German election campaign

Socialist Equality Party on the TV program "The Outsiders"

Our own correspondent
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Ulrich Rippert, the chairman of the Socialist Equality Party in Germany, took part in a television program called 'The Outsiders' which was shown on one of the two main German public TV channels, ARD, on September 14. The live 90-minute program presented those parties taking part in the September 27 federal elections which are not currently represented in the German parliament.

The candidates of all of those parties which are running in more than one German state could make a one-minute statement and were thereafter briefly questioned. In addition a short film of the various organisations was shown.

In his statement, Rippert said:

'The national elections resemble a choice between the plague and cholera. The SPD and Greens defend exactly the same policies of big business as the Union [conservative ruling coalition of CDU and CSU] and the FDP. Therefore it is necessary to commence with the building of a new workers party. In opposition to the ruling principle--enrich the rich--we promote the concept of a society based on solidarity. The needs of the people must have priority over the profit demands of business. Only a workers government can achieve this, in other words, a government based on the active participation of the majority of the population.

'We call for the international unity of all workers. We are opposed on principle to every form of racism and hostility to foreigners. The division between society is not between Germans and foreigners but rather between rich and poor, therefore--the Socialist Equality Party. Thank you.'

Afterwards the programme presenter was apparently stubbornly determined to prevent Rippert from making any further comments. While, without further ado, allowing the representatives of the extreme right-wing and neo-fascist parties--DVU, REP, NPD--to speak at length, he continually interrupted the chairman of the PSG, finally turning exclusively to a leading member of the Party for Bible-True Christians, whose representative stood on the other side of the table.

The exchange was as follows:

Presenter Engert: Mr. Rippert, what is the working class then? I have difficulties with the concept when I look at the workers in Germany. What is it then?

Rippert: First of all, it is all those people who must work to earn their living. However let us speak about ...

Engert: Yes, but the class, working *class*, that is, as it was by Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx ...

Rippert: No, this working class exists ...

Engert: Where then? Where?

Rippert: Mr. Engert, let's speak for once about the fact that we live in a society which excludes the great majority of the working population from political life. That's the problem, and ...

Engert: You always speak in your program, however, about the working *class* and you say as well ...

Rippert: Yes, we live in a class society. Look here, the policies of the government ...

Engert: Yes, but where is the working class then? (And then turning to the representative of the Bible-True Christians) What is the working class for you?

The answer given by this latter dignitary we leave to the imagination of our readers.

Engert then asked Rippert how the PSG could know what the interests of the working population are, as there are so many different people who do not all want the same thing.

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Rippert referred to the group of young people in the audience who would be voting in the election for the first time in their lives. The youth are undoubtedly all different but they all have a common interest in acquiring a reasonable education and a job.

At this point the allocated time was up.

In the corresponding programme which preceded the national elections four years ago, the same presenter concentrated purely on questions of formulation in order to prevent Rippert from making any substantial statement. At that time, together with 'working class,' it was the 'workers government' which caused him such offence. Apparently just the word 'worker' is a red flag for the influential political journalists of the ARD.

See Also:

How the social democrats and the Greens have contributed to Germany's social misery
[12 September 1998]

'Modern' German Social Democrats

Wolfgang Clement--Prime Minister of North-Rhine Westphalia
[10 September 1998]

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

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