

German federal elections: Partei für Soziale Gleichheit runs candidates in six states

Our reporter
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The Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (Socialist Equality Party--PSG), German section of the Fourth International, is running candidates in six of Germany's 16 Länder, or states, in the September federal election. The six states have a combined population of more than 48 million, meaning some 60 percent of all German voters will have the possibility of voting for the PSG.

The PSG is standing as a socialist alternative to the parties of big business. The party bases its campaign on the need for an independent political movement of the working class. None of the parties presently in the *Bundestag* (parliament) represent the interests of the millions who are affected by the social crisis, with unemployment now at levels not seen since the time of the Weimar Republic in the 1930s.

In the last federal election four years ago, the Bund Sozialistischer Arbeiter (Socialist Workers League), the forerunner of the PSG, ran candidates in the capital, Berlin, and in North Rhine Westphalia, the most populous German state. The PSG will be contesting these areas again.

In addition, the PSG will stand in the western states of Baden-Württemberg, Hesse, Lower Saxony (where the Social Democratic Party [SPD] candidate for chancellor, Gerhard Schröder, is the prime minister). In the east, the PSG will run in Saxony-Anhalt, the area most devastated by the destruction of industry following the collapse of East Germany. The unemployment rate in Saxony-Anhalt is currently at 30 percent. Moreover, it is the first state where the Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (Party of Democratic Socialism--PDS), the successor party to what was the Stalinist state party of East Germany, has a share of government power.

In order for the PSG to participate in the elections with its own candidates it had to collect more than

2,000 signatures of registered voters in each state. In recent months the PSG has gathered more than 14,000 signatures to support its candidacy. In some cities where the PSG has never previously been active Election Support Committees have been formed, including Kiel, Hannover, Bielefeld and Mannheim.

A total of 43 parties have now registered to participate in the elections. Apart from the PDS, the only left-wing parties are the PSG and the Maoist MLPD, which glorifies Stalin. On the right wing, several nationalist and anti-foreigner groups are standing.

Even before the election has entered its final stage, the PSG manifesto has generated great interest. Numerous letters and e-mails have been received asking for copies of the programme. The number of visitors to the party's election web site, available only since July, has risen sharply.

Several television and radio stations have approached the PSG with requests for interviews. Susan Huber, a PSG candidate in Berlin, spoke live on August 21 on the *Berlin Aktuell* radio station. Endrik Bastian, PSG candidate in Saxony-Anhalt, was interviewed by *Radio Paradiso*. Elisabeth Zimmemann, PSG candidate in North Rhine Westphalia, spoke on the popular TV programme *Stern-TV*, to be broadcast in September. Other TV stations which have shown an interest in the party's election campaign include *Phönix* and *RTL2*. On September 14, PSG chairman Ulrich Rippert will participate in a live programme called 'The Outsiders' on *ARD*, one of Germany's main TV channels.

The PSG is having its election message broadcast in four transmissions on the two main TV channels and on many radio stations.

The *World Socialist Web Site* will publish the PSG election manifesto in English on Friday, August 28.

See the election web site of the Partei für Soziale
Gleichheit (Socialist Equality Party--PSG)

[In German]

See Also:

Intensive campaigning begins in German national
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