

Germany's early elections: A conspiracy of all parties in favour of war and cuts

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13 November 2024

Germany's 2025 federal election has been brought forward from September 28 to February 23. After the failure of the coalition of the Social Democrats (SPD), Greens and Liberal Democrats (FDP), the three parties, together with the opposition Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, have agreed on an early election.

The election campaign has already begun. On Wednesday, Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) delivered a government statement in the Bundestag (parliament), which, like the subsequent debate, was characterised by election campaign rhetoric. However, in addition to the usual ritual exchanges, the speeches were dominated by calls for unity and cooperation.

While there are differences over the means, the establishment parties largely agree on the goals of their policies: intensifying the war in Ukraine and increasing military spending; sealing off borders and deporting migrants; mass layoffs, real wage cuts and social cuts to finance rearmament and increase profits.

They know that these goals are deeply unpopular and will meet with resistance. And they are aware that they will have to form a coalition after the election to push them through. One should never forget, Scholz warned, that there is a day after the election when one must work together across the political divide, adding, compromise was the only viable way forward.

Scholz practically begged CDU leader Friedrich Merz, who according to the polls has the best chance of winning the election, to support his minority government in passing important legislation before the election.

He cited, for example, measures to boost the economy, more money for rearmament and more military aid for Ukraine. He emphasised that the "new era" of aggressive German foreign policy must be

continued and more spent on defence. With reference to Donald Trump's election victory in the US, he called for Ukraine not to be left alone; it must be able to rely on "our solidarity."

The Green Party's candidate for Chancellor, Economics Minister Robert Habeck, who was unable to attend the parliamentary debate due to a plane breakdown, had previously made an even stronger statement in an interview with broadcaster Deutschlandfunk.

Important infrastructure projects and military spending should not have to wait until new elections, he said. The 100-billion-euro "special fund" for the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) would be used up by 2027. Since it was already clear that the funds will not be sufficient and the necessary money was missing from the existing budget, Habeck called for a further special fund. Because it was foreseeable that after a federal election, "we will no longer be able to pass resolutions requiring a two-thirds majority from the democratic centre," the new special fund must be decided before the dissolution of the Bundestag.

One could not express the undemocratic character of the election more clearly. Because he assumes that there will no longer be a majority in favour of war and rearmament after the election, Habeck wants to create a *fait accompli* beforehand.

CDU leader Merz did not directly address Scholz's offer of cooperation, but in principle declared himself willing to do so. At the beginning of his speech, he attacked Scholz fiercely. He was dividing the country, he said, and trying "in an almost rude and inconsiderate way" to "drag out his term of office beyond the time and extend it once again." But then he suddenly praised SDP parliamentary faction leader Rolf Mützenich and the Greens and thanked them for their cooperation in

preparing the early election.

Far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) leader Alice Weidel, who senses an opportunity after Trump's election victory, attacked both the SPD and the CDU, but at the same time called on the latter to work together. She advocated mass deportations, opposition to climate protection and cuts to the "citizen's income" welfare benefit, which the CDU could implement together with the AfD.

Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock (Green), who spoke in place of the absent Habeck, invoked Germany's "strength" and "national cohesion." In difficult times, "Germany stands together," she proclaimed, campaigning for the "greatest feat of strength for investment in our security" in the name of "peace", i.e. rearmament.

FDP leader Christian Lindner, whose dismissal as finance minister had sealed the end of the coalition, was sitting next to CDU leader Merz, under whom he hopes to return to his old ministry. Lindner railed against the citizen's income and other social benefits for asylum seekers and called for tax cuts for the rich. Not redistribution, but growth, he declared, would secure Germany's future.

The entire election is a conspiracy of the establishment parties against the majority of the population. They are trying by all means to prevent the broad opposition to war, social cuts and job losses from finding expression in the election.

The deadlines to participate in the election for smaller parties that are not represented by at least five members in the Bundestag or in a federal state parliament are even more onerous than before. They not only have to fulfil numerous time-consuming formalities, but also collect thousands of signatures in the shortest possible time, during winter and over the Christmas holidays, and then have them officially confirmed. More than 27,000 signatures are required to stand candidates in all federal states.

In the last federal election, 40 parties were on the ballot. More than 4 million votes were cast for parties not represented in the Bundestag, which corresponds to 8.6 percent of the ballot. If the hurdles are not lowered, many of these parties will no longer have a chance of participating in the election.

Perhaps the most important contribution to sealing off the election against the broad opposition to social cuts

and social inequality was made by the IG Metall union on Monday night. Although more than 620,000 IG Metall members had previously demonstrated their willingness to fight through warning strikes, the union agreed to a lousy sell-out in contract negotiations covering the 3.9 million employees in the metal and electrical industries. This does not even cover the current level of inflation, let alone the massive wage losses of the past years, and, with a contract term of more than two years, protects the backs of the companies, which are planning mass layoffs.

At all costs, IG Metall, which works closely with the government, the CDU and the employers' associations, wants to avoid a situation in which there would be widespread strikes by hundreds of thousands of workers in the middle of the election campaign, which would inevitably have led to a broader radicalisation and an increase in the self-confidence of the working class.

After the sell-out, IG Metall leader Christiane Benner cynically declared: "Social partnership is the most important factor for stability for companies and employees in uncertain times. We find joint solutions." She presented this as a model for the political parties. In reality, so-called "social partnership" serves to bind the working class hand and foot.

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) is standing in the early federal elections to arm the working class with a socialist perspective in the fight against mass layoffs, cuts and wars. "Only if the masses independently intervene in political events, expropriate the big banks and corporations and place them under democratic control, can war and social catastrophe be stopped," it explains in a call to vote for the SGP.

If you are eligible to vote in Germany sign now to support our election campaign and become a member of the SGP!



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