

German Morenoites tie workers and young people to the right-wing policies of the Left Party

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Following its victory in the Berlin state election, the Left Party is preparing to form a government with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Greens that will not end the capital's rightward political course but continue it. At its special party congress last Friday, delegates voted by a wide majority to enter into exploratory talks with the two parties. Lead candidate Elif Eralp declared that the Left Party had a "huge responsibility" that it must now assume. The SPD and the Greens have since also agreed to exploratory talks.

A particular role in this is played by the Morenoite Revolutionary Internationalist Organisation (RIO), whose members joined the Left Party and its youth organisation earlier this year. While RIO does speak out against a Left Party-SPD-Green state government, at the same time it orients the opposition towards remaining within the Left Party and strengthening what it calls the party's "left-wing forces." Its own account of the Left Party's record—social cuts, rearmament, privatisations and the strengthening of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD)—does not lead the organisation to advocate a political break. Instead, it chains workers and young people to a party whose right-wing, anti-worker politics it knows full well.

The Left Party's special congress made clear what it understands by "responsibility." The Left Party is not merely allying itself with parties that stand for rearmament, deportations and social cuts; it is itself part of this policy. Its record in Berlin and other federal states, as well as its trajectory on foreign and military policy, prove this.

In the Berlin Senate (state executive), where the Left Party's predecessor, the PDS, governed in coalition with the SPD, the two parties imposed massive cuts in the public sector from 2002 to 2011, eliminated jobs and privatised large stocks of public housing. This course was continued by the SPD-Left Party-Green Senate from 2016 to 2021. Despite the Left Party's election victory, in which many workers and young people voted for it as a supposed lesser evil, this is widely known. In its current coverage of the government formation, even the news programme Tagesschau recalls that the Left Party of that time was "partly responsible for the sale of tens of thousands of public flats" and a "rigid austerity course."

The party has also become ever more integrated into official policy on militarism. In 2025, Left Party members of state governments in Bremen and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania voted in the Bundesrat, the upper house of parliament, for the constitutional amendment financing the massive rearmament programme. As early as 2013, its then foreign policy spokesman, Stefan Liebich, was involved in drawing up the strategy paper "New Power—New Responsibility," which called for a more active international and military role for Germany. The paper laid the basis for the return of German militarism and for the new war policy that the Left Party has, at its core, supported ever since.

The Left Party's most recent congress in Berlin continued this course. This was especially evident in the so-called antisemitism debate, which since the election has taken a central place in the out-and-out smear campaign against pro-Palestinian and Israel-critical voices within the Left Party, and which aims to defame and criminalise any opposition to the genocide in Gaza as "antisemitic."

The Left Party leadership itself is joining the chorus of rabble-rousers in official politics and the media. Berlin co-chair Kerstin Wolter admitted "mistakes" by her party. In the Middle East debate, she said statements had been made that crossed the line and frightened Jewish people. Where this had happened, it had not been done in the name of the Left Party, and the party needed to address the cases in question.

Eralp sang from the same hymn sheet. "Jewish people must feel safe in our city," she declared, as if criticism of Israel threatened the lives of Jewish people in Berlin. She also announced that she wanted to "strengthen the diversity of Jewish life and combat antisemitism." At the same time, she once again condemned remarks made at a Left Party event in Neukölln, where a rapper had used the slogan "Death to the IDF" to denounce the Israeli military's role as the enforcer of the genocide against the Palestinians. Such remarks, she said, were unacceptable.

Even before the actual coalition negotiations begin, the party leadership is making clear that it is prepared to discipline oppositional voices in its own ranks in order to prove its fitness to govern. The Left Party's rightward shift is not being imposed on it from outside. It is carrying out this shift itself and is prepared to lead a Left Party-SPD-Green coalition that is, at its core, right-wing and hostile to workers.

It is precisely against this background that the role of RIO takes on particular significance. It knows the reactionary character of a new government perfectly well. Its own articles since the election read, in places, like an indictment of the Left Party.

In its online publication *Klasse Gegen Klasse (Class Against Class)*, RIO writes: "Even the Left Party itself acknowledges that, under the given conditions, budget cuts will hardly be avoidable. A Left Party-led Senate therefore risks repeating the same experience as the SPD-PDS Senate of the 2000s, which cut spending 'until it squeaked' and carried out mass privatisations, outsourcing and wage cuts."

RIO recalls that, after the referendum on expropriating Deutsche Wohnen and other housing corporations, the SPD-Left Party-Green Senate dragged its feet on implementation. It asks itself why a new version of that government should act any differently, given that the SPD and the Greens have simultaneously been driving rearmament at the federal level. RIO is also entirely clear-eyed about the Left Party's own pro-militarist course, pointing, among other things, to the votes by Left Party members of the Bremen and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania state governments in favour of the war credits in the Bundesrat.

RIO also names the Left Party's reactionary role in the rise of the AfD. In Thuringia, it notes, government policy under a Left Party state premier did not prevent the AfD's rise but "practically paved the way" for it.

RIO describes the potential coalition partners it is courting in Berlin, the SPD and the Greens, as "pro-rearmament, pro-deportation and pro-cuts parties."

So, RIO knows exactly what kind of party it is dealing with. It knows that in government, the Left Party has cut wages, eliminated jobs, privatised housing and carried out massive social attacks. It knows that it is helping to sustain the largest German rearmament drive since Hitler. It knows that this policy does not prevent the rise of the extreme right but prepares the ground for it.

And yet RIO's conclusion is that workers and young people must not break with this party and organise themselves politically independent of it.

The opposite is the case.

RIO declares that the "role of a left-wing party" must lie "in opposition." There, it says, the Left Party can fight for expropriations, organise mobilisations and call for political strikes. The class character of a party is thereby summarily turned into a question of which side of the aisle it sits on in parliament. The very same party that in government imposes cuts and rearmament is to be suddenly transformed, in opposition, into an instrument of the class struggle.

A second RIO article published after the election makes this orientation even more nakedly clear. Opponents of a coalition government are explicitly urged to organise themselves within the structures of the Left Party and its youth organisation. Motions should be tabled, deputies pressured and votes organised within the "grassroots organisations." RIO describes the "Left within the Left Party" network as a possible "important starting point" for the opposition.

This is the core of RIO's politics. The talk of strengthening the "left-wing forces" within the Left Party is aimed at preventing the necessary political break with this party and a genuine fight against the policy of cuts and war.

RIO presents the Left Party as a "contradictory" organisation which, although it pursues right-wing policies could be forced onto a different course through pressure from below, street mobilisations and the strengthening of its supposedly left-wing base. In this way, a capitalist party preparing to take office once again is given a left-wing cloak.

In reality, there is nothing progressive about the Left Party, and its character can no more be changed by "pressure from below" than that of any other capitalist party.

Its roots lie in the SED, the Stalinist ruling party of the GDR (East Germany), which oppressed the working class for decades and organised the capitalist restoration in 1989-90. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Stalinist bureaucracy transformed itself into a bourgeois force, secured property rights and integrated itself into the reunified German state. In doing so, it carried the nationalist and anti-Marxist character of Stalinism to its ultimate conclusion.

As resistance to the consequences of the Schröder government's Agenda 2010 intensified, the PDS, the successor party to the SED, merged in 2007 with the Electoral Alternative for Labour and Social Justice (WASG) to form the Left Party, in order to absorb and neutralise that resistance. The WASG was an alliance of former SPD and trade union officials who feared that because of its right-wing policies, the SPD was no longer capable of suppressing the class struggle. Since then, the Left Party has established itself as a permanent fixture of the capitalist profit system and plays a key role for the ruling class in channelling and suppressing growing political and social resistance.

The fact that the Left Party won many votes in Berlin, and that there are also workers, young people and members within its ranks who genuinely want to fight against rearmament, cuts or the genocide in Gaza, changes nothing. It is precisely these layers that RIO seeks to politically disarm.

Instead of explaining to them that their opposition is incompatible with the politics and character of the Left Party, it urges them to remain within its structures and fight there for a supposedly different course.

This was precisely the purpose of RIO's entry into the party earlier this year. At the time, the organisation explicitly stated that it wanted to strengthen the "left-wing forces" within the party. Even then, it already knew that the Left Party had supported rearmament and that the party leadership was oriented towards further coalition governments with the SPD and the Greens.

Previously, *Klasse Gegen Klasse* had itself attacked the Left Party over cuts, outsourcing, deportations and police violence, and had described its deep integration into the state. The Left Party's role has not changed, as RIO itself now admits. Yet the pseudo-left tendency has since become an integral part of the Left Party.

This orientation is not a misunderstanding or a tactical error. It corresponds to RIO's social and historical orientation.

RIO is not a Trotskyist workers' tendency, but stands in the tradition of Morenoism, a current that broke with the Fourth International in 1953 and has repeatedly adapted itself, throughout its history, to bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces. From the late 1950s, Nahuel Moreno's organisation Palabra Obrera (Workers' Word) carried out systematic entrism into the bourgeois-nationalist Peronist movement. It even adopted Peronist symbolism and officially placed itself "under the discipline" of Perón.

Since then, Moreno's political successors in Latin America and internationally have repeatedly subordinated the independent perspective of the working class to bourgeois-nationalist and decidedly pro-capitalist forces. Throughout, the same decisive fundamental question has always posed itself: is the growing opposition of workers and young people to be organised independently of the established capitalist parties and the trade unions, or is it kept within their structures?

RIO clearly opts for the latter.

This course corresponds to the interests of those better-off petty-bourgeois layers which comprise the social milieu from which pseudo-left organisations draw their political orientation. They make use of radical language about "class struggle," "revolution" and "pressure from the street," while rejecting the independent political mobilisation of the working class against the existing "left" capitalist parties and institutions.

The Left Party's election victory in Berlin makes the function of this kind of politics especially visible. Many workers and young people voted for the Left Party out of opposition to the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the AfD, spiraling rents, social cuts and militarism. The party leadership is now using this vote, with the help of its pseudo-left supporters, to pave the way for a state government with the SPD and the Greens and to suppress an independent political fight against it.

This exposes RIO's formula of "left-wing forces" within the Left Party as a reactionary fraud. It does not serve to move the Left Party to the left, but to prevent oppositional layers from drawing the necessary political conclusions from its right-wing politics and developing an independent socialist perspective. This is precisely what the orientation towards the "Left within the Left Party" is all about. It is not meant to free the working class from the Left Party, but to protect the Left Party—and with it German capitalism and imperialism as a whole—from the working class.



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