

PSG candidate demands immediate withdrawal of German army from Afghanistan

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The Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (PSG—Socialist Equality Party) is participating in the January 27 Hesse state elections with its own regional slate of two candidates. The PSG candidates are Helmut Arens, 59, a chemical worker and chairman of the Hesse regional PSG, and Achim Heppding, 53, a social insurance worker and former PSG candidate for the European parliament.

The following statement was issued last weekend by PSG candidate Achim Heppding.

As the PSG candidate in the Hesse state election this coming Sunday I demand the immediate withdrawal of German troops from Afghanistan. This war is an imperialist war, as is the war in Iraq, and both must be vigorously opposed.

The war in Afghanistan has now raged for seven years with no end of the fighting in sight. Most of the victims are civilians.

Winston Churchill once said that in war the truth was so precious that it must be attended by a bodyguard of lies. In recent years it is possible to follow at close hand the concerted attempt to assemble such a bodyguard of lies, which centre on the claim that the role of the German army in Afghanistan is limited to purely peaceful, humanitarian interests.

The reality, however, is very different.

The aim of this war is to secure control of a region with huge energy reserves. In addition, Afghanistan occupies a key geo-strategic position. Afghanistan is a crucial transport route for the entire region surrounding the Caspian Sea, which contains roughly 270 billion barrels of oil—approximately 20 percent of the world's entire known reserves. In addition the area is home to around an eighth of the world's gas reserves.

As the largest economic power in Europe, Germany is

keen to ensure its share of the pickings in this region—although two-thirds of the population reject the Afghan military deployment.

At the start of the US invasion in 2001 we explained, “The assault on Afghanistan was unleashed following the events of September 11, but it has far deeper roots. The character of this war is measured, as is the case with any war, not by the events which directly preceded it ...[but] by the class structure, the economic foundations and the world-political role of the states involved. With respect to these decisive aspects it is clear that the United States is carrying out an imperialist war.”

This also applies to current German politics. Both the former Social Democratic (SPD)-Green Party government and the present SPD-CDU (Christian Democratic Union) grand coalition are pursuing imperialist policies on behalf of the German bourgeoisie. In this connection one should recall the remarks of former defence secretary Peter Struck (SPD), who declared four-and-a-half years ago that German security would also be defended in the “Hindukusch” (the mountain range in Afghanistan, as well as the North-West Frontier Province and Northern areas of Pakistan).

The Left Party has no principled opposition to the deployment of the German army in Afghanistan. A discussion is taking place within the party over the respective merits of “good” military missions, i.e., as part of the blue helmet contingents of the UN, or “bad” missions, which lack the approval of the UN. The same debates took place over 10 years ago in the Green Party before the party capitulated completely and turned into a reliable instrument of German military and imperialist policy.

The leaders of the Left Party, Oscar Lafontaine and Gregor Gysi, publicly reject the mission by German troops in Afghanistan, but as soon as they have the opportunity to cement a coalition with the SPD they will use their current stance as a bargaining chip, which they will drop as soon as the price is right.

The Afghanistan war is a springboard to further even bloodier conflicts and wars. This is clear from the Iraq war. There is good reason to fear that the warmongers in Washington are preparing plans for a new military attack, this time against Iran.

The working population must give their own, independent answer to the danger of war. It must reject both the policy of reconciliation with Washington pursued by German Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) and Foreign Minister Frank Walter-Steinmeier, as well as the imperialist policies and projects of the German government itself.

The PSG calls for the dissolution of NATO and the closure of all American bases on European soil. We demand the immediate withdrawal of all German troops and other imperialist forces from the Balkans, Afghanistan, Africa, the Iraq and the entire Middle East.



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