

WSWS/ISSE public meeting in Wellington

After the New Zealand election: the fight against social inequality

22 November 2011

The 2011 New Zealand election campaign has taken place against the global backdrop of a deepening capitalist crisis and sharply deteriorating social conditions. During the course of the campaign, Europe's sovereign debt crisis was used to remove governments in Greece and Italy at the behest of the money markets, and to replace them with unelected "technocratic" administrations. Their agenda will be the brutal pauperisation of millions of ordinary people.

New Zealand is not isolated from these international developments. The election campaign has been dominated by discussions about who will most ruthlessly slash government spending and establish budget surpluses. The Labour Party's opening bid, to save \$100 billion over 20 years by raising the retirement age to 67 years, is a warning sign of the coming onslaught on the living standards and social rights of the working class.

New Zealand is already one of most unequal of the industrialised countries. The richest 151 individuals increased their combined wealth last year by 20 percent, while the average wage for working people rose by just 1.9 percent. A quarter of all children live in poverty. Official unemployment stands at 6.6 percent, and for young people at 27.6 percent.

As part of the global Occupy movement, protests have emerged six New Zealand cities, giving voice to popular opposition to social inequality, unemployment, war and the corporate domination of political life. The Occupy protests herald the development of a much broader movement of the working class internationally. But open social conflict, for the first time in decades,

raises important historical and political questions.

Those arguing for "no politics" in the Occupy movement seek to prevent an essential discussion over program and perspective. They conceal their own political agenda, which is to direct the protests behind the Labour and union apparatus, and block the fight for an independent, socialist movement in the working class.

The next government, whatever its composition, will be committed to imposing the dictates of big business and the banks. What is needed is a socialist program and perspective to meet the pressing needs of the working class, rather than the profits of the corporate elite. The ISSE and WSWS encourage workers and youth to attend our public meeting to discuss these vital political issues and the way forward for the working class.

Friday, December 9, 6.30 p.m.
Mezzanine Community Meeting Room,
Wellington Central Library.
Admission: \$3/\$2 concession



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact