

Christian Democrats leader Merz tears down the “firewall” to the far-right Alternative for Germany

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On Wednesday, with the support of the Alternative for Germany (AfD), the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) passed a motion on migration policy through the Bundestag which abrogates fundamental constitutional principles and European law. A second motion on domestic security failed. The much-vaunted “firewall” against the far-right party is now in ruins and nothing stands in the way of its integration into a future federal government.

Just a fortnight ago, the CDU’s candidate for chancellor, Friedrich Merz, gave assurances that he would not allow the “firewall” against the AfD to fall. “I am pinning my fate as party chairman of the CDU on this answer,” he promised.

Now, Merz says, “I don’t look right or left, I only look straight ahead on these issues. We will table the motions, regardless of who agrees with them.” He could not explain more clearly that he is prepared to realise his political goals with the help of the AfD.

The Liberal Democratic Party (FDP), which left the federal government in November, has announced it will vote in favour of the CDU/CSU proposals. The anti-migrant BSW (Bund Sarah Wagenknecht) has also signalled its willingness to do so, but finally abstained. The motion was finally passed with the votes of the CDU/CSU, FDP and the AfD.

Motions are not legally binding, as they are not draft laws. However, the majority decision by parliament has great symbolic power and a considerable influence on the policy and composition of the future government following February’s federal elections.

The responsibility for boosting the AfD fascists lies not only with the parties supporting the CDU/CSU’s move, but also with the governing Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Greens, who are now complaining about the collapse of the “firewall.”

Ever since a mentally ill 28-year-old refugee from Afghanistan killed a toddler and a man in Aschaffenburg a week ago, there have only been two topics in the Bundestag election campaign: anti-refugee agitation and stepping up the powers of the state. The SPD and Greens are not opposing this racist law-and-order campaign, but rather fuelling it.

One searches in vain for a defence of the right of asylum,

which was introduced into the post-war constitution of West Germany as a reaction to the crimes of the Nazis, or for elementary appeals for humanity. Instead, the SPD and Greens stress that they have long been taking radical action against refugees and accuse the CDU/CSU of not supporting them sufficiently.

On the *Report from Berlin* broadcast on Sunday, Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) promised: “Criminals should be returned to every country, and we want to enforce this.” No effort would be spared, he said. There would be a time when criminals would also be returned to Syria, “And I hope it is soon.”

On Tuesday, Scholz accused the CDU/CSU of blocking his government’s draft legislation to tighten asylum and security policy, citing biometric matching by the police, more powers for the federal police and a law on the European asylum system as examples. The Chancellor boasted that the federal government had already ensured there had been 40,000 entry rejections at German borders last year.

The Green candidate for chancellor, Robert Habeck, warned the CDU/CSU on Sunday’s *Tagesthemen* programme against cooperating with the AfD, but, at the same time, asserted that the coalition government had already decided on and implemented many measures: “Fewer people are coming to Germany. There had been a number of measures tightening up the law. There could have been even more if the CDU/CSU had co-operated.”

This campaign is not only directed against refugees, but against the entire working class. Refugees, who are often traumatised and have been able to save nothing but their lives from wars supported by Germany, are denounced as “illegal migrants” and “criminals” in order to divert attention away from massive social attacks and justify comprehensive repressive measures.

The CDU/CSU motions contain a whole catalogue of such measures. The motion that was accepted calls for “permanent border controls with all neighbouring countries,” which contradicts current EU law. “Without exception, all attempts at illegal entry” are to be rejected, “regardless of whether they make a request for protection or not.” This means the de facto

abolition of the right to asylum, as anyone who is turned back before applying cannot exercise this right. Under the proposals, people who are required to leave the country should be detained, for which the number of detention places must be “significantly increased.”

The second motion, “In favour of a policy change in domestic security,” which failed, calls for the powers of the police and other security authorities to be comprehensively enhanced. It cites an “increasing number of knife attacks and violent assaults” as well as “antisemitic agitation and extremist violence” as justification. The latter is a clear reference to protests in defence of the Palestinians, which are being systematically criminalised in Germany. This is followed by a 27-point catalogue of additional police powers, increased penalties and stricter deportation rules.

All in all, this is pure AfD policy. The far-right and, in part, neo-fascist outfit has long combined anti-refugee propaganda with calls for more state powers. While the AfD has been courted, elected to important parliamentary offices and treated with kid gloves by the other parties and the media, they have shied away, with a few exceptions, from direct government co-operation, knowing that the far right is hated by large sections of the population.

That is now changing. With the return of Donald Trump to the White House, the whole of global politics is changing. In his inaugural speech, Trump declared war on the American working class and the world and has since wasted no time putting his threats into practice.

Trump is using the migrant issue to establish a dictatorship of the billionaire oligarchs through his cabinet. By declaring the crossing of the border by refugees and migrants a “hostile invasion,” he is arrogating powers to himself that an American president only has if another power attacks the US militarily, suspending democratic rights, imprisoning masses of migrants and deploying the army domestically. The Democrats are offering no resistance to this, which will only come from the American working class.

The ruling class in Germany is reacting to the eruption of American imperialism by returning to its own worst traditions. The coming government will—regardless of the outcome of the election—double and triple defence spending and brutally slash social spending. Real wages are falling continuously and hundreds of thousands of reasonably paid jobs in the automotive, chemicals and other industries are about to be cut, for which there are no replacements.

But these issues are not being addressed in the election. Instead, the campaign against refugees serves to boost the state apparatus in order to suppress and criminalise the resistance that will inevitably develop.

The AfD, which is increasingly revealing its true character, is also needed for this. No other German party has such close ties to Trump’s dictatorship of the oligarchs. Trump’s confidante Elon Musk, the richest man in the world, regularly campaigns

for AfD leader Alice Weidel on his media platform X. At the AfD election campaign launch in Halle, Musk appeared on a huge video screen and chanted fascist slogans.

Musk, a self-proclaimed “libertarian,” has been commissioned by Trump to reduce the US national budget by a third so that taxes for the super-rich can be cut even further and military spending increased. The state is to be reduced to its function as an instrument of oppression—police, army and secret services. All socially useful tasks—education, health, social spending, infrastructure—are to be privatised and turned into a source of profit or eliminated altogether.

The AfD shares this programme. It is therefore increasingly being supported by major donors. This year, it has already received two donations totalling more than €2 million. The first, some €1.5 million, came from Lübeck doctor and entrepreneur Winfried Stöcker, while the second, amounting to just under a million, came from Horst Jan Winter from Thuringia. Winter was a member of the Supervisory Board of Böttcher AG, a mail-order company for office supplies, until 2023. The boss and main owner of the company, Udo Böttcher, is known to be an AfD sympathiser.

While the CDU/CSU, FDP and BSW are openly moving towards the AfD, the SPD and the Greens will not oppose the right-wing extremists. They share their programme of rearmament, social cuts and the establishment of a police state. Resistance can only come from the working class, which must intervene independently in political events.

This is what the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party) stands for. It is the only party to oppose war, rearmament and social cuts in the Bundestag elections and defends all democratic rights, including those of migrants. As the German section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, it fights for the unity of the international working class in order to overthrow capitalism, expropriate the oligarchs and build a socialist society in which social needs take precedence over profit interests.



To contact the WSW and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

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