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European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

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30.09.2021

The significance of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei's campaign in the German elections

The federal election in Germany on September 26 has made clear that only the independent intervention of the working class can put an end to the reckless policies of herd immunity, militarism and inequality. The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) has used the election campaign to give voice and a socialist perspective to such a movement.



Demonstration with SGP placards [Credit: WSWS]

The election results show that the vast majority of the working population is no longer represented in the bourgeois party system. Not a single party was able to garner more than

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a quarter of the votes. The chancellor's party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), achieved its worst result in post-war history, and the Left Party also experienced a debacle with less than 5 percent of the votes cast.

There are currently many indications that the elections will produce a “traffic light” coalition led by the incumbent finance minister, Olaf Scholz. Preliminary talks are currently underway between the Free Democratic Party (FDP) and the Greens, and exploratory talks with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) are due to begin officially towards the end of this week. But regardless of who ends up forming the next government, it will continue on the course of the Grand Coalition. The parties and their top candidates already left no doubt about that during the election campaign.

In numerous debates, all parties made it clear that they are preparing a government of ruthless class warfare from above. The candidates outdid themselves with calls for military rearmament and an aggressive war course against Russia and China. The pandemic was largely left out of the discussions because all parties are involved in putting the policy of contagion into practice. In order to keep the profits flowing, they sacrifice human lives.

In industry, the ruling class is planning a general attack on workers. While wages are being robbed on a grand scale with rapidly rising inflation, millions of jobs are also to be destroyed or replaced by low-wage work. In the auto industry alone, 500,000 jobs are up for grabs.

The SGP has been preparing the working class for these class struggles in its election campaign. On each of the six Sundays before the election, we streamed an election broadcast in which we took up all the pressing questions that had been hushed up in the campaign. We did this from the standpoint of the interests of the international working class, and the meetings featured representatives of the Fourth International from Britain, France, Turkey, the US and other countries.

The Corona Pandemic broadcast alone reached over 25,000 viewers. In it, we showed how the death toll is being systematically downplayed and all parties agree to infect children. In doing so, they once again offer the virus the opportunity to mutate and claim many more lives. We counterposed to this “profits before lives” policy the scientific strategy of eradicating the virus, which can only be achieved through an offensive of the international

working class, based on a statement of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

In August, when the precipitous withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan revealed the full extent of the brutal war of occupation, we invited WSWS International Editorial Board Chairman David North to our election broadcast to discuss the historic dimensions of this debacle. North, the national chairman of the SEP in the US, analyzed the deep crisis of American imperialism and warned that the defeats in the wars of the last 30 years increase the danger of a third world war.

The European powers, and Germany in particular, have concluded from the debacle that they themselves must rearm massively and gain “sovereignty.” The dispatch of a German frigate to the Indo-Pacific is a foretaste of the megalomaniacal policy of the German bourgeoisie, which is once again following its historical traditions and is ready to reduce the world to rubble for a third time.

In the election campaign, we fought for the international unity of the working class. “Together with our sister parties in the Fourth International, we unite workers across all borders in their struggles against social inequality, fascism and war,” our election appeal declared.

On this basis, we intervened in workers struggles and protests developing throughout the country, expressing the enormous opposition of workers to the policies of inequality and herd immunity. In dozens of articles and videos, we explained the political context and argued for an internationalist orientation independent of the unions.

When the WISAG workers at Frankfurt airport fought wage theft and layoffs, we organized international solidarity and explained the need to organize the struggle independently of the unions. We stood with the striking Gorillas delivery workers and opposed the bankrupt prospect of forming a works council with the independent mobilization of the international working class.

When the railway workers went on strike, we defended them against the attacks of the DGB unions. We warned that the government wanted to make an example of the train drivers in order to shift the burden of the crisis onto the workers and to force them into the

straitjacket of the unions for this purpose. We explained that it was necessary to develop a political movement against the government, which must be based on the whole working class.

The nurses in Berlin, who are still on strike, are also confronted with the ruthless policies of the Red-Red-Green Senate, which has privatised and cut the hospitals to the bone and is pushing them to the absolute limit with its policy of mass infection. The same issues confront Berlin bus drivers, who are asked to risk their lives to sell tickets.

In all these struggles, we have stressed the need to build independent action committees, independent of the unions, so that workers can take their struggles into their own hands, extending them across all industrial and national boundaries.

On May Day, the ICFI had initiated the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) to unite the struggles of workers throughout the world. In addition to action committees for safe workplaces in many of the above-mentioned factories, we initiated action committees for safe education in schools, fighting against the infection of children with COVID-19.

Each of these initiatives was only possible because SGP members and supporters waged a struggle on social media and in the streets to clarify the political questions. Now it is becoming clear how crucial this work and the building of the SGP as the German section of the Fourth International is.

The SGP is the only party that opposes the policy of “herd immunity” and advocates the scientifically sound program of eradicating the virus. It is the only party that consistently opposes militarism and German great-power fantasies. It is the only party that, based on its historic and international principles, represents the social interests of the working class.

As SGP chairman Ulrich Rippert explained in his contribution at the final election rally, the German section of the ICFI was founded 50 years ago on the basis of three central questions: 1. Trotsky's understanding of fascism as a product of the capitalist crisis that can only be stopped by the independent intervention of the working class; 2. The ICFI's rejection of Stalinism as the counterrevolutionary agency of imperialism; and finally, 3.

The adherence to the revolutionary power of the working class as an international class whose independence must be fought for through the building of a revolutionary leadership.

This orientation was defended in the 1980s in the International Committee by the American Workers League against the degeneration of the WRP (Workers Revolutionary Party) and, after the split, developed on a world level. Today, in the face of the complete bankruptcy of all the old workers organizations, the global crisis of capitalism and the return of militarism and the fascist danger, this historical perspective is intersecting with the growth of working class struggle throughout the world.

“No social problem can be solved without expropriating the banks and corporations and placing them under the democratic control of the working class,” we declared in the election call. “Their profits and assets must be confiscated, and the trillions given to them last year must be taken back. The world economy must be reorganized on the basis of a scientific and rational plan.”

This is the only progressive response to the pandemic, climate change, the threat of war and enormous social inequality. It can only be achieved through the international mobilisation of the working class, which the SGP has fought for in this election campaign.

The SGP won 1,535 votes for its state lists in Berlin and North Rhine-Westphalia, increasing the number by 244 votes compared to 2017. But the importance of the election campaign is not measured by votes. What matters now is to build the SGP as part of the Fourth International as a mass socialist party. Therefore, register today as active supporters and become a member of the SGP!

World Socialist 29.09.2021