

SEP candidate Christoph Vandreier speaks on German television

Our correspondents
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Last Thursday, Christopher Vandreier, candidate of the Socialist Equality Party (Partei fur Soziale Gleichheit, PSG) for the forthcoming Berlin state election, spoke on behalf of the party in an election broadcast organized by the RBB television channel. The program was devoted to what are termed the “small parties” taking part in the current election. A total of 13 parties that are not yet represented in the Berlin state parliament were interviewed in turn by the news reporters Sascha Hingst and Cathrin Boehme.

The program was planned and stage-managed down to the last detail. In the last election broadcast held five years ago, the auditorium and program were open to all those interested. This time around the broadcasting center of the RBB was guarded by dozens of police. The public consisted of just three school classes from different schools in Berlin, which had been prepared for the broadcast on the basis of classroom discussions and questions for the various parties worked out in advance. A number of young people demonstrating outside the doors of the broadcasting center against the appearance of extreme-right parties were denied entry.

In his first question to the PSG candidate, Hingst referred to a central passage in the program of the party, which stated that the PSG does not fear, but rather welcomes a political explosion. The program goes on to assert that the masses should intervene in political events in order to oppose the autocratic power of the financial elite.

Vandreier answered by pointing to the historical crisis of capitalism and stated that the banks and corporations were currently prescribing brutal austerity measures to one European country after another.

“In Berlin we have experienced the way in which the Social Democrat-Left Party Senate implemented harsh austerity measures in order to rescue the Bank of Berlin,” Vandreier said. “This made clear that it did not matter which party was voted into power. In Greece and Spain supposedly left-wing governments have enforced massive savings programs dictated by the banks.

“We want to build a party that refuses to follow such diktats, but rather builds an international mass movement based on the working class to expropriate the banks and utilize the massive wealth accumulated at the top of society for social needs as a whole.”

The PSG stands for the right to education, the PSG candidate added, which should be massively expanded, and calls for an unconditional basic income of €1,500 for all. Only then will it be possible for everybody to participate equally in society. When Vandreier sought to address the issue of social inequality in Europe he was interrupted by the moderator, who declared that the program was devoted to issues surrounding Berlin and not Europe.

Vandreier stressed that the PSG was not just organizing its campaign based on Berlin issues, but rather in direct connection with the mass social movements in Egypt, Israel, Greece, UK and many other countries. He stated: “People are not stupid and we will not allow the banks to continue to dominate every aspect of social life and loot the economy.”

A student from the Herder Gymnasium asked whether

the mass uprising, as advocated by the PSG on the basis of providing a progressive orientation, would involve violence. Vandreier responded: "We propose that the majority of the population who have increasingly suffered from the cuts intervene independently in political life. It is not a question of violence but rather a matter of perspective. It is about the most basic democratic principles. We do not want a few reforms but rather the subordination of the economy to the democratic control of the population."

Vandreier was the only candidate from the 13 parties assembled to directly address the social problems in Berlin and Europe. When questioned, Andrew Baum from the Pirate Party, admitted that his party had no policy on economic issues, and had failed to develop any clear opinion.

The representative from the German Communist Party (DKP), Rainer Perschewski, used his speaking time to historically defend the construction of the Berlin Wall and stress that the veteran DKP Stalinists still remained faithful to the former East German Republic (GDR). A total of five extreme right-wing parties were allowed to spread their racist propaganda without any serious intervention from the moderators.

The program made clear that the PSG is the only party that challenges the Senate from a left-wing standpoint and articulates the interests of working people. It is able to do this with growing authority because it rejects the framework of capitalism and fights for a socialist perspective.

The entire broadcast (in German) can be viewed online at the web site of the RBB. Christoph Vandreier appears at the 55th minute of the program.



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