

# The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei rallies in Stuttgart: “The future will be decided by what we do”

**Our reporters**  
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On January 25, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) held its first rally of the federal election campaign on Stuttgart’s main street, Königstrasse. The SGP is the only party in the election campaigning against war, fascism, genocide and mass layoffs and for a socialist programme.

The rally was clearly visible in the busy shopping street in the centre of Stuttgart. Large posters in several languages read: “Stop the war,” also, “Stop the genocide in Gaza,” and, “Two world wars are enough.” About 20 workers and young people gathered as Marianne Arens, a writer for the *World Socialist Web Site*, began to explain the SGP election programme.

“Our goal is not the reform of capitalism, but its abolition,” Arens said. The capitalist social system, she said, brings only social devastation, war and environmental disasters. In the United States, Donald Trump had come to power in order to establish a dictatorship modelled on Hitler’s in the name of a super-rich narrow upper class. “The richest 1 percent at the top own more wealth than the remaining 99 percent,” Arens explained.

The rule of this billionaire oligarchy was incompatible with democracy, she continued, and inevitably led to war and dictatorship. The situation was no different in Germany, where the ruling class is also going the same way. Parallel to Trump’s attacks on migrants in the US, anti-refugee agitation and law-and-order politics are also being enforced here. “We warn the working class: those in power want to sacrifice everything on the altar of war: wages, working conditions, pensions, culture and democratic rights.”

She called on all listeners to take action themselves. The working class is a great power. It creates all of society’s wealth. “And why shouldn’t workers be able to defend themselves and their families, and unite internationally to abolish capitalism?”

Meanwhile, several groups of listeners formed around the rally. The well-stocked book table also attracted many. Dozens took the election programme to read at home, and several left their contact details. One participant said that it was really difficult to decide on a party in this election, because the leading politicians of all the establishment parties were taking

such a right-wing line.

K. Nesan, a member of the SGP national committee, then spoke. He addressed the attacks on jobs and wages in industry and explained the link between mass layoffs and the official war policy. In the greater Stuttgart area and in the state of Baden-Württemberg in particular, thousands of jobs at Mercedes, Mahle and Bosch and many other production plants are currently at risk.

“The government, the auto industry and the supplier industry see the switch to electric vehicles as a golden opportunity to destroy jobs and maximise profits,” said Nesan. This threatens all the social gains that workers fought for in recent decades. He reported on the negotiations behind closed doors at Mercedes, where an unprecedented austerity programme is being implemented. He also referred to the threats by Bosch boss Stefan Hartung to push through even more job cuts than the 12,000 already announced.

Nesan said that IG Metall was directly integrated into these attacks. “The trade unions act as a factory police force, undermining any independent action by workers in the factories,” he said. “Their job is to fulfill the profit interests of the companies and prevent employees from fighting back against wage cuts, layoffs, restructuring and plant closures.”

He noted that unrest is growing in workplaces and that workers increasingly understand the role of the unions. “Their long experience with the machinations of the bureaucracy inevitably leads to rebellion.”

To organise the workers independently of these bureaucrats, the International Committee of the Fourth International founded the International Workers Alliance of Rank and File Committees (IWA-RFC) in April 2021. Action committees affiliated with the IWA-RFC, Nesan said, will “oppose all the forms of national chauvinism and anti-immigrant agitation used by the ruling class to pit workers against each other.”

He addressed the connection between the mass layoffs and the ruling class’ aggressive war policy, explaining that jobs could only be defended if the “relationship between the preparations for war and attacks on social gains” were understood. “Without this, not a single job can be defended.”

The third speaker was Florian Hasek, speaking on behalf of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE). He described the consequences of the war budget for education and science: not only is the Berlin Senate in the process of implementing a brutal austerity programme, in the state of Baden-Württemberg, “a total of €91 million are to be cut from the universities next year alone. The University of Stuttgart, for example, has to save around €10 million a year. This means the cancellation of courses, professorships that are not re-filled, and cuts in other services for students.”

In addition, the restoration of “warlike efficiency,” demanded by war minister Boris Pistorius, is being accompanied by an ideological offensive: “More and more so-called youth officers of the Bundeswehr are flooding into schools and universities, trying to cram their propaganda into the heads of young people. And with the reintroduction of compulsory military service, German imperialism will now be provided with the human material it needs for its wars.”

Hasek pointed to the example of Ukraine, “where hundreds of thousands of young Russian and Ukrainian men are being slaughtered in NATO’s war against Russia,” while all opposition to the war is being suppressed. “On April 25, 2024, our comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk was arrested by the Ukrainian security service SBU and has since been held in a prison in Nikolayev under cruel conditions.”

Hasek called on all participants and listeners “to support Bogdan’s defence and join the fight against war and capitalism.”

The SGP honorary chairman Ulrich Rippert explained the importance of the working class reconnecting with its historical traditions. His voice rang out clearly through the shopping crowds on Saturday afternoon as he proclaimed: “The future will not be decided in the Chancellery or in the Bundestag—the future will be decided by what we do.” The working class needs its own party to intervene independently in political events, to expropriate the banks, the big corporations and the oligarchs and to enforce its own social and democratic rights.

He continued: “Everyone in this country knows what rearmament, the rise of the far right AfD, Trump and his ‘Amerika über alles’ means! Everyone knows where this is leading: to world war and fascist dictatorship.”

He reminded Stuttgart workers that it was in this city that the great socialist anti-war congress had taken place in 1907, which passed landmark resolutions for the action of the international working class in the event of war breaking out between their countries. “Germany is not only the country of the Nazis, the country of Hitler, the country of the greatest war crimes in history. It is also the country where the socialist movement was born. Germany is also the country of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. It is the country of Rosa Luxemburg and August Bebel. It is here in Stuttgart that the revolutionary socialist tradition of the working class has its deepest roots.”

Regarding the Social Democratic Party (SPD), Rippert said

that it had completely cut off its last roots in the working class many years ago. Most recently, under Chancellor Olaf Schulz, the SPD had “proclaimed a turning point in war policy and, in close cooperation with the trade unions, ensured a drastic reduction in real wages.” The SPD is ready to form a coalition with former Black Rock manager and CDU leader Friedrich Merz after the federal election.

The Greens, who govern together with the CDU in Baden-Württemberg, may have cloaked themselves in pacifism and environmentalism when they were founded in the 1980s, however, “Today they have adopted the class interests of their wealthy clientele. Chancellor candidate Habeck is calling for a tripling of the defence budget, and the so-called feminist foreign policy of Angela Anna Baerbock culminates in support for the massacre of Palestinian women and children in Gaza, where many tens of thousands are being slaughtered.”

Since its federal party conference, Germany’s Left Party has abandoned the last traces of any pacifist rhetoric: “Today it supports NATO arms deliveries to Ukraine and Israel’s ‘right to self-defence.’” The Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance, he said, also has nothing in common with anti-militarism, and represents a completely nationalist standpoint.

Workers today must build on their own historical tradition: “In the same way that the ruling class builds on fascism and war, the working class must build on its revolutionary socialist tradition of the past.”

Rippert emphasised: “Two world wars are more than enough. Never again!” He concluded by summing up the significance of the Socialist Equality Party’s Stuttgart rally, which showed that a party exists that will not be intimidated and that calls on workers worldwide to unite in response to the development towards war and fascism, as stated in the Communist Manifesto: “Workers of the world, unite!”

Additional rallies are planned for Saturday, February 1, in the cities of Duisburg, Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig.



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