

## **Not an industrial accident, but a real turning point. The Merz project and left-wing answers.**

*A statement by the Interventionist Left on the 2025 Bundestag elections*

Even those who expect nothing will be disappointed. The result of the Bundestag election was predictable - and yet it makes us angry. It shows how far our society has moved to the right. The welcome return of the Left Party to the Bundestag and the wave of people joining the party do nothing to change this for the time being. Hundreds of thousands have recently taken to the streets against the right: in 2024 following Correctiv's research into right-wing deportation plans, at the end of January against the cooperation between the CDU/CSU and FDP and the AfD, and now on election night. These protests are important and encouraging - but they alone will not be enough.

### **Germany's political future: a mini-Trump**

As necessary as it is to defend the firewall against the right: The upcoming federal government under Chancellor Merz will pursue deeply reactionary, racist, anti-feminist, anti-social and authoritarian policies even without AfD involvement. It makes no difference whether the SPD or the Greens ultimately serve to procure a majority. Because even if both parties were loudly outraged by Merz and the fall of the firewall during the election campaign: In terms of content, they are fully in line with the CDU/CSU on many important issues. And where this is not the case, the threat of renewed cooperation with the AfD will have a disciplinary effect and lead to the SPD and Greens eating up any shit that Merz, Söder and co. serve up to them out of a sense of "national political responsibility" - as always with great stomach ache, of course.

The "middle-class center" is finally proving to be a hollow phrase. The political future belongs to an anti-feminist 69-year-old mini-Trump from Sauerland, who enjoys flying fighter jets and has earned millions as a lobbyist for capital giants such as Blackrock. This requires more than short-term outrage. We need to understand and fight the upcoming federal government for what it is: a political project that wants to continue, socially expand and radicalize the "turnaround" that began under the traffic lights - and that will thus set the course for lasting cooperation between the CDU/CSU and the AfD.

Milei, Musk, Meloni - and Merz. Crisis capitalism and the right-wing international

With the Merz project, a catch-up movement is taking shape to bring Germany in line with the authoritarian right-wing global zeitgeist. Whether India, Argentina, Brazil, the USA, Israel, Hungary or Italy: with the help of liberal and conservative forces, right-wing government projects have come to power in a large number of countries in recent years. They are a

reactionary response to an age of ongoing crises - from geopolitical tensions and wars to the escalating climate crisis. None of this can be permanently resolved within the framework of national capitalist relations. Even in the absence of a credible left-wing project, the offer of the right-wing international is still catching on: isolationism, exclusion, authoritarianism, anti-feminism and climate denial, often combined with neoliberal or radical market policies in the interests of capital and attacks on the welfare state and the rule of law.

Even if Merz has so far held back with all too obvious admiration for Milei, Trump and Musk: The Union's radicalized conservatism follows international models - and yet has a specifically German agenda.

### **The Merz project - more than just migration defense**

The past election campaign was once again characterized by racist agitation. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to reduce the Merz project to this. It is true that the treatment of refugees is an example of the attack on democracy and fundamental rights. However, the authoritarian restructuring of the state affects all policy areas. It is inextricably linked to three central goals of the Merz project.

Firstly, this involves a geopolitical and economic repositioning of Germany in Europe and the world. In view of global tensions, new wars and the crisis of the German export model, Merz and co are aiming to reposition Germany as a capable global player. In concrete terms, this means even more armament and militarization, but also securing profit rates and sales markets for German (industrial) capital - among other things at the expense of climate protection targets, which are no longer considered anything more than a disruptive cost factor. This strategy not only contains certain contradictions, e.g. between the orientation towards NATO and the EU in matters of armaments and a "Germany first" principle in migration and economic policy. Rather, the foreign policy reorientation also fundamentally shifts the domestic policy coordinate system.

In this sense, the aim of the Merz project is secondly to make Germany competitive and ready for war at home. First and foremost, this concerns the national budget: the CDU/CSU is planning tax cuts for capital and the middle and upper classes, but wants to maintain the debt brake. It is clear what the rest of the budget, which has been cut to the bone, is to be used for: while military spending will continue to rise, massive cuts are imminent in climate protection, the promotion of democracy and the social sector. These will particularly affect marginalized groups and FLINTA\* (women, lesbians, inter, nonbinary, trans, agender people).

The discussion about the payment card and the Bürgergeld (citizen's benefit/income support) give a foretaste of how hard class struggle from above is accompanied and legitimized by authoritarian, racist and classist populism. Where discourse is not enough, the Merz project will rely on militarization, more surveillance and an expansion of law and order. The establishment of deportation prisons, the restriction of the right of assembly and the

repression of the climate justice movement, antifascists and Palestine solidarity show that the dismantling of basic democratic rights began long before Merz. However, this trend will now undoubtedly reach a new level.

Thirdly, this neoliberal, austerity and authoritarian restructuring of the state corresponds to the socio-political goal of a “bourgeois renaissance” against the legacy of 1968. This reactionary programme takes up the right-wing “culture war” narrative of a supposed “left-green” hegemony and attempts to undo the achievements of social liberalization, democratization and legal equality that have been fought for. The rollback is directed against an anti-racist welcoming culture, against the recognition of post-migrant society, against feminism and progressive gender and gender politics, against anti-militarism and the questioning of masculinity norms, against ecology, an uncomfortable civil society, alternative (sub)cultures and critical Sciences. The Merz project will not be able to destroy all of these achievements at the same time, but it will massively narrow the scope - and at the same time prepare the ground for even more racism, anti-Semitism, anti-feminism, queer and trans hostility and open right-wing violence.

### **What can be done? Dark prospects and left-wing answers**

There is no question that the Merz project will massively worsen the lives of many people, in Germany and beyond. Others will benefit because they will be able to generate more profits, pay less tax on their wealth, their privileges will remain untouched or they will be able to live out their hatred even more openly than before. And yet the Merz project will not be able to solve any of the fundamental crises we are facing; on the contrary, it will exacerbate them. The right-wing authoritarian policies of the Merz government will therefore be further grist to the mill of the AfD. With a view to the rest of Europe and the world, it is therefore less a question of whether there will be new political majorities on the right in the medium term, but rather when - and who will set the tone: The radicalized conservatism of the CDU/CSU or the völkisch nationalism of the AfD.

These prospects are bleak. But where the air gets cold, it also becomes clear. The stable conditions of the past are finally passé in this country too - and we can only win a future if we fight for it together. The Merz project is aimed at an authoritarian restructuring of the state and society, disenfranchisement, lack of solidarity, isolation and fear. It relies on a passive society that accepts all of this without resistance. This is why we on the left must start right here, fighting for a society based on freedom, equality and solidarity. The protests of recent weeks give us hope that we are not alone in this struggle. In the short and medium term, we see at least four starting points for developing a left-wing response to the Merz project.

Firstly, it is necessary to see the mass mobilizations against the right as an opportunity for left and radical left interventions. To this end, it is crucial to actively participate in the protests at an early stage or, where necessary, to initiate them ourselves. Only in this way is it

possible to shift content to the left and, for example, to consistently spread anti-racist and anti-militarist positions - also against the SPD and the Greens.

Secondly, we must stand in solidarity with all those whom the Merz project - and in its shadow the extreme right - will attack. Because the attack on migrants, the citizens' benefit, social and cultural infrastructures, equality policies and climate protection measures is foreseeable. So let's prepare ourselves for tough defensive battles, let's seek contact with potentially affected people, groups and institutions, let's defend existing achievements together, also for ourselves.

Thirdly, both in broad mobilizations and in concrete defensive struggles, the aim will be to support organizing processes, create moments of political self-empowerment, point out alternatives based on solidarity and combine issues, struggles and actors into an oppositional coalition. This is the only way to prevent interests being played off against each other, the hope for change being delegated to parties or anger turning into apathy and resignation.

Fourthly, in order to be able to take on the prevailing politics and form a strong left-wing project in the medium term, our politics must act simultaneously on different levels - and in doing so, in addition to local, regional and national activities, also and especially create inter- and transnational links. Against transnational capital, against global militarization and against the right-wing international from Milei to Merz, only a new internationalism can help, in which experiences are exchanged, solidarity is organized and moments of intensification are found together.

So let's come together, let's consult, let's get active. Let's counter the right-wing turnaround from above with a left-wing, solidary response from below. Let's fight to ensure that 1933 is not repeated in 2033. Nothing less is at stake. No pasarán!