

Socialist Equality Party (Germany) officially on ballot for European election

Our reporter
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At its meeting last Friday, the Federal Electoral Committee approved the participation of the Socialist Equality Party (PSG) in the European election due to be held on May 25. The decision means that the electorate can now vote for the PSG in all German states.

When the time came for the PSG to be considered, the Federal Returning Officer reported that the party had fulfilled all of the legal requirements for participation. It had submitted all necessary documents for ballot status within the required time schedule. These documents include a common list for all states in accordance with European Election Rules (EUWO), a certificate of eligibility and the consent of the party's seven candidates, the minutes of the meeting of representatives to select the candidates for the common list, as well as an affidavit on the correct procedure of nominating candidates, plus statutes, party program and an address list of all executive members.

In addition the PSG submitted a total of 4,364 sheets of support signatures, all of which had been checked and stamped by the appropriate registry offices. This total was significantly more than the official stipulation of 4,000 signatures. After confirming that all formal requirements had been adhered to, the PSG was unanimously accepted for the election without any further discussion.

At the same meeting, the application for ballot status of a number of political associations was rejected, with most failing for formal reasons.

A total of 42 parties and political associations had applied to participate in the European election and just 25 were admitted. Five years ago a total of 38 parties and political associations had applied and 30 were accepted for the elections of 2009. This means that the number of rejections has more than doubled, from 8 to 17.

This is a remarkable development. Many voters have evidently concluded that current political and social conditions are intolerable and must be changed. At the same time, they quite rightly lack any confidence in the establishment parties. Those seeking genuine political change are not interested in the existing parties, which all complain of a loss of members. Instead there is an increasing trend towards founding new parties.

The new parties are a vote of no confidence in the official political set-up, and for their part the established parties react with open hostility.

Among the rejected parties were two that mainly engage retirees in campaigns against welfare cuts, the German Pensioners and the German Grey Panther Alliance. A representative of the German Pensioners' Party, which was approved five years ago, complained specifically about the bureaucratic obstacles thrown up by the election authorities to forestall the participation of new parties.

Following internal conflicts in the Pensioners' Party, an unauthorized group had submitted its own list on behalf of the party. Despite legal clarification the Federal Returning Officer initially accepted the list and then demanded the Pensioners' Party submit double the number of support signatures, i.e. 8,000 instead of 4,000. Both lists were then rejected for participation. The representative of the Pensioners' Party reacted angrily and said: "We were consciously excluded. Our party is regarded as undesirable."

In contrast, there was extended debate at the Electoral Committee meeting about the errors and legal inconsistencies in the submission of the "Alternative for Germany (AfD)." Despite these irregularities the party, which represents right-wing nationalist policies, was eventually approved on the grounds it was a new party with little experience in election formalities.

The PSG intends to use the election campaign to organize an intense party-building campaign and encourages all its readers to assist as poll workers and actively support the party's electoral campaign.

It is the only party that fights against the EU from the standpoint of the working class, combining opposition to war with the struggle against social cuts. The election manifesto of the PSG states: "Resistance to the austerity diktats of the European Union (EU), the attacks on democratic rights and imperialist war are growing everywhere. What is lacking is a party that calls things by their name, throws down the gauntlet to the ruling class and provides the growing opposition with a clear socialist and international orientation."

Given the dramatic events in Ukraine and the announcement by the German government that the period of military restraint was over, the PSG election manifesto, written over three months ago, has a prophetic character. The statement declares: "The US is deploying its massive military machinery in order to compensate for its economic decline, and to divert abroad the explosive social tensions at home. After wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, Washington is also turning against China in order to assert its world hegemony.

"The European powers are also throwing themselves once again into the struggle for spheres of influence, markets and resources. Since the Iraq war, Britain has again proved to be Washington's closest ally. France is falling upon its old colonies in Africa and the Middle East. And Germany, which following the crimes of the Nazis was forced to abstain from international military operations, is reasserting itself as a global power by pushing into Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Under these circumstances, a tiny spark would again suffice—as in the 1914 assassination of Arch Duke Ferdinand in Sarajevo—to turn a regional conflict into a global conflagration."

Under conditions where the EU and the German government openly support fascist organizations in Ukraine and are organizing an unprecedented media campaign promoting militarism, the PSG seeks to mobilize the working class on the basis of an international socialist program. At the center of the PSG election campaign is the demand: "Stop the warmongers! No more fascism and war!"



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