

Berlin State Election 2026: Socialism Instead of War

Against austerity, rearmament and fascism

Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei
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The danger of a nuclear war has never been greater than today. The Merz-Klingbeil government is rearming on a scale not seen since Hitler and is brazenly preparing for a war with Russia, a nuclear-armed power. The cost of this madness is being borne by the workers through mass redundancies, cuts to social services and, ultimately, with their lives.

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) is standing in the Berlin House of Representatives elections to oppose this warmongering, which is being pursued by all the parties in the Bundestag, and to build a socialist movement. We declare openly: A catastrophe can only be prevented if the masses themselves intervene in political affairs and put an end to capitalism and its logic of profit.

A tiny financial oligarchy dominates the global economy and subordinates all areas of society to its profit interests. Its power is the cause of war, social inequality and dictatorship. That is why the banks, corporations and multi-billion fortunes must be expropriated, placed under democratic control and used for the benefit of the people. This requires a workers' government that reorganises economic life on the basis of social needs rather than private profit.

Here in Berlin, it is particularly clear what the consequences of the subordination of all areas of society to profit interests and preparations for war are. Growing poverty, skyrocketing rents, dilapidated schools and hospitals and job cuts are the result of a deliberate austerity policy designed to fund rearmament. At the same time, youth officers from the Bundeswehr (German Armed Forces) are being sent into schools, war propaganda is being peddled at universities and anti-war demonstrations are being attacked.

We are standing up to this madness in the House of Representatives elections! We do not make hollow appeals to the warmongers, nor do we beg for handouts. We are organising resistance against redundancies, pay cuts and cuts to social services and, together with our sister parties in the International Committee of the Fourth International, we are building a global movement against war and its root cause, capitalism.

Register now as an active supporter of our election campaign and join the fight for socialism!

No to Third World War! Stop the war in Ukraine, the attack on Iran and the genocide in Gaza!

Preparations for a full-scale war with Russia are far more advanced than is publicly acknowledged. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz and Defence Minister Boris Pistorius have long stated that Germany must be capable of waging war against a nuclear-armed power within the next three years. To this end, they are setting into motion the largest military build-up since the Second World War. Spending on the military and war-critical infrastructure is skyrocketing to over €200 billion a year. The

German government is reintroducing conscription, converting industry into a war economy, and making society as a whole “fit for war” under the banner of “total defence.”

Germany is de facto already at war with Russia. It is Europe's largest supplier of arms to Ukraine and, together with Ukraine, produces the missiles and drones used to attack the Russian heartland. The NATO powers have systematically provoked the reactionary Russian invasion of Ukraine and are continuing to escalate the war in order to plunder Ukraine, subjugate Russia and gain access to its vast natural resources.

Following the invasion of the Soviet Union, the Wehrmacht committed the worst crimes in human history. The ruling elite is today reviving this criminal tradition once again, thereby risking a nuclear war that would reduce not only Germany and Europe but the whole world to rubble and ashes.

The issues at stake here are not “peace,” “defence” or “international law,” but—just as 85 years ago—pure profit and power. This is evident from the fact that the German government is simultaneously supporting the US criminal attack on Iran and the genocide in Gaza, which Israel is extending to Lebanon. US President Trump does not even make an effort to conceal the brutality of these wars. He has openly threatened to “bomb Iran,” with its 93 million inhabitants, “back to the Stone Age” and to commit other war crimes of historic proportions. He is even laying claim to territory belonging to former allies.

Ruling circles in Germany and Europe are no more “democratic” or “peaceful” than those in the US; rather, they are following the same path. Their response to “Make America Great Again” is “Deutschland über alles.” Germany, according to Chancellor Merz, must learn once again to speak “the language of power politics.” To this end, more than €1 trillion is being poured into rearmament and the expansion of military infrastructure, conscription is being reintroduced, and the war in Ukraine is escalating on a massive scale.

Our rejection of NATO's war against Russia does not imply support for the Putin regime and its reactionary war. Putin represents the interests of the Russian oligarchs who enriched themselves through the dissolution and plundering of the Soviet Union. His nationalist programme has nothing progressive to offer in the face of the imperialist offensive. The invasion of Ukraine has divided the working class and provided NATO with a justification for its imperialist war.

The SGP is fighting for the immediate and unconditional release of the socialist anti-war activist Bogdan Syrotyuk. Our comrade, a leading member of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists, has been held captive for over two years on false charges by the NATO-backed regime in Kiev. His actual “crime” is that he opposed the Zelensky dictatorship and the war, and called for the unity of Ukrainian and Russian workers against their respective capitalist governments. For this, he was charged with high treason.

Together with the International Committee of the Fourth International and the *World Socialist Web Site*, the SGP is leading a worldwide

campaign for his freedom. The struggle to free Bogdan embodies the central socialist task in this war: the unification of workers in Ukraine, Russia and worldwide against nationalism, imperialism and capitalism.

The SGP categorically opposes the rearmament of the Bundeswehr. It serves not to defend the population but the profits and predatory aims of German capital. It is linked to the destruction of the population's means of subsistence and exposes the whole of humanity to the danger of nuclear annihilation.

We demand the immediate withdrawal of all German troops from Eastern Europe and from all overseas missions, an end to military aid for Ukraine and Israel, the dissolution of NATO and the abolition of compulsory military service. We reject the conversion of civilian production to arms production. Existing industrial and technological capacities must be utilised to build housing, hospitals, schools and a modern public infrastructure.

War and militarism cannot be combated through pacifist appeals to the warmongers but only by stripping them of their power. The policy of war is not simply the result of wrong decisions by individual politicians. It stems from the deep crisis of capitalism, which, as in the 20th century, is once again leading to war and barbarism.

Workers have nothing to gain from war but everything to lose. We therefore oppose growing nationalism and war with the international unity of the working class. Instead of allowing themselves to be pitted against one another and shooting at one another, workers must unite across all borders in the struggle against capitalism.

Against mass redundancies, wage cuts and cuts to social benefits! Build rank-and-file committees!

War and trade wars are waged on the backs of the workers. To prepare German industry for trade war, the big corporations are orchestrating a massive job cull. Last year alone, 160,000 industrial jobs were destroyed in Germany. And that is only the beginning.

Capitalists use artificial intelligence to destroy jobs, intensify the pace of work, and squeeze higher profits out of shrinking workforces. Under socialist conditions, this revolutionary technology would serve to radically shorten the workday, eliminate strenuous and dangerous work, and enable all people to enjoy a high standard of living, both culturally and materially.

Merz declares: "We can no longer afford the welfare state." Business associations are demanding longer working hours and complaining about "high labor costs." In reality, society can no longer afford the billionaires. Over the past 15 years, the wealth of the 500 richest people in Germany has nearly tripled—to €1.16 trillion. That is more than twice the size of the entire federal budget.

Moreover, the speculative frenzy on the financial markets threatens to drag the entire economy into the abyss—as during the Great Depression, when unemployment reached catastrophic proportions and the ruling class took refuge in fascism and world war.

Two-thirds of the federal government's multi-billion "investment booster" went to the richest one percent of the population. States and municipalities are bearing 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, overcrowded hospitals and crumbling public services. This is particularly stark in Berlin. Privatisation and budget cuts have driven essential public services to the brink of collapse, and now the Christian Democrat/Social Democrat state government, known as the Berlin Senate, is organising the next round of cuts. It is

slashing more than €600 million from public transit, around €200 million each from hospitals, universities and housing subsidies, and €56 million from environmental protection.

At the same time, Berlin is being transformed into an "arms capital." Dozens of tech companies that originally conducted research for civilian applications are switching to military drone technology. In the heart of Wedding, Rheinmetall is producing artillery ammunition in a former auto parts factory—the first arms production in a densely populated Berlin working class neighbourhood since World War II. Education Senator Günther-Wünsch has also signed a cooperation agreement with the Bundeswehr that grants youth officers privileged access to classrooms.

The SGP is fighting to defend every job and against all cuts to wages, pensions, healthcare, education, culture and public infrastructure. But this struggle cannot be left to the union bureaucrats, who act as co-managers alongside corporate executives, enforcing layoffs and wage cuts and supporting rearmament.

That is why we call for the formation of independent rank-and-file committees in all workplaces, neighbourhoods, schools and universities. These committees must take decision-making out of the hands of corporate executives and union officials and organise the struggle against layoffs, cuts, and war policies. To unite workers across companies and national borders, we have launched the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC).

To stop the war and austerity offensive, the masses themselves must intervene in political affairs, break the power of the banks and corporations and democratise society from top to bottom.

All political parties support war and austerity

The rule of the financial oligarchy and its waging of war are incompatible with democratic rights. That is why demonstrations against the genocide in Gaza are banned, critical artists are pressured, and opponents of the war are silenced. Surveillance is being expanded, the police and intelligence services are being militarised, and the entire state apparatus is being prepared to suppress growing social opposition.

The capitalist parties are direct tools of the super-rich. They all defend capitalist property and therefore support the policies of war and austerity.

The CDU and SPD are implementing this military buildup with bureaucratic cold-bloodedness and destroying the last remnants of the welfare state. The former pacifists of the Greens have become the worst warmongers. They criticise the government from the right, demand an escalation of the war against Russia and call for even more rearmament.

The fascist Alternative for Germany (AfD) is not in "opposition" to these policies; rather, it takes them to the extreme. It is not a "peace party." Even during the Bundestag election campaign, it called for an increase in military spending to 5 percent of gross domestic product—a goal that is now being implemented by the federal government.

The AfD wants to beef up the state apparatus and brutally suppress any opposition to militarism and social spending cutbacks. Its smear campaign against refugees serves this purpose. It blames the most vulnerable members of society for the social catastrophe resulting from the enrichment of the rich and rearmament. A government including the AfD would, like its ally Trump in the US, enforce the interests of the rich with extreme brutality. It is not an alternative but rather the most aggressive proponent of war policies and the dictatorship of the financial oligarchy.

That is why the AfD was systematically built up, and that is why its program is being put into practice by all parties in the Bundestag. Within the CDU, SPD and FDP, calls for cooperation with the fascists—a practice long in place at the EU level—are growing. Sahra Wagenknecht's BSW is

even offering itself to help secure majority support for an AfD “government of experts.”

In the last federal election, the Left Party received many votes because it had clearly spoken out against Merz’s collaboration with the AfD and was the only party in the Bundestag that had not participated in the smear campaign against refugees. Yet no sooner had it been elected than it enabled that same Merz to be swiftly elected chancellor. At its last party convention, it even resolved to form coalitions with the CDU, ostensibly to stop the AfD. One might as well ally with an arsonist to put out a fire.

In fact, it is precisely the Left Party’s right-wing policies that have strengthened the AfD. Wherever the party has been part of the government, it has, in the name of left-wing politics, supported social cuts, the expansion of the state apparatus and wage cuts—thereby paving the way for the AfD. In Thuringia, where the Left Party held the office of Minister-President for 10 years, the AfD stands at 40 percent in the polls.

In the Bundesrat, Germany’s second chamber of parliament, the Left Party also voted in favour of war credits amounting to trillions and has repeatedly and emphatically endorsed Germany’s genocidal national policy. Its former co-leader, Jan van Aken, even cheered the assassination of Iranian government officials by the US.

In Berlin, the Left Party is running Elif Eralp as its lead candidate and promising to solve the social catastrophe. This cynicism is hard to beat. The Left Party and its predecessor, the PDS, were part of the Berlin state government for 16 years, cutting tens of thousands of public sector jobs, slashing wages, undermining collective bargaining standards and selling off 150,000 municipal apartments to financial investors. They themselves created the social misery from which Berlin suffers today.

Eralp’s stated role model is New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani, who owed his election to massive opposition to Trump—and whose first official act was a “productive” meeting with Trump at the White House. The Left Party will act the same way: grandiose promises during the campaign, betrayal the day after.

The AfD cannot be fought in alliance with such “democrats.” It is the sharpest expression of how the capitalist crisis is driving all parties further and further to the right. The struggle against the AfD therefore requires a break with all capitalist parties and the independent political mobilisation of the working class on the basis of an international socialist program.

It is time to oppose the bankrupt profit system with an egalitarian, democratic and socialist society.

Workers need their own international party—Build the SGP!

The objective foundations for a socialist counteroffensive are in place. The trade war is putting fierce class struggles on the agenda. In the US, a powerful movement against Trump is taking shape. Millions of people protested at the “No Kings” demonstrations, and hundreds of thousands of workers are fighting back with strikes. France, Italy, Greece and numerous other European countries have also repeatedly been shaken by massive waves of strikes and protests.

The workers of Europe, the US, and the entire world are the natural allies of the workers of Germany. They face the same problems and the same international corporations. But the union bureaucrats—who have long since degenerated into co-managers and support the policies of war and trade warfare—are doing everything in their power, on both sides of the Atlantic, to isolate and suppress these struggles at the national level. Yet they are succeeding less and less.

Production today is globally integrated. The working class is, in its daily existence, an international class. The technological and material conditions for overcoming poverty, hunger and social hardship have never

been greater. Yet under the rule of the financial oligarchy, these immense productive capabilities are being harnessed for war, surveillance and private enrichment.

What is missing is political leadership: an international socialist party that gives the spontaneous struggles of the working class a conscious perspective, unites them across national borders and prepares them to seize political power.

The decisive task is to give the class struggles—which are international in their very nature—an international form and a socialist perspective that rejects the logic of capitalist exploitation. This requires a political struggle against all defenders of capitalism—and the building of a new revolutionary workers’ party.

Just as the ruling class is returning to its reactionary traditions of imperialism, war and fascism, the working class must return to its revolutionary, socialist and internationalist traditions.

This Marxist tradition—from August Bebel, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, through Lenin and the Russian October Revolution, to Leon Trotsky, who founded the Left Opposition against Stalinism and the Fourth International—is embodied today by the International Committee of the Fourth International, of which the SGP is the German section.

That is why it is so important now to support the SGP’s election campaign. We do not seek lucrative positions or participation in a government with the parties of war. We use the election campaign to warn workers of the enormous dangers, provide them with a socialist program, and organise resistance against war, dictatorship and social inequality. We will use every seat we win in the House of Representatives as a platform for this struggle.

It is time to take action and build a new socialist mass party that will eliminate the evils of capitalism once and for all.

We call on all workers, young people, students, renters and anti-war activists who refuse to accept glaring social inequality, the destruction of the healthcare and education systems, the rise of the AfD, and the looming threat of nuclear annihilation of our planet:

Support the SGP’s election campaign! Circulate this election statement! Organise meetings in workplaces, schools, universities and neighbourhoods! Build independent rank-and-file committees! Register as active supporters and join the SGP!

Make the Berlin election the starting point for an international socialist movement against war, austerity and fascism!



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