

PSG campaigns in Cologne: “It is unacceptable that fascists are in power in Kiev”

Our correspondents
30 April 2014

Many people are responding with anger and disgust to the war-mongering by German politicians and the media. Over the past two weeks, members and supporters of the Socialist Equality Party in Germany (Partei für Soziale Gleichheit, PSG) spoke with workers, the unemployed and students in Cologne. They were publicising the meeting of the PSG planned for May 1 in Cologne as part of its campaign for the European elections.

Almost everyone who spoke to the PSG campaigners agreed that the policy being pursued by the German government, the United States and the European Union (EU) in the Ukraine crisis was directed against Russia and could provoke war. The main source of outrage was the war propaganda of the media.

Due to their experiences with wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and Syria, many were not surprised that the US and EU were pursuing their economic and geopolitical interests via military means. But most were taken aback by the media’s reportage and its demands for military deployments to eastern Europe.

On Saturday, a team campaigned in the district of Kalk for the PSG meeting. Around 22,000 residents live in this traditional working class district, and more than half have an immigrant background. Many thousands were employed in the steel, metal and chemical industries well into the 1980s. All of the major plants have been closed now for some time, and, as a result, unemployment is 25 percent higher than in other areas of the city.

Pascal came to Germany 15 years ago from Burkina Faso. The African state is among the poorest countries in the world. Economic subjugation, corruption, coups, violence and authoritarian rule have characterised the

country for decades.

He took the PSG’s election statement, “No to war!,” shook his head and attacked the media, saying, “It is getting worse. The media is totally corrupt. They only propagate what the government tells them.” There didn’t seem to be a free press any more, he said. He was following developments in Ukraine very closely.

“It is a catastrophe, and it will get worse,” Pascal stated. “We are experiencing a new colonialist policy that is concerned with economic interests.” This had been the case in Iraq, in Afghanistan and in Libya, he added, and things are no different currently in Syria. “All of the wars have only brought suffering to the populations there, nothing has changed for the better,” he said.

The US and European countries were now targeting Russia in Ukraine. “The EU, US and NATO are pursuing an increasingly aggressive policy. It is like in the Cold War. The world, as it is now, frightens me.”

Rita Popova, 65, explained that she was born in Ukraine, lived for some time in Moldova and has now been in Germany for 16 years.

“My Jewish family was virtually totally exterminated during the fascist occupation of Ukraine. For us it is unacceptable that fascists are governing today in Kiev,” she commented. For her it is unbelievable that after the experiences of Nazi rule, there are forces involved in the Ukrainian government who honour the fascists Stepan Bandera and Adolf Hitler.

“The German media is not informing the people here correctly,” she said. “They are spreading lies about eastern Ukraine and Russia. Ordinary people need to hear what the population in Donetsk and Kharkov think and say.”

The entire German and European population would then understand that German foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and French president François Hollande were “committing grave errors,” because both were supporting the Kiev government against Russia and provoking a military clash that could produce a war between the EU, US and Russia.

Popova was outraged that Steinmeier and others were cooperating with the fascist Svoboda. “It is also a bad sign when fascists are brought into the European Union.” This would have bad consequences “for the people in Germany and the whole of Europe as well”, she said.

Nurettin Özdemir from Kalk was not surprised by the support from German politicians and the media for fascists. The 52-year-old had already had negative experiences with the police when he protested against a fire started by arsonists in Solingen. On May 29, 1993, five members of the Genç family between the ages of 4 and 27 lost their lives in the racist crime.

“Already at that time, the right was used to agitate against foreigners. The police looked on,” said Özdemir. The right was emerging again today in the European elections to agitate against foreigners, he said, “even though us Turks have been here for 50 years.” He gestured with his arm along Kalk’s main street where numerous Turkish businesses, grocery stores, cafes and shops are to be found. “We are firmly integrated. The right wants to divide us like the people in Ukraine.”

Wolfgang, a worker from Cologne who stopped at the PSG’s campaign table, was disgusted. “The media think we are easily deceived,” Wolfgang stated. He had rubbed his eyes in amazement at the reporting of the Maidan protests. “There was something wrong there, one could see that immediately. They wanted to tell us about peaceful demonstrators. But these peaceful demonstrators were masked, carried weapons and wore army clothing. He took the PSG election statement with him.

An elderly Russian married couple made a point of coming to the PSG’s campaign stall. They had already seen the numerous placards in the area the previous day announcing the PSG meeting on May 1. They have lived for 17 years in Cologne. While no defenders of Putin, they believed that Russia was in the right. “The EU and US are destabilising all countries around

Russia. Their policy in Ukraine is a provocation.”



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