

“The danger of a third world war was never as great as it is today”

PSG candidate in Berlin election speaks on German television

By our correspondents
12 September 2016

“We are the party which is placing the danger of war at the centre of our campaign in these elections. The danger of a third world war was never as great as it is today.” With these words, Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (PSG) candidate Christoph Vandreier began his contribution on an election broadcast by public television station RBB last Thursday.

The so-called small parties round is made up of numerous contributions and broadcast to coincide with the election for the Berlin Senate on September 18. A total of 15 parties that do not yet have parliamentary representation were present and were questioned on their programmes by moderators Sabine Dahl and Sascha Hingst.

The broadcast, which was shown in Berlin and Brandenburg and available throughout Germany on cable, was watched by hundreds of thousands of viewers, according to market research firm GfK.

Seventy-five years after the invasion of the Soviet Union, German troops were once again stationed on the Russian border, Vandreier said, and added, “We are currently experiencing the systematic encirclement of Russia and China.” Syria increasingly resembled a powder keg, “where a major conflict between the major powers could break out at any time.”

Vandreier made clear that the PSG is the only party in the Berlin election campaign drawing attention to the war danger and mobilising the working class against it. “We fight for a unified movement from below, for an international movement against war and capitalism,” he stated.

The moderators pushed local issues and asked, “So you are standing here in the Senate elections, what do you want to achieve there? Do you think the Berlin

Senate is arming for war?”

In his answer, Vandreier referred to the election broadcast by the same channel two days earlier, when the leading candidates for the so-called major parties were questioned. He said, “Well, when one looks at what the leading candidates were discussing on Tuesday, they called above all for the strengthening of the state domestically.

“All of the parties were agreed: we need more police, we need more surveillance, we need a strong state apparatus. This has nothing to do with domestic security or the struggle against terrorism, but it is rather about suppressing social protests, mounting social dissatisfaction and resistance to militarism.”

When Vandreier pointed out that this was very clear in France, “where the state of emergency did not prevent terrorism, but was instead used to target striking workers and demonstrators,” there was audible applause from the audience.

“Here in Berlin, we are experiencing very clearly how the return of German militarism and social decline affects daily life,” he continued. One sees every day how young people rush from one job to the next just to make ends meet. Berlin was the “capital city of poverty.” There was more child poverty in Berlin than any other German state.

“These are all relations that have been imposed as part of an international offensive aimed at destroying the social conditions of the working population,” he said. “These relations exist not only in Greece or Spain, but also here in Berlin.”

The moderator interrupted him again and asked, “When you say that Berlin is particularly poor in terms of the national average, how will the PSG be able to

help Berliners pay their rent in the future?”

Vandreier answered that the social misery was a direct result of a deliberate policy of redistribution from the bottom to the top that had been taking place for years. “Large sections of the state-owned property companies were privatised and much more. The wealthy were awarded billions in payoffs. It was here that the first bank in Germany—the Berlin State Bank—was ‘saved’ at the expense of the population. This is part of an international process which is closely bound up with the drive to war.”

Vandreier explained that underlying the danger of war was the historic crisis of capitalism, which in the 20th century led to two imperialist wars.

After four minutes, the moderator attempted one last counterargument, saying, “But you can see yourself, throughout the world communism is on the retreat. Are you not flogging a rather dead horse?”

Earlier the moderator had spoken to the Stalinist German Communist Party (DKP), which is also standing in the Senate election. Referring to the DKP, Vandrier noted: “The DKP stands for the old Stalinist bureaucrats who governed in the GDR [German Democratic Republic] and financed the DKP. We stand for genuine socialist principles, that is: an economic system that is organised democratically and where the profit drive is not the main concern. And these genuine socialist principles, which have nothing to do with the GDR, are more relevant today than ever.”

At the end, Sabine Dahl tried to employ the allegedly socialist Greek prime minister, Alexis Tsipras, as a prime witness against socialist politics. Vandreier countered, “From the beginning, we said that Syriza and Tsipras had nothing to do with socialism and would implement these austerity policies. I would urge everyone to examine the *World Socialist Web Site*, where more can be read on this.”

The interview with the PSG representative came towards the end of the broadcast. After a series of discussions with various right-wing, conservative, esoteric and religious parties, the PSG contribution was refreshing and made a serious impact. It demonstrated that there is a party that is opposed to the war conspiracy, will not be intimidated and combines the struggle against war with the fight against capitalism.

In addition, the broadcast illustrated the rightward evolution of the journalists involved. Sascha Hingst in

particular, who functioned as moderator alternately with Sabine Dahl, confronted a number of the parties’ representatives with unconcealed arrogance and cynicism. When the representative of the Healthcare Research Party explained he was campaigning in support of research to improve medical treatment for conditions suffered by the elderly, Hingst asked him whether he had considered what this would cost and if the further ageing of society was actually affordable or desirable.

An excerpt from the program (in German) can be found on the RBB Facebook page. The review of the PSG starts at 14:15.

To contact the WSW and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>