

PSG election campaign gains significant support in Berlin

Our correspondents
12 May 2014

The Socialist Equality Party in Germany (Partei für Soziale Gleichheit, PSG) has placed the struggle against militarism and war at the centre of its European election campaign. At election rallies, information stands and meetings, this has met with considerable interest and led to important discussions.

Last week in Berlin the PSG began its election campaign at 6 a.m. People on their way to work listened attentively as Ulrich Rippert and Christoph Vandreier presented themselves as PSG candidates and, along with party supporters, distributed election material.

“We are charging the German government with deliberately provoking the crisis in Ukraine, and using it to justify and carry out the rearming of the German military and NATO,” Rippert and Vandreier explained. The call to make the election on May 25 to the European parliament into a referendum against war and militarism met with widespread support. Within a short time, thousands of election statements were distributed.

Last Tuesday, the PSG organised a rally in the Berlin working class neighbourhood of Wedding. The party’s speakers explained the conspiracy behind the warmongering of the German media.

Events in Odessa had shocked many people and dominated discussion at the rally. A mob of football hooligans led by the neo-Nazi Right Sector attacked pro-Russian demonstrators in Odessa. When they sought to flee to the trade union headquarters, the fascists set fire to the building. Although YouTube videos showed how government-aligned fascists celebrated while people jumped to their death from the burning building, and how those who survived were subsequently brutally assaulted, the media turned reality on its head and made Russia responsible.

Vandreier explained that the media lies were part of a

political campaign prepared over a long period of time and were aimed at implementing a shift in German foreign policy toward militarism and war. The announcement from German president Joachim Gauck, foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and defence minister Ursula von der Leyen that the era of German military restraint was over had been discussed for months by the president’s and chancellor’s offices and various government ministries with academics, representatives from business and the media.

A teacher followed the speeches at the Wedding rally and said afterwards, “I am concerned by the mainstream press, which has a one-sided view of the whole situation. I’m very concerned about the warmongering. Even in the magazine *Der Spiegel* one can describe one article after the other as war propaganda.” An Italian joined in the discussion, saying, “Everything is going in the wrong direction. I think the warmongering is a disaster.”

At a subsequent election meeting, the inclusion of the so-called opposition parties in parliament at the highest levels in the foreign policy conspiracy was discussed. Rippert noted that Omid Nouripour for the Greens and Stefan Liebich of the Left Party had taken part in the development of a strategy paper at the German Institute for Foreign Affairs (SWP) that played a decisive role in the revival of German militarism.

Both Nouripour and Liebich are leading foreign policy politicians in their parties. Nouripour is a representative on the parliamentary defence committee, and Liebich a member of the foreign affairs committee. Liebich also sits on the Left Party’s executive. He had been the driving force behind a new orientation of the Left Party on the question of war and, for the first time, ensured that five Left Party members voted for a foreign intervention by the German army just a few

weeks ago, Rippert added.

At a further rally in Berlin Neuköln, there was applause for the speakers. An Iranian returned to the information stand after he had read the PSG's election statement. He said, "You have written what I have been thinking the whole time. Germany, her European allies and the Americans have intervened in events to provoke Ukraine." Former boxer and right-wing Ukrainian politician Vitali Klitschko had close ties to Germany and had been well prepared for his role. "This has been planned in the EU [European Union] for several years," he said.

A pensioner told the PSG campaigners, "I was born in 1928 and live in a home for the elderly. If I could, I would do something. I have seen a lot. It makes me crazy: the lies and hypocrisy." Responding to the question of how she experienced the Nazi regime, she said, "My parents had a lot of Jewish friends, my father always spoke against Hitler and war, was almost shot and was saved by the skin of his teeth. From a young age our parents made clear to us how bad Hitler was." It was hard to believe, she said, that all of this was coming back.

At another election meeting the central question was why the PSG was the only party in this election campaign opposing the drive to imperialist war. PSG chairman Rippert explained that this was bound up with the history of the PSG and the international Trotskyist movement. The PSG's strength was that it always stood for an international socialist programme under all conditions, and explained the connection between capitalism and war.

Last Thursday, ZDF television filmed a PSG information stand. Last year, during the federal election campaign, the same television channel broadcast a distorted, dishonest report on the PSG. Reminded of this, the responsible ZDF editor commented on Thursday that there had been "a great deal of anger at the time" and it would not be repeated this time.

In response to the question why the PSG was taking part in the European elections, Rippert answered, "We call upon the population to make the election a referendum against war." Rippert said that the European parliament decided nothing and was only a fig leaf for the hated Brussels bureaucracy. Nonetheless, the election had to be used to lay down a marker against war.

Vandreier explained why the PSG opposed the EU. The EU is the instrument of the banks and major concerns, serving to attack the social rights of the workers. "The European parliament is an entirely undemocratic institution," said Vandreier, and added, "We will publish all secret documents and agreements if we are elected."

In addition to the rallies and meetings, PSG election campaigners have been hanging up placards that are clearly distinguished from those of the other parties. With the slogans "No more war" and "Vote against war, vote PSG," the PSG stands against all the other parties who support the drive to war and defend the EU on their election placards.

The PSG will continue to intensify its campaign in the coming two weeks and urges all readers to register as election supporters.

Visit the SEP (UK) website (English) and the PSG website (German) for more information on the election campaign.



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