# “First we take Manhattan, then we take Berlin” — Will Berlin become socialist again?”

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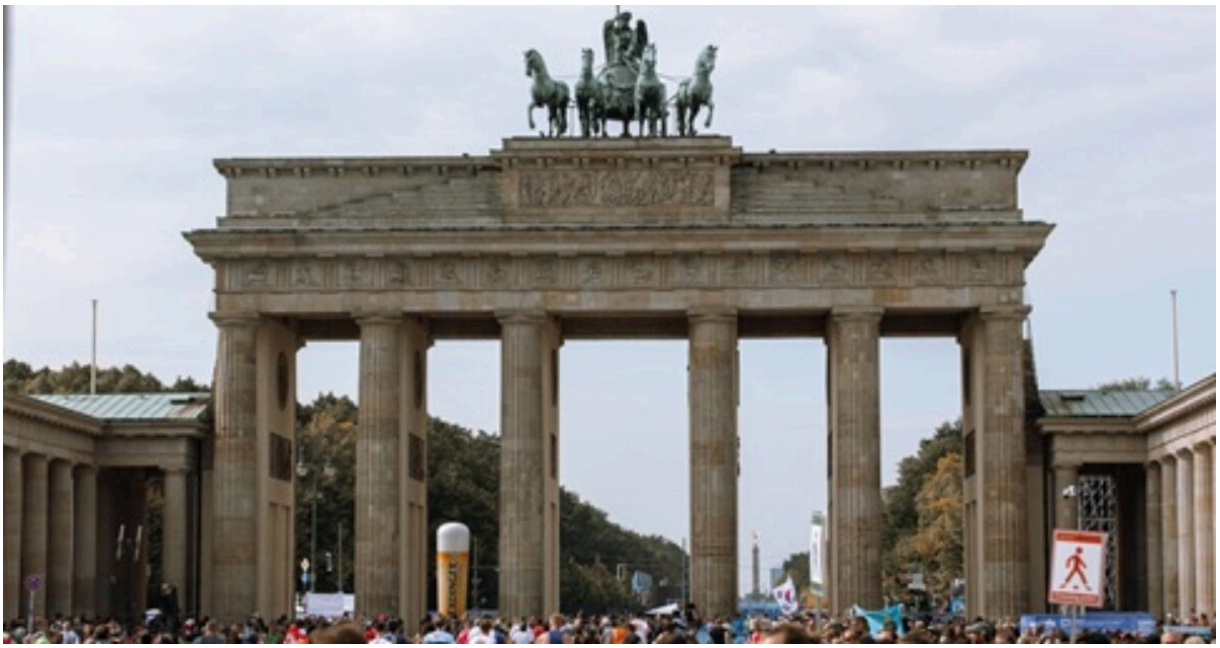

*Op-ed views and opinions expressed are solely those of the author.*

“First We Take Manhattan (Then We Take Berlin)” — that was the plan of the far left. And it seems to have worked. The great role model for DIE LINKE in Berlin was New York’s Marxist mayor Zohran Mamdani, whose campaign they successfully copied. And they won. DIE LINKE became by far the strongest party in the German capital, winning 25.7 percent of the vote, well ahead of the CDU, which had governed until now and received just 18.8 percent. Among voters under 25, DIE LINKE won as much as 43 percent, and among women under 25, 51 percent.

DIE LINKE is the legal successor to the former communist SED, which ruled East Germany until German reunification. Its central campaign issue was its demand to expropriate large housing companies, which it wants to compensate at only about 40 percent of market value. This struck a nerve because housing is extremely scarce in Berlin. But it is precisely left-wing policies that have contributed to this shortage. The Social Democrats and DIE LINKE, which previously governed Berlin together, drove investors out of the city with their rent policies. At the same time, they advocated open borders and virtually unlimited immigration. Together, these two policies have contributed to a severe housing shortage. Following the motto “Stop thief!” the party has now successfully used a problem it helped create to win votes.

Ironically, DIE LINKE advocates the same housing policies that the SED pursued in East Germany: a so-called rent cap, meaning a ban on rent increases, and nationalization. Both had disastrous consequences in East Germany. Rents were cheap, but much of the housing stock fell into disrepair, and one in four homes did not even have its own toilet.

Many Jews in Berlin are particularly alarmed by DIE LINKE's election victory. Josef Schuster, president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, said he was deeply concerned about the party's victory in Berlin. "The fact that a party whose campaign stage was used to openly call for the deaths of people has emerged as the winner of the election deeply concerns me," Schuster said in a statement released on Sunday. He accused DIE LINKE of repeatedly crossing antisemitic lines during the election campaign.

In October 2024, five prominent Berlin politicians resigned from DIE LINKE. One of the main reasons they cited was growing antisemitism within their party.

DIE LINKE's lead candidate in the 2026 Berlin election was Elif Eralp, whose parents come from Turkey. In recent years, DIE LINKE has attracted particularly strong support from migrants from the Arab world, where hostility toward Israel and Jews is widespread. The party has repeatedly opposed police raids targeting Arab clans and has also objected to the use of the term "clan crime," arguing that it is discriminatory.

Issa Remmo, one of Berlin's most prominent clan bosses, attended DIE LINKE's election-night celebrations. Many members of the Remmo clan have been involved in criminal activities. Issa Remmo, who has at least 13 children, is regarded as the head of the clan. Clan members were involved, among other things, in the theft of the 100-kilogram gold coin from Berlin's Bode Museum and the spectacular jewelry heist at Dresden's Green Vault. On election night, Remmo told the "Berliner Morgenpost" that, for the first time in Germany, he felt supported by a political party. DIE LINKE, however, officially distanced itself from him, saying that he had not been invited.

Will Berlin now get a socialist government? The numbers would allow a coalition of the three left-wing parties — the SPD, the Greens, and DIE LINKE. But a coalition of the CDU, SPD, and Greens would also have a parliamentary majority. If Elif Eralp became mayor of Berlin, it would be the first time since 1989 that the party formerly known as the SED and later renamed DIE LINKE would once again provide the mayor of the German capital.


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