

SGP election campaign in Berlin: “We are turning the election into a referendum against the war!”

Our reporters
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Since the State Constitutional Court decided on Wednesday to rerun the Berlin state election on February 12, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) has been campaigning vigorously. “We are turning the election into a referendum against the hated war policy and social devastation,” SGP candidate Endrik Bastian said Saturday at an information table in Berlin’s hotspot district of Neukölln.

Bastian is one of four SGP candidates. He works as a nurse and is a member of the SGP national committee. Raised in the former East Germany (GDR), he joined the Trotskyist movement a few years after the GDR’s collapse in 1990 and now leads the work of the Berlin regional branch of the SGP.

Despite freezing temperatures, many passers-by stopped to discuss the SGP’s socialist program with Bastian and the other SGP supporters. The enormous rage over the war policy of the federal government and the social austerity being implemented by the Berlin Senate (state executive) of the Social Democrats (SPD), Greens and Left Party was palpable.

An elderly woman who had voted for the Left Party last year spoke of reconsidering her decision and looking for an alternative. Hatred for the Greens was expressed even more strongly.

In addition to exclamations such as, “The Greens, they are the worst!” or “Nothing else was to be expected from them,” an older worker recalled the year 1999, when Green foreign minister Joschka Fischer and his party pushed through German participation in the NATO war against Serbia as part of the federal coalition with the SPD.

Till, a worker from Hesse who was in Berlin visiting

his son, also spoke out against the Ukraine war and became very agitated about the rapid development of the Greens from a “peace party” that was “against nuclear power” to their current warmongering policy. In contrast, Till was very interested in the SGP’s international perspectives.

Talking about the history of the GDR and the roots of Stalinism, he said, “Western governments were naturally pleased to recognize this regime as ‘real existing socialism,’ knowing that this could deter workers from socialism.”

Most conversations centred on the war in Ukraine. Many expressed enthusiasm for the campaign of the SGP and its youth organization, the IYSSE, for the online meeting “Stop the War in Ukraine,” which will take place on December 10. Others thanked SGP for its efforts.

Mohamad, a freelance journalist in Berlin, opposed both sides in the Ukraine war. “This is not our war. This is a war of governments,” he said. He was very interested in the upcoming event and in discussing the IYSSE’s call to youth around the world. He immediately supported the SGP’s campaign with a donation.

A Latvian worker left no doubt about who was responsible for the escalation of the war in Ukraine. “Just look at my homeland. The presence of NATO troops on the border with Russia is omnipresent there.”

A young woman, carrying her toddler in front of her, expressed her anxiety about what the future will bring if the war’s development is not stopped. She was taken with the IYSSE’s optimistic call that a nuclear inferno can be prevented if the international working class is mobilized against it on the basis of a socialist program.

The response the SGP is receiving to its election campaign confirms its assessment that the German government and the Berlin Senate enjoy no popular support for their militarist and antisocial policies. The party's election appeal states:

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 Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei 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.



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