

“With respect to education, the Red-Green government has made a step backwards”

Verena Nees
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Drastic austerity measures and salary cuts for teachers—these are the hallmarks of the school policy of the Magdeburg model. These policies have, moreover, been expressly supported by the PDS.

Our reporter asked the newly elected chairman and speaker of the PDS in the state parliament, Dr. Rosemarie Hein (formerly section leader for culture in the local SED organisation), what the PDS had done to oppose the cuts in salary.

“That is the wrong question,” she replied. “Not only did we not oppose it, we stood fully behind the trade union. Originally the regional government wanted to impose an eventual salary cut down to 67 percent. The fact that the cut is only down to 81 to 87 percent is entirely due to the work of our faction.”

Some of the teachers at the Wilhelm Raabe Gymnasium in Magdeburg were less enthusiastic.

Wolfgang P., who has worked for 20 years as a sports teacher, said angrily, “In addition to the cut in salary there is a worsening of conditions. In the new school year some colleagues have been sent on their ‘travels’. According to demand, teachers can be employed at different schools. I myself was affected. The flexible teacher!

“I do not want to accuse anyone of anything, but I think the reduced pay and the other negative conditions have lowered the motivation of the teachers. Who is willing to do the same or even more work for less pay? I dispute the right of the unions to make the kind of wage deal they have made. Many of my colleagues are not even in the union because they do not feel their interests are represented. I can already see a contradiction in the fact that the assistant chairperson of the GEW union, Ms. Mittendorf, sits as a deputy in the Red-Green parliament in Sachsen-Anhalt.

“I am sure that the students themselves will feel the

effects of these policies in the near future. The youth today are very sensitive. They are in the end continually confronted with the frustrating circumstances of the jobs market.

“We have all tried to do our work as best as possible. That was hard enough after reunification. What is happening with us now is a step backwards.”

Gertraud B. teaches history and Latin: “In the other German states the thumb screws are also being turned on the teachers. But here they have proceeded in a particularly foul manner. At any rate, I will not vote for the Red-Green government again. As a voter it is not possible to do more. Begging letters or petitions and appeals—that does not achieve anything. The colleagues have even demonstrated and campaigned for their rights. But nothing has happened.”



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