Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei campaigns for the 2025 federal elections in Germany

Our reporters
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Following the collapse of Germany's coalition government and the announcement that an election would take place on February 23, 2025, members and supporters of the Socialist Equality Party (SGP) have collected hundreds of signatures in working-class neighbourhoods in Berlin. The signatures gathered at anti-war protests, schools and universities are necessary to put the party on the ballot to counter the pro-war and austerity policies of all of the parties represented in the German parliament (Bundestag).

The SGP is intervening in the elections with a socialist programme to unite the working class against capitalism and the escalating warmongering policy of the ruling class. The SGP calls for an immediate halt to the arms build-up and arms deliveries to the reactionary regimes in Israel and Ukraine, and advocates the unity of Russian and Ukrainian workers and a socialist federation of the Middle East.

Instead of funnelling billions euros into wars, the capitalist oligarchs and warmongers must be expropriated and the major corporations placed under the democratic control of the working population. To this end, the SGP calls upon workers to build action committees that are independent of the trade union bureaucracy and join forces in the International Workers Alliance of Action Committees (IWA-RFC).

In recent weeks, SGP members discussed with workers and young people the issues raised in the party's current election statement, which explains that the end of the ruling coalition in Germany and the election victory of Donald Trump in the US will lead to a further intensification of class struggles and the imperialist drive to war. The statement demonstrates that all of Germany's parliamentary parties—including the opposition far-right Alternative for Germany, AfD, the moribund Left Party and the Alliance Sahra Wagenknecht (BSW)—support German warmongering and rearmament. It concludes:

> The only way to prevent a catastrophe is the mobilisation of the international working class against capitalism, that is, all those who create social wealth and bear the full burden of war and crisis. This enormous social force is being set in motion. Mass layoffs, social cuts and wars are putting explosive class struggles on the agenda.
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> The decisive question is how to arm this movement with a revolutionary leadership and a socialist perspective. Only if the masses independently intervene in the political process, expropriate the big banks and corporations and put them under democratic control, can war and social catastrophe be stopped.

On Saturday, deputy SGP chairman Dietmar Gaisenkersting spoke at an SGP rally at Hermannplatz in Berlin-Neukölln and explained this socialist perspective.

The SGP campaign has met with a positive response from workers. Despite the very short notice given for the election, which puts all parties not currently represented in the Bundestag at an additional disadvantage, SGP campaigners have managed to collect more signatures in the past few weeks than during the peak phase of the campaign for the last European elections.

Many passers-by, young and old, signed the petition simply because they recognised that the SGP opposes warmongering and combines this with the struggle against nationalism and xenophobia. The party has to collect 2,000 signatures in each federal state by the end of January in order to be able to put forward a list of candidates for each state.

In lengthy discussions, there was widespread rejection of the genocide in Gaza and great concern about any escalation of the war in Ukraine. A student who signed the SGP's election form reported that Israel's Western-

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backed warfare is a constant topic in his family. When asked about the policy of cuts, his friend reported that school trips at his school were now cancelled because neither teachers nor parents were able to pay for them.

Many passers-by—especially families with small children and pensioners—referred to the decades-long policy of cuts, which the current Berlin state government intends to massively intensify. The lack of daycare places, rising rents and food prices, the deterioration of public transport and the devastating state of schools were among the most frequently mentioned concerns.

Several bus and tram drivers for the Berlin Public Transport Company (BVG) recognised Andy Niklaus, who is active in building an action committee to oppose the policy of the pro-company unions. Niklaus recently stood in staff council elections against militarism and war and a number of his colleagues supported the SGP election campaign with their signature.

An older worker denounced the blatant enrichment of politicians and their open support for the German arms lobby, but expressed doubt that a mass movement was possible given the deafening war propaganda in the media. In response, SGP members replied that fierce class struggles were developing in industry as a result of the war policy, which had to be advanced through a political struggle against the trade union bureaucracies.

A Ukrainian refugee who supports other refugees in their daily lives in Berlin and wished to remain anonymous spoke in detail with SGP members about the fight against the NATO proxy war in Ukraine. In his opinion, immediate negotiations would have to take place to end the war. The situation of many Ukrainian refugees was desperate, with older ones in particular unable to work. Young refugees suffer from mental health issues and fear being drafted if they return to Ukraine.

Conditions in Ukraine, he said, were “nightmarish” and there was “complete dictatorship” in which anyone who expressed a critical opinion about the government was immediately arrested. He spoke of a man he knew who had recently written a critical comment in social media. The following day the Ukrainian secret service, SBU, appeared on his doorstep.

The war, he continued, had already claimed far too many victims and could not be won anyway because of Russian nuclear weapons. A third world war was clearly looming. The various conflicts, such as those in the Middle East and Ukraine, could not be separated from each other, since Russia, for example, had ties to Syria, where civil war was also escalating.

In response, SGP members explained that the ICFI calls for the release of all opponents of the war and fights for the freedom of the Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk, who has stood for the unity of the Russian and Ukrainian working class and had been arrested by the Ukrainian secret police for his advocacy of this policy. The petition for his freedom can be signed here.

A middle-aged woman who signed up to vote for the SGP told campaigners she had previously voted for the SPD and later for the Greens, but that she had broken with both parties because of their aggressive war policy. She strongly condemned the genocide in Gaza and Israel’s war crimes, as well as the witch hunt against opponents of the war in Germany and the universal conformity of the bourgeois media.

She said that there was reason to fear that in future, people could be politically and criminally prosecuted for sharing news critical of Israel on social media. One indication of this, she said, was the disbanding by police of the Palestine Congress in Berlin. She also spoke out against military support for the reactionary Ukrainian regime and noted that, according to estimates, half a million people have already died there for capitalist economic interests. Now there was a real danger of nuclear war, she said, after the Ukrainian side had used Western long range missiles and in Germany the construction of new bunkers was being discussed. At the same time the newly founded Wagenknecht party, the BSW, was no alternative because of its nationalist and xenophobic policies.

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