

Partei für Soziale Gleichheit launches European election campaign in Berlin

Our correspondent
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The German Socialist Equality Party (Partei für Soziale Gleichheit, PSG) launched its election campaign in Berlin last Thursday by adamantly opposing the aggressive moves in Ukraine, undertaken by German imperialism, the US government and the EU, which threaten to lead to nuclear war with Russia. The PSG's campaign—via the Internet and on posters pasted throughout the city by many supporters in the past few days—calls for “the European elections to become a plebiscite against the warmongers and their accomplices in the media”.

“We will not allow the same social forces that have already twice plunged Europe and the world into catastrophic war to do it again,” declared Ulrich Rippert, the PSG's chairman and leading candidate, at the beginning of his speech.

He pointed out that the Easter marches, which drew only a few thousand participants, had exposed the bankruptcy of the old peace movement. The former pacifists among the Greens, the Left Party and the trade unions had transferred their allegiance completely to the camp of the pro-war advocates, and now fully support the view of the federal government, attacking the Russian government as the aggressor in the crisis.

A new anti-war movement, combining the struggle against war with a mobilisation against capitalism and social inequality, was urgently needed: “Therein lies the significance of the PSG's election campaign, which appeals to workers across Europe to join this struggle.”

Rippert gave a detailed analysis of the about-turn in German foreign policy, which he described as an “historic turning point and epochal change”. It had been initiated by President Joachim Gauck, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier (Social Democratic Party, SPD) and Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) at the Munich Security Conference earlier this year, when they emerged to demand the jettisoning of Germany's post-World War II “policy of military restraint”.

Gauck's October speech on the anniversary of the German reunification recalled the statement of Bernhard von Bülow prior to his chancellorship under Emperor Wilhelm: “We don't want to put anyone in the shade, but we do demand for ourselves a place in the sun.”

This aggressive stance on the part of the German government,

Rippert said, was accompanied “by deafening propaganda in the media, intended to suppress every scruple and intimidate every critical voice. Radio, television, press and online opinion makers frantically spread lies and distortions, recalling the techniques of Hitler's propaganda minister, Joseph Goebbels.”

As representative of many comments made by major newspapers, magazines and broadcasters, Rippert cited an article by Josef Joffe, editor of the pro-SPD *Die Zeit* weekly, which agitates against “Russia sympathisers” and pleads for overcoming “German provincialism”. The media propaganda is aimed at the population, which is predominantly opposed to war.

Rippert stressed that all the political parties have united in the push for war and rearmament. The SPD, which approved the state's acquisition of loans for the sake of pursuing war a hundred years ago and thus committed an historic betrayal of working people, had taken over “the role of warmonger”.

During an SPD memorial service in Berlin Cathedral on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the First World War, SPD chairman Sigmar Gabriel had railed against the “threat from the East” and claimed that Putin wanted to have “tanks roll across European borders”. Rainer Arnold, the SPD's so-called security expert, had used German First World War jargon to argue in favour of increasing NATO's “tank battalions”. The SPD was surpassed in this warmongering only by the Greens, who demanded even more robust attacks on Russia in the name of “human rights and humanity.”

Rippert noted, however, that “the most firmly committed of all the warring parties” was the Left Party, which supported the government line and blamed Russia for the crisis: “The Left Party is dropping its pacifist mask at a time when German militarism is returning to the world stage.”

This is also the case with the pseudo-left currents within the Left Party, such as Marx21 and the German Socialist Alternative (SAV), which celebrated the Maidan protests as a “democratic revolution” and trivialised the participation of the fascists. “What the PSG wrote earlier this year has been confirmed: 2014 is the year of falling masks,” Rippert said, adding, “We are faced with a veritable all-party conspiracy. The PSG is literally the only party that opposes the return of imperialism and the pursuit of war.”

The developments in recent months, which had surprised so many, were not simply reactions to the events in Ukraine; they had been prepared long beforehand.

Rippert drew attention to a *Die Zeit* report by Jochen Bittner, in which the author describes in detail how the German Institute for International and Security Affairs and the German Marshall Fund of the United States had led more than 50 representatives from political parties, the media, government departments and universities to engage for a whole year in formulating a reorientation of German politics. Gauck's speech, which was scripted by various government ministries, was a direct product of these discussions. Left Party executive member Stefan Liebich was also directly involved in the discussions.

"When we speak of an all-party conspiracy, we are not exaggerating; the term is justified by the detailed evidence presented in the *Die Zeit* article", Rippert said.

He stressed that the moves towards war were driven by the desperate crisis of world capitalism. The ruling elites were once again responding to the deepening gulf between the super-rich at the top of society and the general population by pursuing aggression abroad and preparing for dictatorship on the home front. Their collaboration with the fascists in Ukraine was to be understood as a warning.

"The only force that can prevent another world war and a disaster for the human race is the working class," said Rippert. "Despite all the distortions of the media and professors of history, no one can deny that the First World War was brought to an end by the October Revolution under the socialist leadership of the Bolsheviks. The continuation of the revolution in Germany and other countries was prevented by the treachery of the social democrats and Stalinists and this inevitably led to another world war and fascism."

The strength of the German Socialist Equality Party and its international sister parties lay in the fact that it addresses itself to the international working class, mobilising it on the basis of the historical lessons of the 20th century and the struggle of Leon Trotsky and the Fourth International for international socialism.

Ideological preparations for war

Christoph Vandreier, European parliament election candidate and deputy chairman of the PSG, focused his contribution on the ideological preparation for war. He recalled the October 1914 "Appeal to the Civilized World", three months after the beginning of World War I, in which 93 academics and artists had justified the war as a peace mission. Today's press articles and media commentaries sounded very similar.

He cited as an example an article by Dirk Kurbjuweit in the

current edition of *Der Spiegel* magazine. Like its cynical forerunners in 1914, the article depicts Germany as a force for peace, while Russia and China are said to be forcing the West into war. "This is bizarre lying, just like in the 1914 appeal", said Vandreier, as he went on to recall the wars of recent years against Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan and Mali, where the Western powers were clearly the aggressors.

These media lies had been systematically prepared at the universities in recent years by rewriting the history of the 20th century. "In order to prepare for another war today, the role of German imperialism in history had to be washed clean, and not just its role in the First World War, but also the crimes of the Nazis in World War II," he said.

Vandreier cited another article by the same *Der Spiegel* author, who denies Germany's war guilt in World War I and plays down the crimes of the Nazis. The article draws copiously on the words of Ernst Nolte, who in the 1980s had justified Hitler's war of aggression as a reaction to Bolshevism. Nolte is defended by Humboldt University professor Jörg Baberowski, who has been quoted as saying: "Hitler was not a psychopath, he was not cruel."

Vandreier noted that, in contrast to the 1980s, "hardly any opposition to war was stirring in academic circles this time round. Quite the contrary!" Those who had formerly objected to Nolte's revisionism, such as Jürgen Habermas, Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Hans Mommsen, had switched sides. "Baberowski is receiving applause even from left-wing institutions, such as the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation and the *Neues Deutschland* national daily."

The PSG candidate said the lies about history were connected with the theory of postmodernism: "As far as Baberowski, his role model Foucault, and other exponents of postmodernism are concerned, there is no such thing as a falsification of history; only various ways of telling a story."

Vandreier concluded by saying that whoever wanted to fight against war "must make historical truth the central issue." Lies had always constituted the foundation of war. The Socialist Equality Party grounds its political analysis on historical materialism and, on this basis, mobilises the working class against war and against capitalism.

Visitors to the event, who attentively followed the speeches of the PSG candidates, were deeply worried about the present situation. Lucas, a physics student, said: "The warmongering in the media is frightening and repulsive. I agree with the PSG's analysis. Wars are being waged for natural resources and that is ultimately grounded in the nature of the capitalist system."



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