

European elections: PSG campaigns in Leipzig

Our correspondents
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Last week, a team from the Socialist Equality Party (*Partei für Soziale Gleichheit*, PSG) distributed the party's election appeal "Vote against war! Vote PSG!" in the German city of Leipzig and won considerable support.

Members and supporters distributed thousands of leaflets at information tables across the city, at job centres, and during shift changes at BMW autos and the city's Amazon warehouse. Supporters also hung many copies of the party's posters for the European election throughout the city.

Municipal elections take place in the east German state of Saxony on the same day as the European elections, and the former election completely dominates in Leipzig. Posters with the pictures of local politicians feature everywhere, often accompanied with banal slogans. The right-wing Alternative for Germany Party has departed from its usual slogans in favour of the message: "We love Leipzig".

None of the posters draw attention to the growing threat of war or the revival of German militarism, and this is no coincidence.

The discussions carried out by the PSG team with workers and young people quickly revealed, however, that the threat of war was an important issue which affected many in the course of their extremely busy and stressful lives.

While there was relatively little interest in the European elections, the issue of war, which the PSG has placed at the centre of its campaign, led to many lively discussions. Workers and students eagerly took and read the statements handed out by the PSG that dealt concretely with the danger of war arising from the most recent developments in Ukraine.

Many were aware that the change of regime in Kiev was brought about by fascist gangs backed by Western

governments, with Germany at the forefront. There was less clarity, however, that the military upgrading of NATO in eastern Europe was not a result of developments in Ukraine, but conversely the coup in Ukraine was deliberately provoked to set in motion long-standing plans for the intensification of NATO operations along Europe's border with Russia.

There was also little awareness that the aggressive stance adopted by the German government in Ukraine was part of a fundamental change in German foreign policy, which had also been worked out some time ago by an alliance of all the main parties and was first publicly announced in October last year by President Gauck—i.e., the end of a foreign policy based on military restraint.

On one question, however, there was broad agreement: the lack of any genuine independent reporting in the German media. One young worker expressed this quite clearly, saying, "The manner in which the major newspapers and TV channels have simultaneously adopted the same line and almost overnight aggressively agitate against Russia is really striking and somewhat threatening."

Historical and social issues were also the subjects of discussions in Leipzig. Two Polish philosophy students were so impressed by the foresight of the writings of Leon Trotsky, which were available at a book table set up at the university library, that they sought an on-the-spot interview with a PSG member on the significance of Trotsky for their own project.

Another student from Spain was very interested in the party's assessment of the European Union (EU), which corresponded with his own view that the EU is mainly an instrument in the hands of European banks and corporations to enforce social attacks on the population in every European country.

One worker at Amazon responded enthusiastically to the party's aim to unite workers internationally, saying, "In an international conglomerate such as Amazon, it is only possible to defend one's rights internationally." She had worked for the company for three years, commenting, "I am only doing this, like many others, because it is impossible to find anything else in the region."

In the course of the discussion, she expressed her shock at the cold-blooded reaction of the Turkish government to the recent mining disaster in Soma, and she also related an incident at her workplace where management had played Russian roulette with the lives of workers.

Last autumn, the press reported that an abandoned suitcase had been found on the premises of Amazon. The police were subsequently alerted and 1,000 people evacuated from the surrounding area. The workers at Amazon, however, were required to remain at their posts. Evidently, management had concluded that an hour-long interruption to company operations was too problematic, ignoring the possibility that hundreds of employees could have been become victims of a bombing.

On Sunday, the PSG held an election rally in Leipzig. Peter Schwarz from the editorial board of the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke at length on the background to the crisis in Ukraine, the war policy of the ruling class and the political response of the PSG. In addition to a number of workers and young people from Leipzig, two Russian immigrants also took part, evidently motivated to attend by the growing media and political campaign against Russia.



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