

The fight against the Alternative for Germany demands a fight against capitalism

Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei
4 September 2026

On Sunday, voters in Saxony-Anhalt will decide whether the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) will, for the first time, provide the minister-president of a German federal state.

The consequences would be a surge in violence against migrants, Jews and the left, increased police surveillance and repression, a frontal assault on education and culture and the rehabilitation of the Nazi regime. Even the Bauhaus in Dessau, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, would not be safe from the rampage of these far-right barbarians.

How did it come to this? Without answering this question, the advance of the far right in Saxony-Anhalt and throughout Germany cannot be stopped.

The rise of the AfD is a symptom, not the cause, of the problem. It is riding a wave of right-wing sentiment that it did not set in motion but that has deep social roots.

A ruling class that mobilises hundreds of billions for war and rearmament to make Germany “fit for war” again, after two catastrophic world wars in the 20th century, while robbing millions of workers of their jobs, wages, pensions and social benefits ultimately needs the fascists. This agenda cannot be implemented by democratic means. That is why all the established parties are strengthening the state apparatus, attacking democratic rights and intensifying the crackdown on refugees. In fact, the very same parties now canvassing for votes with the promise of stopping the AfD have paved the way for its rise and are preparing to collaborate with it.

When Donald Trump won the US presidential election for the second time in November 2024, the *World Socialist Web Site* wrote: “He is not a political accident...the coming to power of a second Trump administration represents the violent realignment of the American political superstructure to correspond with the real social relations that exist in the United States.” The same applies to Germany and the rise of the AfD.

For four decades now, the working population has been subjected to relentless attacks on their incomes and social rights. Germany is now home to more than 200 dollar billionaires, around 5,000 ultra-rich individuals with fortunes exceeding 100 million dollars, and over 700,000 dollar millionaires. This financial elite, which together accounts for less than 1 percent of the population, owns just under 53 percent of total financial assets. At the other end of the social

spectrum, 21.2 percent are affected by poverty or social exclusion; in Saxony-Anhalt, the figure is as high as 24.1 percent.

In eastern Germany, this redistribution took on particularly brutal forms. Following the reunification of the GDR (German Democratic Republic) with the Federal Republic, the Treuhand—founded by the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the predecessor of the Left Party—destroyed over 12,000 businesses, either winding them up or selling them off to speculators for a pittance. Millions of people lost their livelihoods.

In 2003, the Schröder-Fischer government dismantled the remaining social welfare system through Agenda 2010, condemning countless workers to low wages. Now, the Merz-Klingbeil government is escalating the war against Russia, pouring hundreds of billions into rearmament and making the working class foot the bill through drastic cuts to pensions, healthcare and education. With mass job losses in the car industry and other sectors, it is robbing young people of any future prospects.

Social relations are stretched to the breaking point. The anger and outrage towards the established parties is palpable and is reflected in all the opinion polls. It is directed against job destruction, falling real wages, social insecurity and a policy of war for which the population is expected to pay. Yet the AfD is able to exploit this explosive mood—which actually leans to the left—through demagoguery, because the nominally left-wing parties are pursuing policies that are deeply anti-worker.

The Social Democrats (SPD) and the Greens, like the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU), stand for war, rearmament and cuts to social services. The trade unions and the Left Party also essentially support these policies and suppress social resistance.

Just three days before the election, IG Metall agreed to the loss of a further 50,000 jobs at Volkswagen. Its fear of resistance from the workforce was so great that it brought forward the crucial supervisory board meeting by one day in a cloak-and-dagger operation. The message was clear: in the fight for jobs and incomes, the trade union is on the side of capital.

The Left Party is doing its utmost to channel resistance against the AfD into the orbit of the parties that paved the way

for it. It voted in the Bundesrat in favour of the war credits proposed by the Merz-Klingbeil government and regularly makes deals with it when it is needed. In Saxony-Anhalt, it has explicitly declared its support for a CDU-led minority government should the AfD fail to secure a majority of its own. Such a government would further strengthen the AfD.

The AfD is exploiting the political vacuum on the left for its reactionary ends. It poses as an anti-war party, even though it supports military rearmament and the strengthening of domestic repression and was the first to advocate a defence budget of 5 percent of GDP. It promises better pensions, even though it advocates a strict austerity budget and adherence to the debt brake. And it seeks to divide the working class by blaming refugees and migrants for the social crisis.

In fact, the AfD embodies the interests of the financial oligarchy in their purest form. Like its role model and supporter Donald Trump, it strives to establish a dictatorship that intimidates and suppresses all social, political and cultural opposition to capitalism.

The CDU—as well as the SPD, the Greens and the Left Party—will have no problem forming a pact with this party. Their talk of a “firewall” serves primarily to create false illusions. The deep crisis of global capitalism, the imperialist struggle for raw materials and markets, support for the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, and the suppression of the class struggle once again call for fascist methods, just as they did in the 1930s.

In Ukraine, the Merz-Klingbeil government supports and finances the Zelensky regime, which venerates Nazi collaborators and mass murderers from the Second World War as heroes, bans socialist parties and has sentenced the anti-war activist Bogdan Syrotiuk to 15 years in prison for “high treason.” Anyone who forms an alliance with such forces will also collaborate with the fascists in their own country and rehabilitate Nazism.

In fact, this process is already in full swing. As early as 2014, the political, media and academic establishment rallied behind the far-right historian Jörg Baberowski when he trivialised Hitler and the Nazis. In 2020, the Thuringian CDU, in alliance with the AfD, elected the Free Democrat Thomas Kemmerich as Minister-President, while the “Left Party” Minister-President Bodo Ramelow used his vote to help AfD MP Michael Kaufmann secure the office of Vice-President of the Thuringian State Parliament. Merz himself, who is now being courted by all parties as a supposed “anti-AfD” chancellor, ordered his parliamentary group to pass a motion in the Bundestag in 2025 in collaboration with the fascists.

In other European countries, too, the bourgeoisie is bringing forward far-right parties. In Italy, the neo-fascist Giorgia Meloni has remained in office longer than any previous Italian prime minister because she is supported by all the key sections of the bourgeoisie. In France, the ruling class is rallying behind Marine Le Pen’s Rassemblement National.

This lurch to the right cannot be halted by parliamentary manoeuvres involving the governing parties. What is needed is an independent offensive by the working class, directed against war, social spending cuts and their root cause, capitalism. Such an offensive would deprive the AfD of the social ground on which it currently spreads its demagoguery, and would lay bare the class divisions: the AfD does not represent the interests of ordinary people, but stands on the side of capital, militarism and the authoritarian state.

The objective conditions for such an offensive are developing rapidly. Resistance to the German government’s policies of war and austerity is growing. What is lacking is an independent socialist perspective and leadership. The struggle against the AfD requires a political break with the Left Party and the trade unions, which are endeavouring to chain the working class to the rotting corpse of dying capitalism.

The Socialist Equality Party (SGP) is standing in the Berlin House of Representatives elections on September 20 to build such a movement. It does not make hollow appeals to the warmongers, but organises resistance against redundancies, pay cuts and social spending cuts, and, together with its sister parties in the International Committee of the Fourth International, is building a worldwide movement against war and capitalism.

The SGP calls for the establishment 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 boards and trade union officials, organise the struggle against redundancies, cuts and war policies, and unite across workplace and national borders within the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC).

We appeal to all those who are not prepared to accept the rise of the AfD and the increasingly dangerous escalation of war: Join this struggle! Study the SGP’s programme and perspective! Distribute it among your friends and colleagues! Support our election campaign financially and become a member of the SGP!



To contact the WSW and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact