

Socialist Equality Party (Germany) files over 3,000 signatures for Berlin state election

Our reporters
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The Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (Socialist Equality Party—Germany) has filed over 3,000 signatures with the Berlin state election supervisor and the relevant district election offices in order to participate in the elections for the Berlin House of Representatives on September 18. This more than satisfies the legal requirement. (Berlin is one of Germany's 16 federal states.)

A certificate of eligibility must be obtained from the authorities for each signatory. The signature of any PSG supporter who does not have German citizenship or is not yet 18 years old would be disallowed.

With the filing of more than 3,000 signatures, the PSG has now fulfilled all the conditions necessary to participate with a state-wide list in the elections for the Berlin legislature and six constituency candidates in Wedding, Tempelhof-Schöneberg and Friedrichshain. The PSG is also standing its own lists in the elections to the district councils in Berlin Mitte and Tempelhof-Schöneberg.

The fact that the PSG submitted significantly more than the required number of signatures despite official restrictions is a major political success. Over recent months, the PSG organised a concentrated political campaign in Berlin, holding rallies and meetings, distributing leaflets and discussing with thousands of workers and young people.

The campaign centred on the fight against the return of German militarism and the growing threat of war. Party supporters in Berlin sold over 1,000 copies of the International Committee of the Fourth International's statement "Socialism and the Fight Against War."

The ICFI statement explains how the unresolved issues of the 20th century have reemerged and once again confront humanity with the alternative: socialism or barbarism. "The drive to war is centred in the efforts

of the United States to maintain its position as the global hegemonic power. The dissolution in 1991 of the Soviet Union was seen as an opportunity to assert unrivalled US domination throughout the world."

At the same time, the statement makes clear that Washington's rivals in Japan and Europe are faced with the same internal contradictions and pursue no less predatory interests. "Seventy years after the fall of Hitler's Third Reich, the German ruling class is once again demanding that its state assert itself as the unquestioned overlord of Europe and as a world power. In the face of deeply felt anti-war sentiments within the German population, Berlin is deploying military force to assert its interests in the Middle East and Africa. It is pouring money into rearmament, while apologetics for the crimes of the Nazi regime are being advanced across the political establishment, media and academia, with the aim of justifying the revival of German imperialist ambitions."

Against the capitalist war policy, the ICFI statement counterposes the unification of the international working class on the basis of a socialist programme. It advances four principles on which a new anti-war movement must be built: (1) It must be based on the working class, (2) have a socialist perspective, (3) be independent of all capitalist parties and organisations and (4) unite workers internationally.

The PSG explained these principles at rallies in various parts of Berlin and at two public meetings—"The return of German militarism and the threat of World War III"—in the Mitte and Lichtenberg districts. PSG candidate Christoph Vandreier also spoke out against the NATO manoeuvres on the Russian border in a campaign video.

The PSG linked the struggle against war to the fight against nationalism and the social attacks on workers

throughout Europe. Its campaign was conceived as part of an international movement.

In April, the PSG campaigned intensively for the ICFI's International May Day online rally, which analyzed the key issues of contemporary world developments and formulated a perspective for the international working class. In Berlin, as in other German cities, the PSG held public viewings involving numerous workers and youth.

The campaign for a British exit from the EU was discussed at length at the May Day rally. On the eve of the Brexit referendum, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) invited the national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party in the UK, Chris Marsden, to Humboldt University in Berlin, to explain the position of the Trotskyist movement.

Marsden explained that the working class had to reject both camps in the referendum and take up the independent perspective of the United Socialist States of Europe. While the EU, as the representative of the continent's most powerful financial interests, was responsible for the most egregious social attacks, the Brexit referendum was dominated by nationalism and xenophobia. Only a socialist revolution could prevent the rise of noxious nationalism and unite the continent in a progressive fashion, Marsden argued. This message was repeated by PSG representatives at rallies and online.

When mass strikes against the reactionary labour reforms of the Hollande government broke out in France, the WSWS reported daily on the events. PSG members discussed the international significance of the battles in France with workers in Berlin. In particular, they emphasised the pernicious role of the trade unions, the Socialist Party and pseudo-left groups such as SYRIZA in Greece.

The PSG focused in particular on the brutal treatment of refugees in Berlin. The party participated in demonstrations organised by relief organizations and explained that the attacks on the democratic and social rights of refugees were directed against all workers in Germany. "What is necessary is a common struggle by refugees and all those living here against war and against its root, capitalism," Vandreier explained in a video.

Throughout the campaign, the PSG argued that workers needed an independent perspective and had to

oppose pseudo-left tendencies such as the Left Party. The PSG election statement reads: "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... 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 PSG received a powerful response to its campaign. "When we explain in discussions that we have nothing to do with the establishment parties, but advocate the expropriation of the banks and stand for a socialist society, we win great support," PSG candidate Peter Hartmann said. At the same time, there is considerable scepticism about all political parties, Hartmann said. "But when we point to the history of the Fourth International, which has struggled for decades against the betrayals of social democracy and Stalinism, this creates greater confidence."

At the end of July, the final phase of the election campaign will begin. The PSG will intensify its campaign against war, nationalism and social attacks. It will work closely with its sister organizations in France, Britain and all over the world to unite workers internationally. We call on WSWS readers in Germany to actively support the campaign.



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