

Socialist Equality Party (PSG) vote in the Berlin election

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The Socialist Equality Party (PSG) received a total of 1,687 votes in the Berlin Senate election held on Sunday. This represents a threefold increase of its vote compared to the last election five years ago and represented the highest total for the party in the capital city in all of its campaigns for European, federal and state elections.

No less than two parties—the Pirates and the satirical group “The Party”—were built up by the media as a “safe” means of venting popular discontent. This means that the votes for the PSG represented not merely expressions of general dissatisfaction and protest, but rather a conscious decision to support its revolutionary program.

The result is all the more remarkable because of the veil of silence hung by the bourgeois media over the election campaign of the PSG. Apart from two very short articles hidden away in two Berlin-based newspapers, the only opportunity for the PSG to explain its policies via the bourgeois media was an appearance by one of its candidates in a short spot on a local television station. All other newspapers, radio and television stations refused to say a word about the PSG campaign—on occasion clearly due to open political hostility. In addition, unlike the other parties, the PSG receives no government grants or donations from large companies to assist in the propagation of its perspectives.

The increase in votes is therefore mainly due to the tremendous support the PSG received during the campaign. During the last seven weeks, dozens of campaign workers hung up thousands of posters, distributed over 200,000 flyers and spread the political campaign of the PSG in social networks. Numerous

discussions were held at a hundred information tables set up across the city. All these activities indicated considerable support for the PSG which was able to win a number of new contacts and members.

The vote for the PSG was particularly pronounced in the areas where it concentrated its campaign. In the districts of Steglitz, Charlottenburg Köpenick the result was quite low, but in Neukölln the party increased its vote sixfold to 0.2 percent and increased fivefold in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg (0.3 percent). In Neukölln 185 voted for the PSG (in 2006: 30) and in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg 270 voters (in 2006: 55)

In the elections for the district council (BVV) in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, the PSG won 0.4 percent of the vote—its best ever percentage result in an election. EU citizens and young people above 16 years are also eligible to vote in the elections to the BVV. In some electoral districts of the same suburb, the PSG obtained up to 3.1 percent of the votes cast.

Compared with the vacuous campaigns of other parties, the PSG focused on burning international issues and stressed the need for a revolutionary perspective. It called for the expropriation of the banks and their democratic control by the population. A final election meeting held last Saturday was attended by delegations from France and Britain, with many workers and young people from Berlin also in attendance.

“We have made a major step forward with this campaign,” declared Ulrich Rippert, the leading candidate, at the PSG election party on Sunday evening. “We campaigned as a self-confident, revolutionary alternative and met with great interest on the part of workers and youth, not only in this city, but

internationally. Tens of thousands of Berliners gathered information about our program and hundreds have been in contact with us.”

At the same time, he added, it could be noted that while workers expressed interest in our program and grappled with our international perspectives, many still shy away from drawing revolutionary conclusions and making the step of positively engaging in the work and activities of the PSG. “A great many people are now watching us and following what we have to say.” Rippert said, “They will actively turn towards us to the extent that class struggles openly develop in Germany.”



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