

European elections: PSG campaign against war evokes great interest in Stuttgart

Our reporters
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The Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (Socialist Equality Party of Germany—PSG) campaigned last week in Stuttgart to build for an April 26 meeting on the struggle against the war danger in Ukraine and the revival of German militarism. The meeting is to be addressed by PSG chairman Ulrich Rippert, the party's lead candidate in the European elections, to be held May 25 in Germany.

The campaign team distributed the PSG election manifesto at auto plants in and around Stuttgart, including at Daimler, Porsche and Bosch, and at the university. PSG supporters also campaigned for the meeting in working class neighbourhoods.

Most of the workers and students who stopped to talk opposed the intervention of the German government in Ukraine. Many distrusted the media and felt insufficiently informed about the events and their background. There was a widespread feeling that the media was serving as a propaganda arm of the government.

At shift change at the Daimler plant, many workers stopped to take a leaflet. When the campaign team spoke out denouncing German militarism, many workers approvingly raised their thumb.

At Marienplatz, an elderly couple speaking with PSG campaigners said, "We are not as well informed as you, but we see that there is a threat of a third world war."

They talked about the relationship between the preparations for war, rearmament and growing poverty. Asked about the European Union's austerity policies, the woman said, "When we travel from our home to Stuttgart, we encounter more beggars than before. Yes, poverty is increasing. I have often bought bread and distributed to the beggars."

The two took additional leaflets for family members and donated to the PSG campaign fund.

A young woman who is employed by the city council said, "of course" she was against Germany interfering in Ukraine and the militaristic foreign policy of the government. She felt uninformed because she had the impression the media served up only propaganda. To understand more about the historical background to today's events, she bought a copy of Leon Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* at the PSG bookstall. She also said she intended to more closely follow the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Four men from the former Yugoslavia discussed the PSG manifesto for the European elections. One of them, Dragan, translated the pamphlet for his colleagues.

Dragan, who is in his early sixties, expressed his agreement.

"This is the first time that I have read something in which every word is true," he said. He said he agreed with the assessment that the imperialist powers of Europe and the US, with their aggressive behaviour, were responsible for the intensification of the conflict with Russia. He was very concerned about the war-mongering being carried out by the German media.

Dragan has lived in Germany for 41 years and worked as a construction worker and truck driver. In 1998, he had his own experiences with the awakening of German militarism. He comes from Serbian Krajina and is now a citizen of Croatia. All his possessions were destroyed in the civil war in Yugoslavia, which Germany helped provoke in order to split up Yugoslavia.

Dragan insisted he had "no hatred for the Germans, because most were not responsible for it." He continued, "There are those at the top and those at the bottom in every country, the rulers and the broad majority."

A family man with his wife and two children said, “We need to stay away from the East. It’s all about power politics, not about the people or international law.”

Outside the cafeteria at the university, many expressed their spontaneous agreement with the PSG campaigners when they denounced German militarism. Many students knew little about the history of Ukraine or the colossal crimes perpetrated by German troops there during World War I and World War II. Hitler’s SS committed some of their worst war crimes there.

Many knew nothing about the political lineage of fascist groups such as the Right Sector and Svoboda, with which the German government collaborated to bring down the elected government in Kiev. They did not know that the predecessors of these organisations served as auxiliary troops of the Nazis and were complicit in war crimes and the Holocaust.

Uwe, a language student, acutely felt his lack of historical knowledge. Asked about the conflict in Ukraine, he said, “I would not directly call myself a socialist, but I also don’t like American imperialism. In Ukraine, a dangerous conflict is brewing. It would be absolutely essential to know more about the background to this. For example, I know very little about Trotsky. I will certainly look more closely at your web site. I am also very interested in the event on Saturday.”



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