

“Krach against Nazis”—The latest election fraud by Berlin’s Social Democrats

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Before the election to the Berlin House of Representatives, allegations of corruption have been levelled against the Social Democrats’ (SPD) lead candidate, Steffen Krach. The Hanover Public Prosecutor’s Office is investigating the politician on the basis of initial suspicions of accepting undue advantages in two cases, as well as in a further case concerning anti-competitive collusion in tendering procedures, the breach of trade secrets and a breach of the duty of confidentiality under the Limited Liability Companies Act. On 9 September, searches were carried out at Krach’s flat in the Schöneberg district of Berlin, the SPD’s regional headquarters in Wedding, and also at Krach’s former workplace in Hanover, where he served as regional president.

Krach denies all the allegations. In a TV interview shortly after the searches, he explained that the matter might concern a party donation to the SPD from the Hanover region, which had been made by a company that was simultaneously participating in a public tender process in the healthcare sector. According to Krach’s account, on the day after he became aware of this donation in January 2026, he immediately instructed that it be refunded. He said that he had asked the state headquarters to present him personally with details of donations from the Hanover region, because he feared that a targeted donation might serve to portray him as corrupt.

Based on the circumstances known so far, the *World Socialist Web Site* is unable to assess whether this is a dirty election campaign manoeuvre on the part of rival factions within the ruling class seeking to take revenge on Krach, or whether the allegations are substantive in nature and have been raised justifiably.

In any case, workers and young people should not allow themselves to be misled by the events of the past week. Instead, they should examine Krach’s political track record, which provides them with a clear picture.

In the election campaign, Krach presents himself as a candidate for the mayoralty, portraying himself as someone who cares about the most superficial everyday concerns. He claims to practise “politics based on common sense rather than ideological blinders,” he says he will “send out the rent police to crack down on rent gouging” (while concealing the fact that the SPD and the Left Party together sold off 150,000 state-owned flats to private investors), and he “will ensure that a 30 km/h speed limit becomes standard outside nurseries and schools.”

True to the unspoken motto “Why should I care about my policies of yesterday?,” he evidently assumes that Berliners have forgotten which party has held government responsibility—and thus taken the lead in social cuts, job losses and militarisation—for the greater part of the last thirty years at federal, state and many district levels: the SPD.

And last but not least, Krach is portraying himself as a supposed fighter against the far right. At several campaign appearances, he wore a red T-shirt bearing the slogan “Krach against Nazis.” The SPD has had campaign material produced featuring this slogan; stickers bearing the slogan can be found here and there on Berlin’s lampposts.

But “Krach against Nazis”? Nothing could be further from the truth.

Just how little this posturing has to do with a fight against right-wing politics is already evident from Krach’s support for the campaign against the Russian House in Berlin. While he strictly opposes the expropriation of large property developers, he posed in front of the Russian cultural institution on Friedrichstraße holding a placard bearing the slogan: “We can expropriate here, dear Left Party! Are you in?” In his accompanying Instagram post, he claimed that the Russian House was “used primarily for propaganda,” offered no added value for cultural and academic exchange, and should be boycotted.

In doing so, Krach placed himself at the forefront of the campaign against the Russian House in a particularly repugnant manner and supported the ideological mobilisation for the German military offensive against Russia. The cynical twist in his campaign stunt was to reject the expropriation of large property developers, while turning the seizure of a Russian cultural institution into the subject of a flippant anti-Russian campaign stunt.

No less telling was the reaction of the Left Party. Its Member of the Bundestag, Caren Lay, replied to Krach in the comments on Instagram with “Well then, let’s get on with it!” and merely called on the SPD to agree to a motion by the Left Party to establish a property register. Not a word against the campaign against the Russian House or against the anti-Russian warmongering. Instead, Lay treated Krach’s cynical provocation as a run-of-the-mill election stunt and countered with a parliamentary proposal of her own. Right-wing cynics among themselves, who will jointly pursue their anti-social and right-wing agenda should they be in a position to form a government after the election.

A look at Krach’s track record as Berlin’s State Secretary for Science and Research from 2016 to 2021 also paints a picture entirely different from that of a down-to-earth fighter against the far right. Not only did Krach fail to stand up to the Nazis at the time, but he made himself a willing accomplice of Berlin’s neo-fascists. At the AfD’s instigation, Krach brought legal proceedings against elected student representatives at Humboldt University after they had publicly taken a stand against right-wing professors. The aim of the legal action was to force the student representatives to hand over to the AfD lists containing the real names of the current student council and all representatives from the previous ten years (!).

What took place? In January 2018, Alternative for Germany (AfD) deputy Martin Trefzer tabled a “parliamentary inquiry” in the Berlin House of Representatives concerning the student representative bodies at Berlin’s major universities. Among other things, he called for the disclosure of student structures and the naming of both current student representatives and all those who had served over the past ten years.

While the university management at the Free University (FU) and the Technical University (TU) refused to enforce this demand against their student representative bodies, the HU management, under President Sabine Kunst, demanded that the HU’s RefRat, the official student representative council, disclose the representatives’ real names.

Understandably, the RefRat refused to disclose the identities of its representatives so as not to expose them personally and politically to the far right. Consequently, in August 2018, the HU management filed an action for disclosure against the student representatives before the Berlin Administrative Court. The university management thus took legal action against the elected political representatives of its own student body.

Given the history of right-wing terrorism in Germany, it is well known what such lists of names of anti-fascist activists regularly serve when in the hands of right-wing extremists: they become the starting point for persecution, incitement to hatred, political and physical attacks, and even murderous acts, as the NSU terror has devastatingly demonstrated.

However, it was not until a year after the action for disclosure—in July 2019—that it came to light that the initiative for this lawsuit did not simply originate directly from the HU management, but had been ordered from higher up: by Steffen Krach in his capacity as State Secretary for Science and Research. In a letter dated 13 July 2018, he instructed the HU Executive Board to exercise legal oversight over the student council.

It was therefore Steffen Krach, the lead candidate of the Berlin SPD, who sought not to take legal action “against Nazis,” but rather, in collusion with the Nazis of the AfD, to have anti-fascist students at Humboldt University sued.

The lawsuit was preceded by a failed ideological project by the far-right professor Jörg Baberowski at the HU. Under the title “Dictatorships as Alternative Forms of Government,” the professor of Eastern European history at the HU had attempted to establish a research centre explicitly designed to highlight the merits of dictatorial rule. The legal action against the student representatives at the HU came just as funding for the project had been rejected by the HU’s Academic Senate due to opposition from the student body.

For understandable reasons, the SPD’s lead candidate is keeping quiet about all these events in the current election campaign. After all, “Krach in the service of the Nazis” would not be a winning election slogan for the SPD.

Realistically, Krach currently has no chance of actually becoming Berlin’s new Governing Mayor after 20 September. According to the latest polls, the SPD is barely reaching double-digit percentages. Yet his harsh crackdown on student protests and his support for the anti-Russian war campaign clearly do not stand in the way of cooperation with the Left Party. After all, the Left Party candidate, Elif Eralp, has also made it clear that, regarding the genocide in Gaza, she stands on the side of Israel and German national interests.

One cannot provide a comprehensive account of the current investigations into Steffen Krach without addressing one final point: his downright whingeing TV interview about the search of his home.

Visibly distraught, he spoke about it in front of a crowd of microphones and cameras. His mobile phone had been seized, he explained. He was evidently not remanded in custody.

In view of all those people in Berlin who have been criminalised, wrongly suspected and marginalised, one must seriously ask: what on earth is this man whingeing about?

Over the past three years, the Berlin state government has carried out countless house searches on innocent people whose supposed offence was to have demonstrated against the genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza—and this in Berlin of all places, the very city from which the Holocaust, the greatest genocide in history, was planned and ordered.

Just as regularly, preferably under cover of darkness, countless refugees and their families are raided by the police out of the blue, forcing them to leave their homes at a moment’s notice, be taken to the airport and deported from there. Between 2016 and 2021, while Krach was a member of the Berlin state government, a total of 7,420 people were deported from the state of Berlin, according to official figures. That is an average of three to four people per night—roughly the size of a small family.

None of these people were given the opportunity to describe their now truly desperate situation in front of rolling TV cameras and in response to sympathetic questions from journalists, let alone to be able to move freely through the capital again just a few hours later. And a similar fate soon threatens Ukrainian refugees, who are to be used as cannon fodder in NATO’s proxy war against Russia. Foreign Minister Wadehul, whose Christian Democrats are the SPD’s coalition partner at federal level, publicly threatened just last week that the authorities possess data on conscript-age Ukrainians in Germany regarding their social security benefits, registration status and residence permits.

It remains to be seen how the corruption allegations against Krach will develop in the near future. But there is no need to wait for that. Workers and young people should base their stance on Krach and the Berlin SPD on the party’s political track record and reject Krach—and the SPD—with all the contempt that this party has so diligently earned over the last three decades.



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