materials, markets and profits, the banks and corporations will stop at nothing—neither the workers in their own countries nor their international rivals. And all the parties that defend capitalism support them in this. As in 1914 and the 1930s, capitalism is once again leading to fascism and war.

Our goal is therefore not to reform capitalism but to abolish it. Every day proves anew that the capitalist system of society is bankrupt and produces only social destruction, war and environmental catastrophe. We are fighting for a socialist society that serves the needs of the majority and not the profit interests of the rich.

**Against mass layoffs, wage cuts and social spending cuts! Build rank-and-file committees!**

Workers are paying for the costs of rearmament and trade war with social spending cuts, mass layoffs and ultimately with their lives.

In order to prepare German industry for trade war, the big corporations are organising a gigantic jobs massacre. Last year alone, 160,000 industrial jobs were destroyed in Germany. And that is only the beginning. Artificial intelligence is being used to destroy jobs, increase workloads and squeeze higher profits out of shrinking workforces. Under socialist conditions, this revolutionary technology would serve to eliminate strenuous and dangerous work, poverty and social misery.

Merz proclaims: "We can no longer afford the welfare state." Business associations are demanding longer working hours and complaining about "high labour costs." In fact, society can no longer afford billionaires! Over the past 15 years, the wealth of the 500 richest individuals in Germany has nearly tripled to €1.16 trillion. That is more than twice the entire budget of the Federal Republic. In addition, the speculative frenzy on the financial markets threatens to drag the entire economy into the abyss—as in the Great Depression, when the unemployment rate reached 30 percent.

Two-thirds of the federal government's multibillion "investment booster" went to the richest 1 percent of the population. The states and local authorities bear the brunt of these costs. Their coffers are being plundered to enrich the rich and finance rearmament. At the same time, spending on welfare benefits, pensions and healthcare is being slashed.

The result is dilapidated schools, overburdened hospitals and ailing public services. This is particularly evident in Berlin. Privatisation and cutbacks have driven public services into collapse, and now the Christian Democrat/Social Democrat state government, known as the Senate, is organising the next round of cuts. It is cutting over €600 million from public transport, around €200 million each from hospitals, universities and housing subsidies and €56 million from environmental protection.

To stop this war and austerity offensive, the masses themselves must intervene in political events, break the power of the banks and corporations, and fundamentally democratise society. They must counter growing nationalism with the international unity of workers. That is why we call for the establishment of rank-and-file committees in all workplaces, neighbourhoods and schools, which will unite internationally and lead the fight against mass layoffs, cuts and war.

### The Left Party supports war and austerity

With unmatched cynicism, the Left Party, of all parties, now claims that these problems can be solved by electing its top candidate, Elif Eralp, as governing mayor. The social catastrophe in Berlin was organised by the Left Party and its predecessor, the PDS, which were members of the state government for 16 years between 2002 and 2023. In the name of budget consolidation, they cut tens of thousands of public sector jobs, reduced wages and salaries, undermined collective bargaining standards and imposed massive cuts in education, social services and healthcare. Particularly devastating was the sale of 150,000 municipal flats to financial investors, which led to skyrocketing rents and a housing shortage.

Eralp's declared role model is the new mayor of New York, Zohran Mamdani. This should be a warning to workers and young people. Mamdani owed his election to massive opposition to Trump and the financial oligarchy—and immediately betrayed his voters. His first official acts were a "productive" meeting with Trump at the White House and the abandonment of his promised tax increase for the super-rich.

The Left Party also supported Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, who owed his election to opposition to the EU's austerity policies and, barely

in office, implemented the harshest austerity programme ever in Greece. The Left Party will act in the same way and continue its policy of cuts, for it defends capitalism and supports the policy of war.

It would also be fatal to believe that a vote for the Left Party would prevent the rise of the AfD. The opposite is true. With its austerity measures in the name of left-wing politics, the party is paving the way for the right wing. In Thuringia, Bodo Ramelow has left a trail of social devastation in his 10 years as minister-president, which has cleared the path for Höcke's AfD. War policies require fascist methods, which is why the Left Party supports the arming of the police, mass deportations and the dismantling of democratic rights. Only a political counteroffensive by the workers can stop the shift to the right.

### Workers need their own international party!

The objective basis for such a counteroffensive exists. The trade war is putting fierce class struggles on the agenda. In the United States, the murders of Renée Nicole Good and Alex Pretti by the ICE Gestapo have sparked a massive wave of protest. France, Italy, Greece and numerous other European countries have also been repeatedly shaken by massive waves of strikes and protests.

Workers in Europe, the United States and the whole world are the natural allies of German workers. They face the same problems and the same international corporations. But the trade union bureaucrats, who have long since degenerated into co-managers and support the policies of war and trade wars, are doing everything they can on both sides of the Atlantic to isolate and suppress the struggles nationally. But they are succeeding less and less.

The decisive task is to give the class struggle, which is international in its very essence, an international form and a socialist perspective that does not accept the logic of capitalist exploitation. This requires a political struggle against the defenders of capitalism—it requires the building of a new workers' party. Just as the ruling class is reviving its reactionary traditions of imperialism, war and fascism, the working class must revive its revolutionary, socialist and internationalist traditions.

These Marxist traditions—from August Bebel, to Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, the Russian October Revolution and Leon Trotsky, who founded the Left Opposition against Stalinism and the Fourth International—are embodied in the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), whose German section is the SGP.

That is why it is so important now to support the SGP's participation in the election. We do not seek lucrative positions but will use the election and seats in Berlin's House of Representatives to oppose the warring parties. We warn of the enormous dangers and organise resistance against them.

It is time to take action and build a new mass socialist party that will eliminate capitalist evils once and for all. We call on everyone who refuses to accept glaring social inequality, the destruction of the health and education systems and the nuclear annihilation of our planet: Share this statement as widely as possible and help the SGP with your signature to participate in the election today!



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