Berlin: Die Linke congress votes overwhelmingly for right-wing coalition with Greens and SPD

Christoph Vandreier
6 November 2026

The contrast could not have been starker. At the same time as around 15,000 young people in Berlin, and 120,000 nationwide, took to the streets to protest against war and the social catastrophe, Die Linke (Left Party) met on Saturday for a Berlin state congress to pave the way for a coalition with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Greens. In power, this will push ahead with social cuts and step up the repressive powers of the state.

Many of the protesters had voted for Die Linke in September, hoping it would at least halt the cuts and give a voice to resistance to the genocide in Gaza. The state congress showed that Die Linke is doing precisely the opposite—and that there is no serious resistance to this within the party.

More than 90 percent of the 152 delegates voted to open coalition negotiations with the Greens and SPD on the basis of the exploratory paper that the three parties had drawn up beforehand. The paper provides for massive cuts to the state budget, announcing, for example, that social service providers should "limit spending growth." By contrast, there is to be more money for the police. All the slight improvements with which the parties are publicly promoting the coalition are subject to financing reservations.

The exploratory paper also contains a "joint statement" that invokes Israel's right to exist. It announces bans on pro-Palestinian activists at Berlin universities and commits to strengthening "the police and the Office for the Protection of the Constitution [the secret service] in their mission to protect Jewish life in Berlin"—a euphemistic formulation for the police suppression of any opposition to the genocide in Gaza.

These formulations did not merely receive the overwhelming support of the congress. Die Linke's mayoral candidate Elif Eralp, who bears the main responsibility for the paper, was greeted with standing ovations and repeatedly interrupted by loud cheering—as though she were a pop star and those in the hall her fan club.

Alongside all manner of social promises, which Eralp painted in the rosiest colours—while studiously glossing over the financing reservation—she stood fully behind the "joint statement": "Central for us was and is that the protection of Jewish life and the fight against antisemitism were clearly named. And I will always stand up for that; my promise of protection to the people of Berlin holds."

In the run-up to the congress, there had been a fierce campaign against Eralp. Leading news magazine *Der Spiegel* had published internal notes of hers and accused her of being afraid of pro-Palestinian activists and of not being determined enough to act against them. The 70-year-old Palestine activist Ibrahim Ibrahim was branded a "supporter of terrorism," and Vanessa Emde, the member of parliament who won her direct mandate in Neukölln with 46 percent, was denounced as an "Israel hater."

The leadership of Die Linke submitted completely to this campaign and lashed out at internal party critics. "I won't be intimidated," Eralp declared at the congress—meaning not the media smear campaign but the pro-Palestinian activists! "Of course I will take action against organised crime and the glorification of violence, no matter where it comes from," she declared, leaving no doubt that by "glorification of violence" she means support for the Palestinian resistance to decades of Israeli oppression.

Tobias Schulze, Die Linke's parliamentary group leader in the Berlin state assembly, made this clear on Monday on Deutschlandfunk radio. He again defamed Ibrahim, who has never been convicted of any offence, as a "glorifier of terrorism," and threatened Emde with expulsion from the parliamentary group. There would be "consequences," Schulze said.

It speaks volumes about Die Linke that this threat against its own members was not even raised at the congress. The delegates held no debate but contented themselves with their role as cheerleaders for Eralp and the party leadership. Motions that voiced criticism of the exploratory paper or

© World Socialist Web Site

questioned the “joint statement” were either rejected by an overwhelming majority or referred back to the state executive for “further consideration,” thereby removing them from any debate at the congress.

In the run-up to the congress, the media had conjured up a major conflict with the party’s “left” wing, but this never materialised. Instead, its members largely lined up behind the government line. Ruben Lehnert of the Socialist Left (Sozialistische Linke) current, for example, gushed that the coalition with the Greens and the SPD raised the “question of property” and the “question of democracy” and could therefore “move stock prices, federal governments and the consciousness of Berliners.”

Even Vanessa Emde, whom not a single delegate had defended in the general debate, did not speak out against participation in government in her speech to a few dozen supporters outside the congress hall. Instead, she formulated “red lines” that must not be crossed in the coalition negotiations. These included cuts to social work (apparently cuts in other areas do not count as red lines) and solidarity with Palestine. As if a Die Linke-Green-SPD Senate (state executive) would stand up for the concerns of the Palestinians and reject cuts.

The only speaker at the congress to come out against participation in government was Chiara Stenger of the “Socialist Organisation Solidarity” (SOL), which works within Die Linke. SOL is the German section of the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI), an opportunist tendency originally founded by Ted Grant and now headed by the Socialist Party in England. Stenger warned that hopes among the population in a government under left leadership would quickly be disappointed. She criticised the exploratory paper, which allows the SPD to block taking the large housing companies into state ownership and provides for cuts. “Socialist class politics and a fundamental change of policy in the interests of the working class cannot be implemented with pro-capitalist parties,” she declared.

That is less a criticism than a defence. While Die Linke is marching with flags flying into a right-wing government with the war parties, the Greens and the SPD, which will quickly bring it into confrontation with workers, Stenger declares it to be a “socialist class party.” She is already preparing to cover for the new government from the left by presenting her group as an oppositional force.

In reality, there are no fundamental differences between the Greens, the SPD and Die Linke. All three are capitalist parties that have often entered coalitions with one another and carried out fierce social attacks in the process. The state governments in which Die Linke participates also voted in the Bundesrat (the upper chamber of the federal parliament representing the states) for a trillion-euro military build-up, thereby setting the framework for the next round of massive cuts.

Organisations such as SOL, Marx21, to which Emde is close, or the Revolutionary Internationalist Organisation (RIO), which present themselves as “left” and “revolutionary” but are part of Die Linke, repeatedly play the role of shielding the party from the anger and outrage over its right-wing policies when in government. Die Linke can organise the military build-up, support the genocide in Gaza and push through the harshest cuts to save capitalism, and the pseudo-left stands ready to promote it once again as “socialist” and a “class-struggle” party. They thus serve as a fig leaf to conceal the true character of Die Linke.

This defence of right-wing, anti-worker policies with left-wing phrases ultimately only strengthens the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). What is needed is a ruthless political reckoning with Die Linke, which is capitalist through and through and therefore supports war and cuts.

The many workers and young people who gave the party their vote and are turning away from its right-wing government policies must turn to a genuinely socialist perspective. The insane war policy and the social catastrophe will not be ended by appeals to the capitalist parties, but only when workers intervene independently in political events, expropriate the big banks and corporations and place them under democratic control. That is what the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) is fighting for. Sign up now to take part in the fight for socialism.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site