

Germany's Left Party appeals for cooperation with Christian Democrats and Free Democratic Party in Thuringia

By Peter Schwarz
17 February 2020

The election of Free Democratic Party (FDP) politician Thomas Kemmerich to the position of Minister President in Thuringia with the support of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) revealed to the world that Germany's ruling elite is once again ready to collaborate with Nazi apologists and fascists.

The alliance of the Christian Democrats (CDU) and FDP with the AfD was neither an accident nor a mistake. It was carefully planned and discussed. The rise of the AfD is bound up with the shift of the entire ruling class to the right. Numerous AfD members emerged from the state apparatus or the established parties which have systematically paved the way for the right-wing extremists.

The Left Party is no exception to this rightward shift. Although it was the target of the AfD in Thuringia, the party has responded with evasions, concealing the truth, appeasement, and stretching out the hand of cooperation to the CDU and FDP. The Left Party wants at all costs to prevent the widespread outrage over the promotion of the AfD from being directed against all of the established parties and the capitalist system. The party is itself part of the conspiracy that has strengthened the AfD. This was made very clear by the appearance of former Thuringia Minister President Bodo Ramelow on the ARD talkshow Meischberger last Wednesday.

Ramelow was well aware that his defeat was the result of a plan worked out behind the scenes. He cited a number of examples to back this up. The evening prior to his election, Kemmerich announced that the SPD ministers could retain their portfolios in his government—thus indicating his expectation that he would win the election with the votes of the AfD.

Ramelow also reported that the “spin doctor in the CDU, Mr. Dr. Hahn,” a man with a right-wing extremist past, “documented the scenario in a public debate” on the Sunday prior to the vote. He continued, “The evening before the election, CDU deputies allegedly met with AfD representatives in a pub in Erfurt. So none of them could really have been surprised; the only person who was surprised was me.”

Nonetheless, Ramelow extended an offer of close cooperation to the very same parties who connived with the AfD against him. His demand was for “orderly new elections,” although the emphasis was placed on the “orderly.”

“That’s the offer to the CDU. Vote for the state government so we can remain capable of taking decisions,” Ramelow said. “If I am not elected, we will have 150 days of an election campaign without a state government,” he warned—apparently Ramelow’s worst nightmare.

His intention is clear. If new elections were held immediately, as a majority of 63 percent called for in a recent Infra poll, the results for the CDU and FDP would be devastating. The FDP would no longer surpass the 5 percent hurdle required for parliamentary representation, while the CDU, which governed the state uninterrupted between 1991 and 2014, would achieve just 14 percent. By contrast, the Left Party would secure a record result of 40 percent of the vote. The AfD, SPD, and Greens would achieve similar results to the last election.

Ramelow hopes to avoid such an outcome through “orderly” elections. This will give the CDU and FDP the time they need to recover. He repeatedly stressed his concern about the decline of these parties during his

appearance on ARD. He is being forced to watch as “the CDU tears itself apart as one of the large people’s parties,” Ramelow complained. And it is “the condition of the SPD that really concerns me.” He added that he believes in the “necessity of stable parties.”

Asked about his opinion on the announced resignation of CDU leader Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, whose interventions in Thuringia played an important role in establishing the coalition with the AfD, he responded, “It troubles me. I know the colleague Kramp-Karrenbauer from the Saarland. In some areas, we fought together for good conditions.”

He also praised his close cooperation with CDU Thuringia leader Mike Mohring, which was blocked by the party leadership in Berlin. Ramelow stated that he was in continuous talks with Mohring since December 23, discussing 22 different projects with the CDU state leader. According to Ramelow an agreement between the two would have enabled the CDU to elect him as Minister President on the third round of balloting to head a minority government of the Left Party, the SPD, and Greens. Instead, the CDU voted en masse for the candidate of the smallest party, the FDP, who was then elected with the votes of the AfD.

Ramelow also vehemently protested when Sandra Meischberger referred to him as “a socialist Minister President.” He is obviously prepared to do anything to demonstrate his reliability to the ruling class.

Ramelow’s appeal for favours from the CDU and FDP prove that the Left Party, its name notwithstanding, is a right-wing, bourgeois party for which the defence of the capitalist “order” comes before everything else, and which fears nothing more than the independent political mobilisation of the working class. Wherever the Left Party is or has been in government—in Berlin, Brandenburg, Thuringia, and Mecklenburg-Pomerania—its social, refugee, and other domestic policies have been no different to those of the other bourgeois parties.

Ramelow’s stance recalls Hans Modrow, who set the stage for capitalist restoration in East Germany as the last Stalinist Socialist Unity Party (SED) head of government, and now leads the Left Party’s advisory council of elders at the age of 90. “In my estimation, the road to unity was unavoidably necessary and had to be pursued decisively,” he later wrote in his

autobiography. “I was mainly concerned about ensuring the country’s governability and preventing chaos.” Millions of workers paid a bitter price for that.

Ramelow’s approaches to the CDU and FDP will only strengthen the AfD. The only way to prevent their rise and the return of fascism and war is through the independent mobilisation of the working class on a socialist perspective.

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