

Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei submits over 4,000 signatures for its candidacy in the 2024 European elections

Our reporters
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On Monday, March 11, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) submitted 4,080 confirmed signatures to the Federal Election Commissioner in Wiesbaden to ensure its participation in the European elections. The SGP is participating in the election, which will take place throughout the EU from June 6-9 to provide a voice and a socialist perspective to the fight against war and dictatorship.

“We will conduct this election campaign together with our comrades in France, Britain, Turkey, Ukraine and Russia,” explained Marianne Arens, one of the party’s candidates in the European elections. After handing in the signatures to the Federal Statistical Office in Wiesbaden on Monday, Arens stressed, “The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei is the only party that opposes the capitalist barbarism of the EU with the programme of a United Socialist States of Europe.”

SGP teams have been travelling throughout Germany in recent months to collect voters’ signatures to enable the party’s participation in the election. They discussed with tens of thousands of workers and young people and explained the need to build the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) as a new leadership of the working class to stop the insane race to war.

The enormous intensification of social and political tensions was palpable. The number of people willing to sign the election petition forms is growing steadily because they are alarmed by the German government’s pro-war policy, because they reject support for Israel against the Palestinians and because they do not accept that workers should pay for this inhumane policy. “The German government is risking a world war,” as one Berlin bus driver put it.

At sign-up tables, the poster “Stop the genocide in Gaza” often attracted many passers-by, especially young people. They were keen to sign because they themselves had already been looking for a way to take action against Israel’s murderous actions against the Palestinians. On Berlin’s Leopoldplatz, SGP supporters were recently working with three tables at the same time because whole groups of young people wanted to sign up. Young people repeatedly emphasised how important it was for the SGP to take an open stand “because nobody else does that here.” Others took photos of the poster to share on social media. A number of people agreed to collect signatures themselves.

The SGP campaign coincided with numerous recent warning strikes in which train drivers, airport workers, public sector

employees and tram and bus drivers in local transit stopped work. Many confirmed what the SGP declares to be the “political issues in the train drivers’ strike,” that “the fight against inflation, real wage cuts and increasing labour agitation cannot be waged with the trade unions,” but that it is “inseparable from the fight against war and military rearmament.”

Many strikers were very impressed by the call of the rank-and-file Rail Action Committee: “Stop the military transports.” A number of Berlin bus drivers not only signed up to support the SGP’s participation in the European elections but were also interested in setting up action committees to take up the fight for better wages and against war into their own hands, independently of the trade unions.

In Berlin, bus drivers working for BVG local transit said that the Verdi union’s demands were far too low and that it had not even asked workers “what we imagine better working conditions to be.” Others confirmed that the trade unions in general—from Germany’s biggest industrial union, the IG Metall, to Verdi and the transit and train unions EVG and GDL—even support the government’s military transports and war policy.

In North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), Germany’s most populous state, SGP members collected numerous signatures, especially in the working class neighbourhoods of Cologne and the Ruhr area, particularly in the north where many immigrants live. At a large anti-AfD demonstration in Duisburg, the SGP poster “Stop the genocide!” polarised the participants. While supporters of the government coalition (Social Democrats, Liberal Democrats, Greens) positioned themselves on the side of Israel, many participants in the demonstration spontaneously came to the SGP stall and supported the party with their signatures.

There was significant support for the SGP’s election campaign at demonstrations against the genocide in Gaza, both in NRW—in Düsseldorf, Cologne, Münster and Bielefeld—as well as in Berlin, Munich, Stuttgart, Frankfurt, Mannheim and Nuremberg. Workers told the SGP they felt it was important to resist war and genocide.

In Stuttgart, one participant, who was taking part in a demonstration for the first time, said he “had the feeling for some time that things can’t go on like this.” A group of young workers in Mannheim said, “We need a party that represents us workers and stands up against war, including the war in Ukraine and of course in Gaza.”

In Berlin, one person expressed his gratitude, saying that he was happy to see a “classic left-wing” party again that focused on class issues and anti-militarism instead of identity politics.

Throughout the last few months, the SGP has combined the collection of signatures with its campaign for a socialist programme. The party took the lead in the fight against censorship and against the defamation of opponents of war and genocide as “antisemitic.”

In Berlin, the SGP launched a campaign to defend the Oyoun cultural centre, which is threatened with closure as the Berlin Senate (State Executive) is withdrawing all funding at the instigation of the AfD parliamentary group. The mendacious “justification” is that the Oyoun had behaved in an “antisemitic” manner and was “too politically charged.” The SGP had been able to hold its “Stop the massacre in Gaza” event in the cultural centre on November 14, 2023, where ICFI Secretary Peter Schwarz spoke about the historical and international background to the attack on Gaza and explained a socialist perspective.

Another lively event on the topic took place in Stuttgart on November 11, 2023. At Ruhr-Universität Bochum (RUB) and in front of Berlin’s Humboldt-Universität, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), the youth organisation of the Fourth International, organised two rallies against the genocide in Gaza, which were attended by several hundred supporters. On December 14, David North, chairman of the WSWS International Editorial Board, delivered a lecture at Humboldt University addressing “The fascist ideology of the Israeli state and the genocide in Gaza.”

For weeks, millions of people have been taking to the streets of Germany, both against the genocide in Gaza and against the return of fascism in the form of the AfD. The SGP has intervened massively in these demonstrations, explaining that the fight against the fascists could only be waged if it was also directed against the right-wing policies of the government, which was effectively putting the AfD’s programme into practice.

At the same time, industrial disputes are on the rise. While the establishment parties are seeking to politically co-opt the protests, and the trade unions are doing their best to keep strikes short and separate, nevertheless, hardly a day goes by without at least one central sector going on strike and being shut down.

SGP teams have intervened in these protests and strikes, collecting hundreds of signatures. The aim of the SGP’s participation in the European elections is to transform the growing resistance movement into a powerful, European-wide and international movement against the real driving force behind war, exploitation, racism, the pandemic and environmental degradation: the capitalist profit system.

In his video “Stop the Russian roulette with nuclear weapons! No third world war!”, Christoph Vandreier, SGP party chairman and its lead candidate, explains that the SGP will turn the European elections into a “referendum against the official pro-war policy.”

Vandreier says:

Eighty years later, the return of German militarism is

accompanied by massive attacks on workers’ living standards and democratic rights. While inflation is decimating real wages, mass redundancies are being prepared throughout industry. Demonstrations against the pro-war policy and the genocide in Gaza are banned, and opponents of war are taken into custody. This policy is supported by all parties ... The only way to stop the war madness is an international movement of the working class against the root cause of the war—capitalism.

The fact that the SGP has reached and surpassed the required 4,000 support signatures is an important step in this struggle. Now the election campaign will be stepping into gear, in which the party will conduct a Europe-wide and international offensive for Trotskyism.

At the same time, the Socialist Equality Party in the US, the sister party of the SGP, has also launched a strong campaign in the American presidential election. The SEP (US) is opposing the Democratic and Republican candidates, Joe Biden and Donald Trump, standing two socialists and internationalists, Joseph Kishore for president and Jerry White for vice president. When announcing the party’s candidates, David North, the national SEP chairman in the USA, explained the aim of the election campaign:

The Socialist Equality Party is intervening in this election to raise the political consciousness of the working class, to develop its understanding that no solution can be found to any of the problems confronting working people except through the ending of the capitalist system and its replacement with socialism, and that this great historical task can only be achieved by adopting a global strategy aimed at the mobilization of the power of the American and international working class in a unified struggle against the world capitalist system.

This is also the main goal that the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei and its European sister parties are pursuing in the European election campaign.



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