Hundreds attend Socialist Equality Party rally in Berlin against Ukraine war and German militarism

Our reporters
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On Saturday, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP, Socialist Equality Party) held a powerful anti-war rally at Potsdamer Platz in Berlin, in which over 300 people participated. It was the SGP's main rally in its election campaign for the Berlin state House of Representatives, which the party is conducting on the basis of a socialist program against war and social spending cuts.

The strong response to the rally shows that the party is giving a voice to widespread opposition to war and austerity and fighting to arm it with a socialist perspective. The SGP is the only party to oppose the ruling class's war in Ukraine and the danger of a third world war fought with nuclear weapons.

In his introductory remarks, moderator Johannes Stern, editor-in-chief of the German-language edition of the *World Socialist Web Site*, recalled the revolutionary socialist Karl Liebknecht, who called for a fight against war and against the German government at the same location:

> The demonstration, which took place in the midst of the mass death of the First World War, was an important step in building a powerful anti-war movement. This movement culminated in the October Revolution of 1917 in Russia and a year later in the November Revolution here in Germany, which finally put an end to the war. Our rally is in this tradition.

SGP Chairman Christoph Vandreier then sharply condemned the war policy of the federal government and the reactionary policy of nationalist demagogues like Sahra Wagenknecht. "The war can only be stopped if workers all over the world fight together against the warmongers in their own country," Vandreier said. "Like Liebknecht back then, we say today: The main enemy is at home! German imperialism, the German war party, German secret diplomacy!"

At the same time, Vandreier rejected the lying war propaganda of the bourgeois media and declared that the people in Ukraine themselves were the first to suffer from the German and Western war escalation. "According to estimates," he said, "well over 100,000 Ukrainians have already lost their lives. The decision to send battle tanks does not diminish this number, but pushes it higher!"

He continued: "NATO's commitment to Ukraine's reconquest of Crimea means nothing less than the deliberate acceptance of a catastrophic nuclear war against Russia."

As in the First and Second World Wars, he declared, it is the capitalist elites in whose interests the war is being waged.

Vandreier went on to explain:

> While the DAX (German stock exchange) corporations are reaping record profits and the number of millionaires continues to rise, tens of thousands of workers are being thrown out of their jobs! Day care centers, schools and hospitals are seeing their budgets cut to finance the horrendous rearmament.

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The warmongering of the Social Democrats and the Greens is supported by the Left Party, Vandreier stressed, whose lead candidate, Klaus Lederer, is demanding arms deliveries to the Ukrainian military, and, like a true militarist, accusing anyone who criticizes this of “open complicity with Putin.”

Speaking on behalf of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), the youth and student movement of the SGP and its sister parties in the International Committee of the Fourth International, Gregor Link summarized the political experiences that youth and young workers have gone through all over the world.

He emphasised that in order to put an end to the capitalist evils of war, social spending cuts, environmental destruction and dictatorship, young people had to take part in the struggles of the working class and play a leading role in building the revolutionary socialist party. This required a break with all pseudo-left tendencies, whose role is to tie young people to the capitalist system.

The international perspective of the SGP was underlined by several greetings from its international sister parties, which were read at the rally. Joseph Kishore, national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party in the US, stated that US imperialism in Ukraine was continuing its decades-long war policy, focused today on subjugating Russia and waging war against China.

The greetings from Russian socialists warned that the Putin regime, threatened with being overthrown, could resort to nuclear weapons, and noted that the working class in Russia also supports the fight against war.

The greetings of the French and British parties reported that mass strikes involving millions of workers are developing against the war and austerity policies of the Macron and Sunak governments.

As all of the speakers stressed, this opposition—which is developing rapidly in Germany as well—is the basis for stopping the war and averting a third world war.

Ulrich Rippert, founding member and longtime leader of the SGP, referred to the growing struggles of the working class around the world and concluded that the fight against war and austerity requires “breaking the straitjacket of the unions” and uniting workers internationally.

He stressed that the SGP rally demonstrated:

> There is a party that consistently opposes the war conspiracy in politics and the media, does not adapt and is not intimidated. Our party opposes the danger of a third world war and a nuclear catastrophe by mobilizing the working class on the basis of an international and socialist program.

Ninety years after Hitler took power, which led to the greatest crimes in human history, the lessons of Leon Trotsky’s struggle against Stalinism are of the utmost political importance, Rippert said, adding:

> Socialism is not the past, but the future! And that future depends on what those who have gathered here and watched the SGP’s election campaign do. Today, a third world war can only be prevented if a new mass socialist party is built that unites the working class internationally.

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