

New state election in Berlin: The SGP gives opposition to war a voice and a perspective

Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei**18 November 2022**

On Wednesday, the Berlin Constitutional Court ruled that elections for the House of Representatives and all 12 districts must be rerun in full because of serious electoral irregularities. The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) welcomes this decision and will participate in the elections with its own list of candidates. In this way, the population will have the opportunity to vote against the hated policy of war and social devastation that the Social Democrats (SPD), Left Party and Greens are ruthlessly pursuing.

The electoral errors were so serious that the court could not help but order a complete rerun of the election. The judges found that the principles of universality, equality and freedom of choice had been so seriously violated that it had an impact on the distribution of mandates. The election for the federal parliament (Bundestag), which took place on the same day, must also be rerun in numerous Berlin constituencies. While the election of the House of Representatives is scheduled for February 12, the date for the Bundestag election remains to be determined.

But the elections were not only illegitimate because of formal mistakes. Politically, the federal and state governments have no mandate from the population for their right-wing and militaristic policies. In the election campaign a year ago, no party openly declared what a catastrophic policy of war and social devastation it would pursue after the elections.

The voters did not vote to once again deploy German tanks against Russia, 77 years after the end of the Second World War, triple the military budget with the €100 billion special fund, and upgrade Germany to the strongest military power on the continent. The NATO powers have systematically encircled Russia to provoke a response. Now they are using the Putin regime's

reactionary invasion of Ukraine to escalate the war and subjugate Russia. The consequences are devastating not only for Ukrainian and Russian workers, but for the whole world.

Nor have the voters voted to pass on the costs of this madness to the working population. The economic war against Russia is causing prices to explode and real wages to decline, while the super-rich are receiving handouts worth billions and companies are closing down factories and carrying out mass layoffs. Spending on health care, social care and education is being cut to the bone and the climate destroyed to finance the militarist great-power plans of the elites. The federal health budget alone will be cut by two-thirds in the midst of the pandemic. At the same time, the last remaining measures to combat the pandemic are being scrapped and pupils and workers are being abandoned to mass infection.

The SGP will turn the rerun of the Berlin state election into a referendum against this hated and illegitimate policy. By placing the needs of the population above the interests of private profit, we give a voice and a socialist perspective to the enormous opposition, which is no longer expressed in official politics. The war cannot be stopped and social devastation ended without breaking the power of the banks and corporations and placing them under democratic control.

This requires an international movement of the working class, the vast majority of the population, against war and its root cause, capitalism. The Socialist Equality Party is participating in the elections in order to build such a worldwide socialist movement together with its sister parties in the International Committee of the Fourth International.

The strikes and protests now taking place everywhere

must be organised independently of the official parties and trade unions. We therefore combine our election campaign with the call for the formation of rank-and-file committees in workplaces, neighbourhoods and schools to independently organise and unite the resistance against war and social attacks around the world.

The policies pursued at the state level in Berlin show in microcosm the devastating social impact of the war. The Berlin Senate coalition of the SPD, Greens and the Left Party, which is the government for the state of Berlin, often calls itself a left-wing government. In reality, all Senate parties unreservedly back Chancellor Scholz as they support military rearmament and enforce social spending cuts with particular severity and aggressiveness.

The Left Party plays a particularly foul role in this. At its party congress in the summer, the party fully supported NATO and the delivery of arms to Ukraine. The party resolution claimed that the Russian war of aggression had given NATO “new legitimacy.” The trade unions, which are closely linked to the Senate parties, also fully support the policy of war and its social consequences.

In order to finance the military rearmament and escalate the war against Russia, the German government is drastically cutting social spending. The Berlin Senate is responding with its own cuts. In March, the Berlin state government decided on massive austerity measures in the two-year budget for 2022 and 2023. Despite inflation, it cut the budget from €78.3 billion to €76.6 billion. One major area of savings is in the education system. The hospitals are also collapsing, and the Senate immediately annulled the clear majority support recorded in a referendum for the expropriation of housing corporations. The police, on the other hand, are being strengthened and re-armed.

The ruthless attitude of the “red-red-green” Senate towards the working population is also reflected in the arrogance with which it violated democratic principles in the last election and then tried for a year to prevent a rerun by all means. In view of their hated policies, the SPD, Greens and Left Party fear an election like the devil.

The SGP, on the other hand, will conduct an intensive election campaign and counter the right-wing conspiracy in the Bundestag and the House of

Representatives. We call on anyone who does not want to accept outrageous levels of social inequality, the destruction of the health and education system, and, finally, the nuclear destruction of our planet: Support our election campaign and vote for the SGP on February 12! Register now as an active supporter.



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