

Widespread support for Socialist Equality Party's lawsuit against the German secret service

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The Socialist Equality Party's (SGP) complaint against its surveillance by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV), Germany's secret service, is of great political importance, because the government wants to criminalize socialist ideas.

Hundreds of WSWS readers and workers have quickly recognized this fact. An online petition, which will be submitted to the court to defend the SGP, has received over 700 signatures in just a few days. Over 550 signatures have come from Germany and around 150 from the US, Australia, France, Britain and many other countries.

Numerous supporters have made clear in written comments why they are signing the petition. Users from all over the world are also supporting the fight on social media using the hashtag #defendSGP. The hashtag has been used well over 200 times.

All of these comments make clear the importance of the case. Should the court dismiss the SGP's lawsuit on November 18, it will mark a step towards an authoritarian regime that can brutally suppress any resistance to militarism, inequality and the "profit before life" policy in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The SGP is the only party that supported us airport workers in the fight against the WISAG Group," writes Cemaleddin Benli, an airport baggage handler who was dismissed by WISAG. "An attack on the SGP is an attack on all workers who are fighting against exploitation, layoffs, wage robbery and Coronavirus. #defendSGP!"

"The FRG (Federal Republic of Germany) is developing more and more into an authoritarian police and surveillance state with a facade of democracy," writes Thomas Bautzer. "That worries me."

Jan Robin Hengfoss from Leipzig explained the reasons for his signature, writing, "The SGP, which is actively

fighting against the crimes of the government—be it against the criminal coronavirus policy, which claims thousands of lives, or against the ever-increasing shift to the right and militarism, is being unjustly surveilled. Anyone who actively supports human life and the rights of workers should not be under observation by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution. This observation shows that the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, like the government, is not acting in the interests of democracy. You are actively acting for the bourgeoisie through this unlawful condemnation of the party and socialism."

Tina Meier from Bochum added, "The judiciary of the Federal Republic of Germany is reminiscent of the darkest chapters of German history. The political persecution of communists and government opponents must never be repeated. In times like today we are more dependent than ever on socialists who fight against capitalism, environmental destruction, mass infection and exploitation!"

Felipe wrote on Twitter, "I have already signed and I think the lawsuit is justified. Basically, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution classifies all Marxists as suspects. That is absurd!"

He continued, "As a foreigner, I was immediately concerned about whether my participation in events of a political organization with Marxist views would have a negative effect on my naturalization process. That means: The surveillance by the office for the Protection of the Constitution intimidates and thereby restricts freedom of expression. I would never have expected that from this country. It confirms the Marxist view by betraying the highly reactionary character of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution: It defends the capitalist system, not the Constitution."

The political scientist and trade unionist Dr. Torsten Bewernitz writes, “Without agreeing with the party mentioned, I consider it extremely dangerous and downright threatening to classify an organization that is committed to more democracy, equality and socialism as unconstitutional.” His contribution ends with the words: “The greatest threat to a free democratic order is evidently the Office for the Protection of the Constitution itself.”

Comments came not only from Germany, but also from many other countries.

Steven Brust from Minnesota, an author of socially critical fantasy novels and a musician, referred to the considerations of the German ruling class that underlie the attack on the SGP, writing, “It is impossible to care for the equality of all people, justice and basic dignity and at the same time accept that the discussion of how these goals can be achieved is suppressed. The fact that the elite tries to prevent a free and open discussion only shows how much they fear the working masses using the weapon of reason in the fight against oppression and inequality.”

Sunanda Marasingha from Colombo, Sri Lanka’s capital, wrote, “I strongly condemn this blatant and egregious attack by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution on democratic rights—not only of the working class in Germany, but around the world. This opens the door to fascism. Dissolve this center for right-wing conspiracies!”

“Freedom of thought and expression are human rights,” states David Sawyer from North Carolina (US). “The best ideas for human survival come from the free exchange of ideas, not from oppression. Governments should defend these human rights and not violate them.”

Mitchell Nugent from Australia wrote, “Hands off the SGP! Germany’s rulers will face the wrath of the working class as long as they attack more and more achievements that workers and youth have won in long and bitter struggles. Stop monitoring political groups that oppose war, censorship and inequality!”

Many of the signatories associated the defense of the SGP with social issues and the fight against capitalism and the threat it poses to human culture and civilization. “We have to stop capitalism before it devours the planet,” writes James Wohlgemuth, a retired teacher from the US state of Tennessee.

Looking at German history, Ross Murray from Massachusetts recalled the systematic struggle of the German section of the International Committee of the Fourth International against the rehabilitation of Hitler, the falsification of the Nazis’ crimes and the trivialization

of the Holocaust.

The fact that the federal government is now declaring socialists to be criminals for the third time, in line with what took place under the Kaiser and Hitler, is an alarming development in the eyes of many international signatories.

“I support the SGP and strictly reject right-wing attacks on socialism,” explained Carolyn Zaremba from San Francisco. “I am appalled that Germany seems to be repeating the crimes of the Third Reich. My father fought the Nazis in World War II. His fight must not have been in vain!”

Anthony Matthews from southern England wrote, “Socialism is a legitimate alternative to the problems our world is facing. The attempt to silence its advocates is nothing less than fascistoid.”

As the SGP declared in its statement, the Interior Ministry’s pseudo-legal arguments can be directed against anyone who addresses the existing, outrageous social inequality. Left-wing newspapers, anti-capitalist environmental groups and critical artists have appeared on the blacklists of the German police and secret service apparatus, while the same forces prevent the exposure of right-wing extremist elements who are preparing for a civil war.

In two weeks, on November 18, the SGP’s lawsuit will be heard in court. The *World Socialist Web Site* calls on all its readers to support the SGP’s lawsuit against the federal government and against its surveillance by the secret service. Sign the petition today, write a strong comment and discuss these questions with your friends, families and colleagues!



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