

Support the election campaign of the Socialist Equality Party in Berlin! Vote against war and militarism!

The Partei für Soziale Gleichheit
25 April 2016

The Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (PSG—Socialist Equality Party) is standing in the Berlin state elections in September to provide a political perspective to mobilize the broad opposition to war and social cuts. As was the case 100 years ago, only an international socialist movement against capitalism can prevent a world war. To all those seeking to oppose war, oppression, nationalism and social inequality, we say: Do all you can to support the PSG election campaign!

Of all the problems confronting workers and young people, the growing danger of war is the most urgent. For 25 years, the US has carried out a virtually unbroken series of wars. It has destroyed whole societies, as in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria. It is encircling Russia and China militarily and has provoked conflicts in Ukraine, the South China Sea and Korea that threaten to unleash a world war.

Nuclear arsenals are being restocked and the use of atomic weapons seriously considered. A recent report by the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies came to the conclusion that an atomic war between India and Pakistan would “not necessarily have serious grand strategic consequences” for the US, and “might well have benefits.”

Germany’s ruling elites want to ensure that in the fight for a re-division of the world and the scramble for raw materials and markets, they do not emerge empty handed. Seventy years after the downfall of Hitler’s Third Reich, they are once again striving to make Germany a world power and Europe’s hegemon.

Two years ago, the German government announced the “end of military restraint.” Ever since, the government and the media have systematically promoted militarism. In NATO’s drive against Russia in Eastern Europe, in the wars in the Middle East, and in Africa, the Bundeswehr (German Armed Forces) are operating on multiple and distant fronts. German Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen has announced additional defence spending of 130 billion euros, and the new Defence White Paper foresees the deployment of the Bundeswehr both at home and in new foreign missions.

At the root of the return of German militarism is the profound

crisis of world capitalism. In 2008, the criminal exploits of the banks drove the world financial system to the brink of the abyss. Since then, the crisis has further intensified. A massive speculative bubble threatens to burst and unleash a new financial crisis. The bitter struggle for markets and profits is undermining entire industries and threatening millions of jobs. The European Union, once the framework for political stability in Europe, is breaking apart and becoming the cockpit for ferocious class battles and national conflicts.

While wages, pensions and social benefits are sinking, and the younger generation is left without a future, a tiny minority at the top of society wallows in obscene levels of wealth. The 62 richest individuals in the world possess more wealth than the poorest half of humanity.

The ruling elites are reacting to the crisis of the capitalist system as they did in the 1930s. They are carrying out wars and planning even bigger ones. They are whipping up nationalism and strengthening the state apparatus of repression in anticipation of social upheavals. They are witch-hunting refugees and building up far-right and fascist forces such as the Alternative for Germany (AfD), the National Front in France and Donald Trump in the US.

All of the establishment parties are closing ranks and veering to the right. They take an identical stance when it comes to social cuts, rescuing the banks and increasing military spending. They do not represent the interests of the broad mass of the population, but only the richest 10 percent.

The Social Democratic Party (SPD), once considered the party of social reform, is today the party of the Hartz IV welfare and labour counter-reforms, raising the retirement age to 67 and imposing cuts within the framework of the “debt ceiling.” The SPD no longer rests on the working class, but on well-paid functionaries and upper-middle class layers. Berlin, where its candidate has been mayor for 15 years, has become the capital of poverty.

The Greens, who began their rise under the banner of peace and environmentalism, have become the most aggressive warmongers. They have cast themselves as a “business party of the modern type,” in the words of the Green Party premier for

the state of Baden-Württemberg, Winifried Kretschmann.

A particularly pernicious role is played by the Left Party. The only thing “left” about this party is its name. In the Berlin Senate, it championed the redistribution of wealth from the bottom to the top and carried out a policy of social devastation. It long ago swung behind the government’s militarist course.

The rightward turn of all the establishment parties can be seen most clearly in the disgusting witch-hunt against refugees. Desperate people fleeing war in the Middle East are being abused, crammed into prison camps and deported to Turkey. Hundreds drown in the Mediterranean every month. The attacks on refugees provide succour to the far right and serve as the pretext for the shredding of democratic rights. They are directed against the entire working class.

Opposition to militarism and war, the defence of social and democratic rights, the support of refugees, and the struggle against the far-right AfD are inseparably connected. Mankind once again confronts the alternative: Either the capitalist system plunges the world into barbarism and war, or the working class, the overwhelming majority of the population, overthrows capitalism and builds a better society based on equality and democratic planning.

Only an international movement of the working class can repulse the right wing and halt the drive to war. Such a revolutionary movement is not only necessary, it is also possible. All over the world, the opposition to social devastation and war is growing. In France, tens of thousands of young people are demonstrating against labour market “reforms,” flouting the state of emergency and police state measures imposed by the Hollande government. In the US, the campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination of Bernie Sanders, who falsely calls himself a “socialist,” is winning the votes of millions of workers and youth who are looking for an alternative to capitalism.

In Germany too, great class battles are on the agenda. In the steel and auto industries, in engineering, in retail and in all areas of the public sector, drastic social cuts and sackings are being prepared. It is necessary to develop a conscious movement against war and capitalism out of all these struggles. This requires an international and socialist perspective, advanced only by the Partei für Soziale Gleichheit.

As the German section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), the world party of socialist revolution, the PSG stands in the tradition of revolutionary Marxism, defended by Leon Trotsky against the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union.

The building of the Fourth International is the focus of our campaign. Here in the capital of Germany, where the return of German militarism is being prepared and implemented, where university professors justify war and dictatorship, and where all parties participate in social attacks, we counterpose the unity of the international working class to capitalist barbarism.

The basis of our participation in the election is the statement

“Socialism and the Fight Against War” published by the ICFI. It advocates the following principles for building an anti-war movement:

* The struggle against war must be based on the working class, the great revolutionary force in society, uniting behind it all progressive elements in the population.

* The new anti-war movement must be anti-capitalist and socialist, since there can be no serious struggle against war except in the fight to end the dictatorship of finance capital and the economic system that is the fundamental cause of militarism and war.

* The new anti-war movement must therefore, of necessity, be completely and unequivocally independent of, and hostile to, all political parties and organizations of the capitalist class.

* The new anti-war movement must, above all, be international, mobilizing the vast power of the working class in a unified global struggle against imperialism. The permanent war of the bourgeoisie must be answered with the perspective of permanent revolution by the working class, the strategic goal of which is the abolition of the nation-state system and the establishment of a world socialist federation. This will make possible the rational, planned development of global resources and, on this basis, the eradication of poverty and the raising of human culture to new heights.

It is on this basis that we plan to conduct a powerful campaign. We call on all those who agree to support the PSG election campaign. Make a generous donation today to help our campaign! If you are eligible to vote in Berlin, sign the petition form to enable our participation! Distribute this statement and other articles among your colleagues and via social networks! Take part in the election campaign and become a member of the PSG!



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