

Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei slate in Berlin certified for the federal election

Tamino Dreisam
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On Friday, January 24, the Berlin State Electoral Committee certified the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) to stand in the federal election in Berlin. In addition, the Berlin-Mitte District Electoral Committee certified Christoph Vandeier as the SGP's candidate for that constituency. In Duisburg, Dietmar Gaisenkersting and in Leipzig Martin Mauer, both leading SGP members, have been certified as independent constituency candidates.

In Berlin, the SGP will be on the ballot alongside 17 other parties. Many parties were not certified to stand for election due to the completely undemocratic shortening of the deadlines for collecting voter signatures.

At the meeting of the Federal Electoral Committee a week earlier, only 31 of the 56 parties that had submitted a notification of participation were certified. In order to be on the ballot in the German capital, parties had to collect 2,000 valid signatures of support from eligible Berlin voters in a very short period of time. In addition to the SGP, only seven other parties in Berlin managed to do so. Also, 10 parties were certified without having to collect signatures because they already have parliamentary representation with at least five deputies and thus count as "established" parties.

Many larger parties that receive sizable government subsidies or even have representatives in the European Parliament did not manage to obtain the required number of signatures in Berlin, including Basis, the Pirate Party and the Ecological Democratic Party (ÖDP). Other parties, such as the Stalinist German Communist Party (DKP), did not even try to run for election.

The SGP's candidacy is politically significant. As it explained in its election statement, every day proves anew that "the capitalist system is bankrupt, producing

only social devastation, war and environmental catastrophe." The inauguration of Trump signifies a huge intensification of the class struggle. In the first week since his inauguration, he has implemented measures that pose fundamental attacks on the working class and have a dictatorial character.

The German ruling class is responding to Trump's second presidency by accelerating its military build-up and moves to a war economy. In the federal election campaign, all the establishment parties are competing in their support for the war against Russia and with announcements of how much money they want to put into the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces).

This policy will be implemented by the ruling class after the election, regardless of which parties make up the new federal government. Therefore, there is no such thing as a "lesser evil" among the establishment parties in this election. They are already implementing the far-right Alternative for Germany's (AfD) law-and-order policy in various state governments and have essentially adopted its anti-refugee propaganda.

The SGP is confronting this all-party coalition with a socialist programme in order to build an independent movement in the working class. While the largest job cuts in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany are being prepared at Volkswagen and throughout the entire auto industry, federal and state parliaments are enforcing historic austerity budgets that are intended to slash funding in all areas of social spending and subordinate them to the war drive.

These social attacks will unquestionably provoke major class struggles. The coming weeks will see wage disputes beginning in local transport, the railways and in the public sector. However, while hundreds of thousands of workers are extremely angry and ready to fight, the trade unions are trying by all means to

postpone a confrontation until after the elections or to prevent it altogether.

The SGP will use the election campaign to intervene in these struggles and fight to build a movement in the working class based on rank-and-file action committees to unite the struggles across company lines and national borders. To this end, it has joined the fight to build the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). Such a movement must link the struggle against social cuts with the struggle against war and rearmament.

In recent weeks, while collecting support signatures, members and supporters of the SGP have discussed with thousands of people and have seen the enormous anger among the population with the policies of war and social cuts. However, anger and outrage alone are not enough to fight these evils. What is necessary is the building of a socialist mass party based on historical lessons. That is the significance of the SGP's election campaign.

Last Sunday, the SGP held a rally launching its election campaign. This Thursday, it will hold an online discussion about the election.



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