

How to stop the far-right Alternative for Germany

Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei
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This leaflet was distributed on September 12 at the “Sterndemonstration” in Berlin—organised by an alliance of 80 organisations under the slogan “It’s time things changed.”

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) is also holding an online meeting on Tuesday, September 15, 2026, at 7p.m.: “What is the AfD, and how can it be defeated?” The link to join will be made available shortly before the meeting begins on this website. Everyone interested is invited to take part in the discussion.

Anyone who wants to fight the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) must understand who is responsible for its recent victory in the Saxony-Anhalt state election. No one should be fooled by talk of a “firewall,” by which the establishment parties supposedly refuse to form coalitions with the AfD or rely on its votes to pass legislation, at either state or federal level. It is precisely the governing parties at federal and state level who have *paved the way* for the far right and will work with them too.

The Merz-Klingbeil government, a coalition of the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and Social Democrats (SPD), is pouring hundreds of billions of euros into arms and war, cutting pensions and health and education spending, destroying jobs on a massive scale in industry and public administration, expanding the police and surveillance apparatus, deporting refugees from war and defending the profits and wealth of the rich. Germany has more than 200 dollar billionaires and 5,000 super-rich individuals with a fortune of over \$100 million each, while more than one in five people at the bottom of society live in poverty.

Massive social inequality, mass unemployment and militarism are incompatible with democracy. Capitalism is in its deepest global crisis since the 1930s, and its only answer is more exploitation and war. The struggle for markets, raw materials and world power is driving the imperialist powers into a third world war, which continues to unfold and spread. Its front lines run through Ukraine, the Middle East and around China.

This is why the financial oligarchy is promoting and supporting fascistic forces. Donald Trump, Giorgia Meloni, Marine Le Pen and Javier Milei embody this international development, which is not stopping at the German border

either.

This is precisely why it is impossible to fight the AfD in an alliance with parties that are themselves continuing to move further to the right. They are once again rearming Germany to become Europe’s leading military power and are driving forward the confrontation with Russia. The federal government has spent more than €100 billion [US \$116 billion] on the war in Ukraine and is investing hundreds of billions more in rearmament. In doing so, it is continuing the disastrous traditions of German imperialism, which twice—first under Kaiser Wilhelm and then Hitler—tried to enforce its economic and geopolitical interests through military force.

In doing so, Berlin is cooperating with a regime in Ukraine that venerates fascist collaborators of the Nazis from World War II as national heroes. Organisations and individuals who took part in the murder of Jews, Poles and communists are being glorified by the Ukrainian state. At the same time, the Zelensky regime is banning opposition parties and persecuting opponents of the war. The young Trotskyist Bogdan Syrotiuk was sentenced to 15 years in prison, despite having committed no offence. His only “crime” was to campaign on the *World Socialist Web Site* against the war and for the unity of the Ukrainian and Russian working class against Putin and Zelensky.

In Germany too, the political shift to the right has been systematically prepared from above. It began long before the AfD itself became a significant political force. When the federal government announced the “end of military restraint” in 2014 and initiated a return to great-power politics, a campaign to revise German history began at the same time. The right-wing extremist historian Jörg Baberowski declared in *Der Spiegel* that Hitler had “not been cruel.” When the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) criticised this trivialisation of the crimes of the Nazis, university leaders, the media and representatives of the establishment parties lined up behind Baberowski.

The same pattern was seen with Pegida and later with the AfD. Right-wing and xenophobic positions were increasingly normalised in politics and the media, while refugees and migrants were made scapegoats for the social crisis. Pegida was courted as a movement of “concerned citizens,” and the then

president of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, Germany's domestic intelligence agency, Hans-Georg Maaßen, advised the AfD and defamed the SGP and other left-wing organisations as “enemies of the constitution.”

The AfD is not a protest movement “from below.” It emerged from the establishment political apparatus. Thirty-seven of its 151 Bundestag (parliamentary) members—like its lead candidate in Saxony-Anhalt, Ulrich Siegmund—were previously members of the CDU/CSU or the FDP (Liberal Democrats). The AfD is escalating a policy that has been prepared by the establishment parties and is, in essential respects, already implemented.

A central responsibility for the growth of the AfD lies with the trade unions, the SPD and the Left Party. They are preventing the widespread opposition to war and social inequality from finding any left-wing expression. They support the policies of war, layoffs and social cuts, and suppress resistance to them. This is what allows the AfD to pose as a social opposition and anti-war party.

The SPD has transformed itself into a right-wing, pro-capitalist party. In the Merz government, it is complicit in rearmament, austerity and social cuts.

In the struggle over jobs and incomes, the trade unions stand on the side of the corporations. IG Metall demonstrated this once again just three days before the Saxony-Anhalt state election, when, behind the backs of the workforce, it agreed to the destruction of 75,000 jobs at Volkswagen and the closure of four plants.

The Left Party is an expert at talking “left” while acting right. Its predecessor, the PDS, played a central role after 1990 in providing political cover for the reintroduction of capitalism in East Germany, and in channelling the outrage over the destruction of East German industry into safe channels.

It later entered state governments itself and continued this policy of savage cuts. In Berlin, the SPD-Left Party Senate (state executive) under Klaus Wowereit bailed out the Bankgesellschaft, sold off vast numbers of public housing units to speculators, cut wages in the public sector and eliminated tens of thousands of jobs. In Thuringia, it continued the policies of the establishment parties for 10 years under Left Party State Premier Bodo Ramelow.

Sahra Wagenknecht, too, whose anti-migrant BSW (Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance) is now openly courting right-wing voters and helping to prop up the AfD, was a leading member of the Left Party for more than 30 years before founding her own party in 2024.

The AfD has exploited the betrayals by the trade unions and Left Party to its own advantage. Many of those who voted for it are not convinced fascists but did so to protest against the policies of war and austerity being implemented by the establishment parties. That does not make the AfD any less dangerous. It represents the interests of capital in a particularly aggressive form. The congratulations sent by Donald Trump and Elon Musk on its election victory in Saxony-Anhalt speak a

clearer language than its mendacious election promises.

The AfD cannot be stopped through an alliance with the parties that paved its way. Yet this is precisely the policy of the Left Party, which now wants to vote for a CDU State Premier in Magdeburg. Such a policy would not weaken the AfD but strengthen it further.

The Left Party also supports a ban on the AfD, as called for by, among others, State Premiers Cem Özdemir (Greens) and Hendrik Wüst (CDU). Banning a party that has won 44 percent of the vote would mean fighting the AfD by restricting democratic rights, which would ultimately strengthen the fascists. The judiciary, police and intelligence services, which are themselves riddled with right-wing extremists, would gain even more power—power they would inevitably turn against left-wing opponents of war and capitalism.

The AfD can only be stopped by an independent offensive of the working class directed against war, social cuts and their underlying social cause, capitalism. Such a movement would deprive the AfD of the social grounds on which its current demagoguery rests.

This requires a political break with the Left Party and the trade union apparatuses that bind the working class to the existing capitalist order. These ossified, pro-capitalist apparatuses cannot be transformed through pressure into organisations that represent the interests of the working class.

The objective conditions for a working-class offensive are developing rapidly. Resistance to the federal government's policies of war and austerity is growing. What is missing is an independent socialist perspective and leadership.

The SGP is standing in the Berlin state election on September 20 to fight for such a perspective. It makes no hollow appeals to the warmongers, but is organising resistance to layoffs, wage cuts and social cuts.

It defends the rights of migrants and refugees, fights for the expropriation of the major corporations and large fortunes and for the reorganisation of the economy according to the needs of society rather than the profit interests of the corporations. Together with its sister parties in the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), it is building a worldwide movement against war and capitalism.

Vote SGP on September 20! Study our election programme and read the *World Socialist Web Site*! Get in touch with the SGP and become a member!



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