

PSG election meeting in Frankfurt

For a socialist answer to the social disaster

12 December 2007

The Socialist Equality Party (Partei für Soziale Gleichheit - PSG) is holding a meeting in Frankfurt-Main on Thursday as part of its current campaign in the Hessen state election.

The invitation to the meeting states: “The PSG does not limit itself to criticism and protest. In light of the increasing social disaster and the danger of war, our party advances a political programme for the working population to fundamentally change economic and social conditions.

“Social inequality is incompatible with democracy. The process of enrichment in the boardrooms of Germany’s main companies has taken a grotesque form. The head of Porsche automobiles, Wendelin Wiedeking, took home a salary of €54 million last year; the chairman of Deutsche Bank, Josef Ackermann, €13 million; the chair of German Railways, Hartmut Mehdorn, €3.2 million. Since 2002, the incomes of the chief executives of companies registered on the DAX have increased their incomes by 62 percent, while average incomes have risen by just 2.8 per cent. It is this financial oligarchy that determines policies—not the electorate. All of the established parties are at the beck and call of this oligarchy.”

PSG supporters have campaigned for the meeting with information tables at the University of Frankfurt, at the Polytechnic school and in the pedestrian areas of the student district of Frankfurt-Bockenheim.

Broad layers of students and workers despise the Hessen state government led by Prime Minister Roland Koch (Christian Democratic Union - CDU). Many recall how Koch came to power nine years ago in an election campaign dominated by xenophobic witch-hunting. Since then, his government has intensified its measures against immigrant workers and their families. A law passed in 2005 obliges doctors, headmasters and lawyers to turn over to the police those without proper

identity papers—including children—so they can be rapidly deported.

During the nine years of a CDU led government, a total of €1 billion has been slashed from social projects. State institutions and services, such as schools, hospitals, public transport and publicly owned housing cooperatives have been subjected to a rigorous privatisation policy.

Instead of “guaranteed education,” there are now overcrowded classes, reduced school hours and the introduction of study fees. A quarter of a million inhabitants in Hessen live on miserly Hartz IV payments. In Frankfurt—Germany’s financial centre—a quarter of all children live in poverty.

The question remains, however, how to fight Koch when the main opposition party—the Social Democratic Party—advances a similarly reactionary programme.

In its seven years in office, the SPD-Green coalition government created the conditions for the orgy of enrichment now taking place. It provided substantial tax cuts for big business and introduced the Hartz IV welfare and cheap labour scheme. While a tiny minority has never had it so good, millions confront the humiliating trek to the social welfare office after just one year of unemployment benefits.

The leading candidate for the SPD in Hessen, Andrea Ypsilanti, is desperately trying to divert attention away from the right-wing policies of the SPD, but everybody is aware this party shares power in a grand coalition with the CDU at a federal level and is responsible for unrelenting attacks on social programmes and the rights of working people. If Ypsilanti were to replace Koch as Hessen prime minister in January, there would be no fundamental change.

In this situation, it is necessary to examine the role of the Left Party.

PSG supporters have repeatedly explained in the

course of the last few days why the Left Party and its leaders, Gregor Gysi and Oscar Lafontaine, provide no political alternative.

The Left Party has a reputation for complaining about social inequality, but as soon as it assumes government responsibility, it obediently bends to the dictates of the corporate boardrooms. For the past six years, Germany's capital, Berlin, has been governed by a coalition of the SPD and the Left Party. This coalition has implemented reactionary social measures that put Roland Koch to shame—including the closure of public services, cuts in jobs and wages, and the introduction of €1 (per hour) jobs. In Berlin, the Left Party is carrying out policies diametrically opposed to the promises they are making in the Hessen election campaign.

The PSG is absolutely opposed to the cynical and opportunist policy of the Left Party. As the German section of the Fourth International, it has centred its election campaign on the call for the building of a new international socialist party of the working class.

The leaflet for the meeting declares, "It is not enough merely to be enraged over the social crisis and the right-wing policies of the SPD, the trade unions and the Left Party. Only the active intervention of broad layers parts of the population into political struggle, based on a socialist programme, will bring about fundamental change. Without that, the current social decline will only intensify. The degeneration of democracy is already leading to a revival of racism and nationalism. History has shown where this can lead. We cannot stand by and allow a corrupt elite to continue to plunder public resources and ruin society."

The meeting on Thursday will be addressed by the chairman of the PSG, Ulrich Rippert, and the party's state parliament candidate, Helmut Arens.

Frankfurt-Main

Thursday, 13 December 2007, 19.00
Saalbau Bockenheim (Room 1)
Am Kurfürstenplatz (Schwälmer Str. 28)



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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