

SGP holds successful launch event for the Berlin state elections

Our reporters
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On Monday, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) broadcast its launch event for the 2023 Berlin state elections. In it, leading members of the party explained the SGP's principles, socialist program and historical foundations. The SGP is turning the Berlin election into a referendum against the government's broadly hated war policies and the social devastation being ruthlessly enforced at federal and state levels.

As SGP Chairman and lead candidate Christoph Vandreier emphasized that the party would use its election campaign to advance the building of a mass international youth and working class movement against war and capitalism. SGP members and supporters will put up thousands of election posters throughout Berlin in the coming weeks, invite people to weekly candidate forums, engage in thousands of discussions with workers, and hold several public rallies.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic and facing the threat of a third world war, he said, the urgency of the task was very clear. Vandreier stressed that all parties except the SGP supported the herd immunity policy allowing the virus to run wild, as well as NATO's proxy war in Ukraine. Moreover, the SGP was the only party that welcomed the rerun of the Berlin state elections: "The SPD, the Greens and the Left Party, which have created a social disaster here and support the war policy unreservedly, fear the elections like the devil fears holy water."

Vandreier then spoke in detail about the unprecedented rearmament of the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces), the arms deliveries to the Kiev regime, and the austerity measures and cuts policies of the governing parties. The war policy pursued by federal and state governments, he explained, went hand in hand with massive attacks on wages and social benefits, a breath-taking falsification of history and the growth of the extreme right. "Especially here in Berlin, everyone knows where this policy leads. It starts with war propaganda and rearmament, and it ends in disaster."

In their speeches presenting the SGP's perspectives, both Vandreier and long-time party chair Ulrich Rippert comprehensively addressed the lessons of history. Rippert

explained that during World War I the revolutionary socialists Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg had insisted "the struggle against war requires a struggle against capitalism, because the capitalist profit economy is the cause and source of war." That was why, Rippert said, Liebknecht "built an international workers' movement against war and capitalism before he was brutally murdered—just as Rosa Luxemburg was—in a cowardly act by a Social Democratic government."

As Vandreier explained, Hitler's rise to power 90 years ago "was not the result of winning an election, let alone the decision of the majority of the population, but the result of a conspiracy of the leading representatives of capital, the Reichswehr (Army) and all the bourgeois parties." The National Socialists [Nazis] served the German elites to crush the powerful workers' organizations and, through their terror, to create the conditions for World War II. With its war policy today, the ruling class in Germany, amid the deepest crisis of capitalism, is once again harking back to the war aims of the Kaiser's Empire and the Nazis.

Vandreier stressed that the striving for world power, which was incompatible with democratic methods, was the cause of the growing danger of fascism and dictatorship and was the basis of the right-wing conspiracy in the state apparatus. But unlike the 1930s, "today, the rulers do not have a mass fascist movement recruited from millions of lumpen petty bourgeois and World War I veterans," Vandreier said.

In his contribution, Gregor Link, spokesman for the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), pointed out how it was primarily the nominally "left-wing" parties—the Social Democrats (SPD), Left Party and Greens—that were promoting the war and austerity policies. "All parties in Berlin's House of Representatives (state legislature) support the war in Ukraine and the German elites' grab for world power. The SGP is the only party that is running in the elections with a program against war and that links the fight against war with the fight against its root, capitalism," Link explained. The IYSSE will "pull out all the stops to support the SGP's campaign."

Pointing to the strong support that socialist autoworker Will Lehman had received in the election for president of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union in America, Vandreier and Rippert stressed that a growing international movement against capitalism is developing in the working class. “Workers are stronger than the union apparatuses, the corporations and the governments,” Vandreier declared. “They produce all the wealth of society and keep it going under the most difficult conditions. They are the social force that is uniquely capable of preventing a world war. But they need their own party to do it.”

Rippert concluded his speech by stating, “The most important strength of a party is shown by its ability to provide a correct assessment and a forward-looking perspective during great social upheavals and historical turning points.” As the German section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, the SGP stood in the Marxist tradition of August Bebel, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, the October Revolution led by Lenin and Trotsky, and the Left Opposition to Stalinism, Rippert said.

The meeting concluded with a strong appeal to build the SGP and its international sister parties as mass parties in the working class: “If we are elected to the Chamber of Deputies,” Rippert said, “we will use that as a tribune in the struggle against war and capitalist exploitation. We will expose the war conspiracy and show how the Senate (state executive) enforces the war policies of the federal government. And we will mobilize the working class against it.”

Following the event, *World Socialist Web Site* reporters spoke with workers about the importance of the SGP’s election campaign. Vitaly, who was born in the Soviet Union and came to Germany from Kazakhstan in 1996, now works in Berlin as an educator, and plans to vote for the SGP. He thought “everything was right about the program’s contributions” and has “fears of a third world war.”

It was “not as simple as it is portrayed in the media. Propaganda exists in all countries—in Russia, Ukraine, but especially in Western countries. Instead of telling the truth, people look for a black sheep to blame.” He said he opposed the sanctions against Russia and thought they “will hurt people all over the world.”

History is “repeating itself like a spiral,” Vitaly warned. “Everything that is happening now is reminiscent of the previous history. People must not die; people must not support war. But that’s exactly what Western governments are doing.” Worst of all, he said, “the German government is making Ukraine a war zone. The oligarchs profit from the war and the pandemic and get richer and richer—while the working class pays for it.”

“The SGP should be represented in parliament,” he

continued. “I will send your statements to my friends to show them how corrupt the government in Germany is. The proposals you make should be looked at and discussed by all. You have my support.”

Frank, who works as a nurse in North Rhine-Westphalia, said: “I would definitely vote SGP if I lived in Berlin. There’s no other choice if you’re against war and for social equality.”

The SGP provides “an independent point of view on current political issues, which is not influenced by war propaganda: an objective perception on current events, from the point of view of working people, who must work to survive every day. Workers are best represented by people who have their interests in mind, not the interests of the employers and exploiters. And that’s what the SGP does, it focuses its work completely on the interests of the working class, always taking into account the historical events of the last hundred years.”

The SGP, he said, is “the only party in Germany that fights against imperialist wars, stands up against exploitation and for the social equality of all people, regardless of their birth status.” It is also, he said, the only party, which, in the coronavirus pandemic, “advocates a strategy to protect the population from this epidemic—not only from acute illness, but also from the long-term consequences of an infection. I urge everyone who can, to vote for SGP.”

For more information on SGP’s election campaign, visit <https://www.gleichheit.de/>



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