

The Fascists Have an Easy Game to Play

Because the centrists and the left conspired to abandon the disenfranchised



Image by [Sri Harsha Gera](#) from [Pixabay](#)

These days, our western media are totally up in arms. They write about how there was no red wave during the US midterm elections. On the surface of it, it looks to be true. It seems that in the U.S. at least, the fascists have stopped advancing for a bit. Except they have not. In reality, the midterm results show how dismal the situation really is. It is not that hard to beat fascists like the Trumpists.

You need to offer a real political alternative. An agenda, that actually listens to the disenfranchised. And one that charts a path into a progressive future. And yet, all the democrats could manage was to preserve the status quo. Of course, you could come up with explanations about how the situation in the U.S. is special. About how there is a unique historical background. How this history creates a certain political climate in the red states of the south. Except, if you look at a global scale, you see that these explanations

are bullsh*t.

Fascists Have the Upper Hand Everywhere in the West

In Brandenburg state, where I teach, the most recent polls indicate that the AFD is now the biggest party.

Sonntagsfrage zur Landtagswahl in Brandenburg (#ltwbb) • INSA/BILD: AfD 25 % | SPD 22 % | CDU 17 % | GRÜNE 11 % | DIE LINKE 10 % | BVB/FW 5 % | FDP 4 % | Sonstige 6 %

► Verlauf: <https://t.co/lx41aRN9En>

☐☐ Nächste Landtagswahl: vorauss. Sommer 2024 pic.twitter.com/3WFMdNLUY6

– Wahlrecht.de (@Wahlrecht_de) October 11, 2022

In fact, everywhere in East Germany, the AfD stands pretty strong. This is not a coincidence. A large majority of their voters, including many people I know used to vote differently. What the polling statistics also show is something else. It is that the left and center-left parties have been bleeding voters for many years. This is also the case in almost every other European country. Take the British Labour party, for example. Even with a moron like Boris Johnson, they can no longer mobilize any sizeable majority.

In Denmark, there were parliamentary elections last week. The elections torpedoed a new right-wing party near the top. Danmarksdemokraterne, which is modeled after its counterpart in Sweden. They too had huge success during the latest Swedish elections, as well. The pattern is clear. The center-left is still holding on to power. Barely. They can no longer mobilize the masses against the fascists.

Who Represents the Disenfranchised?

Back in Germany, the once proud worker's party SPD is hovering around 20-25%. They did during nearly every election for the last decade. Most of these voters left to vote for the AfD. There are good reasons for this. A major one is, that an ever larger minority is feeling disenfranchised. They have lost out on globalization, which shipped their remaining manufacturing jobs overseas. Rural populations lose out because their infrastructure gets defunded. Whether it is public transport, hospitals, or schools.

Most people in rural areas have lost faith in the established center-left parties. They no longer believe that these parties do anything to improve their situation. They have good reason to. Even the leftist parties have embraced neoliberal narratives. For instance, when the SPD and the LINKE sold off the majority of public housing in Berlin. This has left many families scrambling for rents that are anywhere near affordable.

When Poverty Is on the Rise, so Is Fascism

In Germany, since the late 90's the income gap has been growing steadily.

► Tab 2 Einkommenschichtung und Einkommensarmut 1995–2018 – in Prozent

	Perioden					Jahre		
	1995–1999	2000–2004	2005–2009	2010–2014	2015–2018	2016	2017	2018
Äquivalenzeinkommen im Monat (real)								
Bevölkerungsanteile nach Einkommenschichten (Median = 100 %)								
≥ 300 %	1,0	1,3	1,7	1,6	1,3	1,4	1,2	1,2
200 bis < 300 %	4,5	5,0	5,8	5,8	5,3	5,8	4,5	5,2
150 bis < 200 %	10,8	10,8	11,6	11,5	12,4	12,2	12,1	11,9
125 bis < 150 %	12,6	12,6	11,8	12,6	12,6	13,3	12,3	12,3
100 bis < 125 %	21,8	21,4	19,7	19,1	18,8	18,6	20,1	19,4
75 bis < 100 %	26,3	25,4	24,5	22,4	22,3	22,0	20,7	23,5
60 bis < 75 %	12,1	11,8	12,2	12,9	11,2	11,1	11,8	10,5
50 bis < 60 %	5,3	6,0	6,2	6,9	7,5	7,4	7,8	7,3
< 50 %	5,5	5,8	6,5	7,1	8,6	8,3	9,5	8,7
Armutsschwelle: 60 % des Medians								
FGT(0) (Armutsquote)	10,7	11,7	12,7	14,1	16,0	15,6	17,3	15,8
FGT(1) (Armutsücke)	2,2	2,5	2,8	3,0	3,6	3,6	3,7	3,6
FGT(2) (Armutsintensität)	0,7	0,9	1,0	1,0	1,3	1,3	1,3	1,3
Äquivalenzeinkommen im Vorjahr (real)								
Armutsschwelle: 60 % des Medians								
FGT(0) (Armutsquote)	11,1	12,0	13,9	14,4	15,4	15,8	15,7	15,1
FGT(1) (Armutsücke)	2,7	2,9	3,3	3,3	4,0	4,1	4,0	4,0
FGT(2) (Armutsintensität) ¹	1,1	1,2	1,3	1,3	1,6	1,7	1,6	1,7

Datenbasis: SOEPv35

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt

Note the line 'Armutsquote'. The number represents the share of people, who have been living on less than 60% of the Median Income in Germany. This is the official definition of relative poverty set by the EU. Do you notice a trend? Yes, it has been going one way between 1995 and 2018. Up, up she goes!

And guess what. The worker party SPD has been part of forming the government since 1998. First together with the green party, then in a coalition with the CDU. In this period, they launched the infamous HARTZ labor market reforms. The name stems from the fact that Peter Hartz formulated the law texts almost entirely on his own. At the time, he was still the manager at Volkswagen. He has since been convicted of crimes related to corruption.

These market reforms led to one of the biggest low-wage sectors in the Eurozone. And the SPD was even proud of that achievement.

Gerhard Schröder boasted about Germany's low-wage sector at the World Economic Forum in 2005.

How can it be a wonder, that nobody trusts the center-left to tackle their material challenges?

The Fascists Lure the Voiceless

There are similar case stories for nearly every western country. Presenting them here would blow up the size of the post to an insane degree. But hey, at least I have plenty of material to write about. The fact is, that there are large swaths of people in all western countries that do not feel represented. Especially among precarious workers and poverty-stricken families.

The fascists know this. They manipulate these people, so they feel heard. They offer no solutions, other than blaming immigrants and LGBTQ+ people. But it does not matter. Because the center-left doesn't even want to offer any alternatives. They don't even want to listen to these proletarians. Even so-called progressive parties, like the greens, only cater to the urban elite. It is easy to mock people for taking a car when you live in a city where alternatives are available.

The fascists have an easy game to play. Their tricks are not new. The NSDAP used the same strategies in the 1930s. Whether in Europe, or the U.S. The outcome is the same. The fascists can even run their most incompetent candidates and still secure victories. No, the red wave didn't flush over the U.S. But it certainly wasn't a win for the center-left, either.

As long as the center-left refuses to offer a New Deal as a real alternative, fascism will continue to rise. We know what we need. We need to invest in people. Sound public infrastructure. We need accountability for billionaires and corporations who refuse to pay taxes. We also need to hold cooperations accountable, who destroy our common goods. That includes our environment. And we need a way to offer disenfranchised people a way out of poverty and despair.

When we offer this on the ballot, the fascist balloon will pop in no time. But if we refuse to do so, we are doomed to follow the rhyme of history. Fascism will reign supreme. Just like it did once before.