

Socialist Equality Party (Germany) placed on ballot for Berlin election

Our reporter
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On Friday, the Berlin State Elections Committee voted unanimously to allow the state-wide list of candidates of the Socialist Equality Party (Partei für Soziale Gleichheit—PSG) to participate in the elections for the Berlin House of Representatives in September.

On Wednesday, the district election committees met and approved the PSG list for the district assemblies in the Berlin boroughs of Mitte and Tempelhof-Schöneberg, as well as the party's direct candidates.

According to German electoral law, eligible voters have two votes. The PSG can now be supported with a second vote in the state-wide elections on September 18 and a first vote in the electoral districts 5, 6 and 7 in Mitte, 2 and 4 in Tempelhof-Schöneberg, and 5 in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. The votes for the district assemblies will be issued on a separate ballot. In order to obtain ballot access, the PSG submitted more than 3,000 signatures from supporters.

"All of our candidates have been recognized," said PSG candidate Christoph Vandreier, who participated as party representative in the election committee session. "It is the first time that the PSG has also competed with direct candidates. We have decided to use every opportunity available in this campaign."

Other parties, such as the Tenant Party or the "Unity" Party, founded by Russian migrants, were excluded from the election during the undemocratic proceedings because they submitted too few signatures from supporters. Altogether, 14 state-wide lists and three parties with state-wide district lists were admitted. Four other parties will participate in single districts. In most districts the PSG will be listed in the twelfth position on the ballot.

"Our campaign is directed at all those who are not willing to accept the return of German militarism, increasing poverty and the rise of the right," said

Vandreier. "At the centre of our campaign is the fight against growing militarism and the drive toward war." These are the most pressing issues confronted by workers and youth in Germany's capital.

In Berlin, many global issues find a focal point. The city is the control centre of German militarism. It is here that war policy is prepared and decided and ideologically justified at the universities. Professors at Berlin's Humboldt University play a key role in the academic preparations for war.

The German elite are responding to the recent Brexit vote and the growing political, economic and social crisis in Europe with the militarization of the continent. The new "White Paper" of the German government provides for the domestic deployment of the army and a massive rearmament of the Bundeswehr and sets out a European foreign and defence policy dominated by Germany.

These policies go hand in hand with a severe social assault on the working population. The German government wants to enforce the conditions in Greece on the entire continent. Berlin plays a leading role in this as well. The Red-Red Senate of the Social Democratic Party and the Left Party in power till 2011 carried out unprecedented wage and social cuts, turning Berlin into the capital of poverty.

The politics of social assault and war have met with massive popular opposition. This is why dictatorial tendencies are emerging all over the world. As was the case before both world wars, militarism and police state measures are being enforced against the opposition of the workers. In Berlin, Interior Senator Frank Henkel is systematically building up the state. The attacks on the social and democratic rights of refugees serve as a lever to attack the rights of all workers and prepare for major class conflicts.

The working class must also prepare for these struggles. That is the significance of the PSG's election campaign. It exposes the conspiracy for war and fights for an independent perspective of the international working class.

Twenty-five years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the capitalist system has nothing more to offer humanity than social ruin, dictatorship and war. To fight against these developments, workers require a socialist perspective. Capitalism cannot be reformed. It must be abolished and replaced with a socialist society. Unless the controls of economic life are wrested from the financial aristocracy, not a single social problem will be solved.

A new anti-war movement can only be successful if it is international, bases itself on the working class and combines the fight against war with the fight against capitalism. The PSG sees its participation in the Berlin elections as part of an international campaign to build the Fourth International as the World Party of Socialist Revolution.

In the coming weeks, the PSG will publish an election statement in which these questions will be elaborated. On August 1, the critical stage of the campaign will begin, in which the statement will be distributed to tens of thousands throughout Berlin. The party has registered dozens of book tables and will hang thousands of posters in order to show that there is a party which has pledged to oppose the drive to war.

In the five weeks before the election, the PSG will hold weekly meetings in several districts of Berlin which will address different themes of the election program. The return of German militarism, the growth of nationalism in Europe and the revival of class struggle throughout the world will be among the subjects discussed.

In these meetings, the independent perspective of the working class will be developed. They will demonstrate how all parties that defend capitalism shift to the right and defend militarism. In particular, pseudo-left organizations such as the Left Party in Germany or Syriza in Greece play a decisive role in imposing militarist policies and social attacks against the population. They represent an affluent layer of the middle class and are hostile to the interests of workers.

In addition to representatives of the PSG, international guests from France, Russia, Britain and

the US will speak at the meetings and explain the international perspective of the International Committee of the Fourth International. The presentations and discussions will be available online so that they may directly reach the European and international working class.

The PSG campaign will also have a strong online presence. It will make use of social networking, including Facebook and Twitter, publishing videos and daily articles from the *World Socialist Web Site*.

We call on all readers to diligently support the campaign of the PSG. Spread our election materials online. Organize a meeting in your area. Tell your friends and colleagues about the campaign. Subscribe to the newsletter and register as a supporter. Donate to the PSG so that it can lead the strongest campaign offensive possible.



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