

Socialist Equality Party receives approval to participate in Berlin Senate election

Our correspondents

7 June 2011

At its meeting last Wednesday, the state electoral commission approved the participation of the Socialist Equality Party (Partei für Soziale Gleichheit—PSG) in the September 18 Berlin Senate election. The committee noted that the application of the PSG was submitted in a “correct and timely manner” and said it was entitled to draw up a list of candidates for the election. What remains is the submission of 2,200 certified signatures supporting the party’s candidature.

The election committee sanctioned the participation of a total of 35 parties in the Berlin election. Three candidate submissions were turned down for technical reasons, but these candidates may still participate in the elections for twelve Berlin district parliaments.

In addition to the five parties currently represented in the Senate—the Social Democratic Party, the Christian Democratic Union, the Left Party, the Green Party and the Free Democratic Party—a number of conservative and right-wing organizations were permitted to participate. These include the Freedom Party, the Pro-Germany Party, the German Family Party, the German Conservative Party, the Civil Rights Party and the neo-fascist National Democratic Party.

Reflecting the growing social crisis in Germany, a striking number of political organisations focused on individual social problems. No less than four different parties representing pensioners sought to take part in the election—the Greys, the Grey Panther Party, the Pensioners Party and the German Pensioners’ Party. The latter was denied recognition because of incomplete paper work. Another participating group calls itself the Alternative for Social Justice.

In addition to the Left Party, which has exercised power in Berlin for the past 10 years in a coalition with the Social Democratic Party and bears responsibility for the dramatic social decline in the city, another “left” organisation participating in the election is the German Communist Party (DKP). Prior to German reunification in 1990, the DKP was the sister organisation in West Germany of the East German ruling Stalinist party.

The anti-social nature of the policies carried out in Berlin and nationwide underscore the extent to which all of the established political parties in Germany have embraced right-wing policies. All of these parties—including the Left Party, the Social Democratic Party and the Greens—accept the capitalist profit system and defend the interests of the banks and corporations.

The Socialist Equality Party is the only party fighting for a socialist perspective. It alone rejects the claim that due to existing economic and political constraints nothing can be done to defend or improve the situation of the vast majority of the population.

Because the PSG is not presently represented in the Berlin state parliament or the federal Bundestag, it must collect 2,200 signatures to appear on the ballot. That total represents nearly 0.1 percent of Berlin’s voting population. The signatories have to give their full name, date of birth and current address. The district election offices then verify this information on every individual form and certify that the signer is eligible to vote, has made a correct submission and has not signed on behalf of any other party. Only then can the PSG submit these confirmed signatures to the Regional Electoral Return Officer.

Despite these bureaucratic hurdles, the PSG has begun collecting signatures and has already encountered many people who are willing to support the candidacy of the PSG. A number were already familiar with the *World Socialist Web Site*.

The PSG encourages all readers to actively support our campaign, participate in the party's upcoming election events and discuss with our candidates.

The PSG is standing five candidates:



• Ulrich Rippert (60) is the chairman of the PSG and has been active in the Trotskyist movement for nearly 40 years. He is a member of the international editorial board of the *World Socialist Web Site*. Rippert has two daughters.



• Christoph Vandreier (30) works as a psychologist in the Berlin city program that provides support to drug addicts. He has been active for many years in the PSG and is a member of the party's executive.



• Susan Salamah (53) is an administrative worker in Berlin and a member of the executive of the PSG. She has two daughters and is a regular contributor to the *World Socialist Web Site*.



• Fabian Reymann (31) works as an IT consultant and is a member of the executive of the PSG. He has a son and is a regular contributor to the *World Socialist Web Site*.



• Endrik Bastian (47) is a nurse in Berlin and has been active in the PSG for nearly twenty years. He has three children.

More information is available on the web site of the PSG.



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