

Life instead of profits! Socialism instead of capitalist barbarism!

Support the SGP's campaign for the German federal election!

Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei
5 February 2021

The coronavirus pandemic has exposed the bankruptcy of capitalism before the eyes of the entire world. More than 2 million people died during the first year of the pandemic; hundreds of millions have been infected. They are the victims of a policy that sacrifices the health and lives of working people for the profits of the financial oligarchy. Instead of shutting down schools and businesses and providing financial support to compensate for the social consequences, the governments have forked over huge sums to the banks and major corporations. The stock markets are now celebrating record gains, while coffins pile ever higher in the crematoriums and hundreds of thousands of workers lose their jobs and incomes.

The pandemic is not the cause of this crisis. It merely exacerbated it. Wages, pensions and welfare benefits have long been under attack and health care and education spending cut to the bone, while a tiny minority has enriched itself to unprecedented levels and vast sums have been used for military rearmament and wars. The capitalist system is dominated by a financial oligarchy, whose rule is no longer compatible with democracy. This is the reason why fascist forces are being promoted everywhere.

But opposition to this is growing. Strikes and protests by teachers, students, health care and other workers against the ruling class's murderous strategy are on the rise. In the US, autoworkers have struck for safe working conditions. In India, millions of farmers are protesting against the government, protests against police violence broke out in every country, and several demonstrations occurred in Germany against the far-right Alternative for Germany and the right-wing agenda of the Christian Democrat (CDU)-Social Democrat (SPD) grand coalition government.

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) is standing in the federal election to give this opposition a voice and a perspective. We do not seek to treat the symptoms of a sick system, but advocate the overthrow of capitalism and the building of a socialist society. Together with our sister parties in the International Committee of the Fourth International, we unite workers across all borders in their struggles against social inequality, fascism and war.

The fundamental contradictions of the global capitalist system, which led to two world wars, are erupting once again. As in the 1930s, workers confront the choice: international socialism or capitalist barbarism. No social problem can be resolved without expropriating the banks and major corporations and placing them under the democratic control of the working class. Their profits and wealth must be confiscated, and the trillions given to them over the past year must be returned. The world economy must be reorganised on the basis of a scientific, rational plan.

To realise this programme, the working class requires its own party. Support our participation in the federal election now with your signature and become a member of the SGP!

Life instead of profits!

The coronavirus policies pursued by all the parties in government at the federal and state levels, from the CDU/Christian Social Union to the Left Party, are determined by the interests of the financial oligarchy. They leave schools and businesses open so that profits continue to flow, and thereby implement in practice the programme of the COVID-19 deniers and the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). The result of this murderous policy is the greatest mass death since World War II.

While nurses are worked to death in chronically underfunded hospitals and there is no money for even rudimentary air filters in schools, the federal government and European Central Bank gifted hundreds of billions of euros to the major banks and corporations through stock purchasing programmes and stimulus packages. As a result, the DAX, Germany's main stock exchange, has climbed by 60 percent in 10 months, reaching an historic high. The 10 richest Germans have increased their wealth by 35 percent during the pandemic to \$242 billion. The richest 1 percent of the population possesses as much wealth as the poorest 75 percent.

The fight to contain the pandemic is developing into a class struggle, which is showing ever more clearly that the two major classes in society, the capitalist class and the working class, have irreconcilable interests. The official pandemic policy puts profits before human lives. We demand:

The immediate shutdown of all nonessential businesses until the pandemic is under control! Full payments of wages for all workers affected as well as real assistance for the self-employed and comprehensive support for poor households! A globally coordinated vaccine campaign instead of vaccine nationalism and profiteering!

Defend all jobs!

The major corporations are exploiting the horrific consequences of the coronavirus pandemic to carry out long-planned rationalisations so as to destroy hundreds of thousands of jobs. In the auto industry alone, 500,000 jobs are on the chopping block.

We fight for the defence of every single job and demand a programme of public works in socially critical sectors, such as education, health care and environmental protection!

Stop militarism!

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, all of the great powers are preparing for new wars in order to pursue their economic interests. The federal government cut the budgets for health care and education in 2021 and increased the military budget to a record high of close to €50 billion.

In a government statement, Chancellor Angela Merkel demanded that during the coronavirus crisis it is necessary to “do everything so we not only retain Germany’s strength in the economic sector, but also in the global competition of systems.” Millions are to die so that the German financial elite can pursue its imperialist interests with military force.

We demand: An immediate end to all foreign interventions! Dissolution of NATO and the German armed forces! Billions for education and jobs instead of rearmament and war!

Fascism never again!

Mass death, social inequality and war are incompatible with democracy. This is why the ruling elite around the world is turning to authoritarian forms of rule. Donald Trump’s attempted fascist coup of January 6 showed that even the oldest Western democracy is breaking down. This will not change under President Biden, who represents the same interests of Wall Street as Trump and preaches “unity” and “reconciliation” with his supporters. In Europe, the filth of the past, which was long thought to have been overcome, is being resurrected: Volkish nationalism, racism, militarism.

The threat from the right is particularly acute in Germany. The police, army, and intelligence agencies are infested with right-wing extremist terrorist networks that enjoy support from the highest levels of the state. Despite the deadly terrorist attacks in Halle, Hanau and other places, and the murder of Kassel District President Walter Lübcke, the leaders and backers of these fascist structures remain free men.

By contrast, the state and government clamp down on anyone who resists the far-right. The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei was placed under surveillance by the domestic intelligence agency because it, in the words of the Interior Ministry, agitates against “alleged nationalism, imperialism, and militarism” and “advocates a democratic, egalitarian and socialist society.”

In the universities, professors are trivialising the Nazis’ crimes. The AfD was systematically built up by the political establishment and media. With its decision to continue the grand coalition after the last federal election despite suffering massive vote losses, the SPD and CDU/CSU made the right-wing extremist party the official opposition and integrated it into parliamentary affairs.

All parties then adopted the right-wing extremists’ inhumane programme and put it into practice: Sealing Europe’s external borders, mass deportations and inhuman camps for refugees, the building of a police state, the largest programme of rearmament since the Nazis, and lastly, the murderous policy of infecting the population en masse.

The SGP resists the rise of the far-right. We defend all democratic rights and fight against the censorship of the Internet by governments and big business. We demand equal rights for everyone who lives here, a halt to deportations and the closure of all deportation camps. The surveillance of the SGP and other left-wing organisations by the intelligence agencies must be stopped and the domestic intelligence agency must be dissolved. Freedom for Julian Assange!

Workers need their own party

These demands cannot be realised with appeals to the ruling elite, but only through the independent mobilisation of the international working class. The SGP therefore supports all genuine initiatives by workers and calls for the formation of rank-and-file action committees in workplaces, schools and neighbourhoods, which will unite internationally and organise workers’ struggles.

To enforce their interests, workers require above all their own party. All parliamentary parties advocate social spending cuts, the strengthening of the repressive state apparatus, military rearmament, and the deadly coronavirus policy in the interests of the financial oligarchy. This applies to the openly right-wing and right-wing extremist as well as the nominally left parties.

Under the chancellorship of Gerhard Schröder, the SPD and Greens organised the greatest transfer of wealth from the bottom to the top in history with the Agenda 2010 reforms. With its chancellor candidate, the current Finance Minister Olaf Scholz, the SPD is currently spearheading the anti-worker agenda of the grand coalition. The Greens, which organised the first German military interventions since the Second World War in Kosovo in 1999 and Afghanistan in 2001, are enthusiastic militarists and are keen to establish a governing coalition with the CDU.

The Left Party is also a vociferous defender of German imperialism. Wherever they govern at the state level in coalition with the pro-war, pro-austerity parties, the Left Party cuts social spending, deports refugees and makes deals with the AfD, as in Thuringia. With its roots in the Stalinist state party in East Germany, the SED, as well as the SPD and trade union bureaucracy in West Germany, its hostility to the working class is to be found in its DNA. The Left Party represents the interests of the state and privileged sections of the middle class.

The trade unions also no longer represent the interests of working people. They organise job cuts, smother all opposition, and ensure as the capitalists’ factory police force that production continues to run smoothly during the pandemic, despite terrible working conditions.

To defend their interests, workers must build the SGP as a new mass socialist party. As the German section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, the SGP stands in the tradition of the Trotskyist movement, which defended the Marxist programme of socialism against both Stalinism and social democracy.

The struggle of the Left Opposition and the ICFI provides living proof that there is a socialist alternative to Stalinism. Stalin embodied the dictatorship of a small privileged bureaucracy, which seized hold of power in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and expanded this after World War II into Eastern Europe and the GDR. Thirty years ago, it was the Stalinists who reintroduced capitalism, with horrendous social and political results around the world.

For the United Socialist States of Europe!

Workers in every country around the world confront the same problems and can only oppose exploitation, militarism and fascism by uniting. This is why our election campaign is not restricted to Germany but addresses itself to workers throughout Europe! We will conduct it together with our European sister parties, the Socialist Equality Party in Britain, the Parti de l’égalité socialiste in France, and Sosyalist E?itlik Grubu in Turkey.

To the European Union (EU) of the banks, big business, and militarism, we counterpose the unification of Europe from below. The European Union is not an alternative to the growth of nationalism, but rather

encourages it. The EU dictates ruthless austerity programmes in the interest of capital, arms the police and intelligence agencies to the teeth, rearms the military and therefore strengthens the most right-wing political forces. Only if the working class unites throughout Europe and takes up the fight for the United Socialist States of Europe can a relapse into barbarism be prevented.

We call on all who are unwilling to tolerate the return of German and European militarism, the growth of poverty and the rise of the far-right to support the SGP's election campaign.

Share and discuss this election statement with friends, colleagues and acquaintances, and collect signatures to support our participation in the election.

Register today as an active supporter of our campaign and donate to our election fund. Read and study the *World Socialist Web Site*, the daily publication of the ICFI. Become a member of the SGP!



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact