

The significance of the PSG's election campaign

Christoph Dreier
27 September 2013

Regardless of how the current coalition talks in Germany are concluded, it is already clear that the new government will continue the drive to war and intensify social attacks across the whole of Europe. A massive social confrontation is developing in Germany, just as it has in Greece, Spain and Portugal.

The Socialist Equality Party (PSG) took part in the elections to prepare the working class for such conflicts. The PSG was the only party which stood in opposition to the politics of capitalist war and the social counterrevolution, fighting for a socialist and revolutionary perspective and an international orientation. The aim of the PSG was to build the International Committee of the Fourth International as the revolutionary socialist workers' party.

In the last seven weeks, the PSG published a total of 94 detailed articles on the election and political developments in Europe. These articles exposed the growing tensions within Europe, the preparations of new wars by Germany's ruling class and the planning of drastic social attacks across Europe.

All of the established parties sought to keep these issues out of the election and pretended that they did not exist. The PSG made clear how all of the parties, from the Christian Social Union to the Left Party, are moving closer together in preparation for the coming attacks on working people. They are supported in this by the media. The Left Party plays an important role in this common front against the workers. Fully 10 articles by the PSG focused on the role of the Left Party and their defence of austerity policies and war.

The PSG formulated an independent perspective for the working class. It explained that workers could only defend their interests in an unrelenting struggle against the corrupt manoeuvres of the trade unions and the right-wing policies of the Left Party and its pseudo-left

satellites. This required a united struggle by workers across Europe and internationally for the United Socialist States of Europe.

“Only through the unification of Europe on a socialist basis can the working class bring their own interests to bear, prevent Europe from relapsing into nationalism and war, and use the continent's enormous wealth and productive forces to serve the interests of society as a whole,” the election statement of the PSG states on this issue.

Guided by this perspective, the PSG organised its election campaign from the outset as a European-wide offensive for Marxism. The campaign began with meetings of the European sections of the ICFI on the 15th anniversary of the WSW and the history of the Fourth International. The PSG developed its election campaign based on this historical legacy. A European workers' conference against war, dictatorship and social cuts formed the conclusion of the campaign, to which international guests were invited.

In the weeks leading up to the election, the PSG organised four main online meetings, with several hundred people from around the world taking part in each. Participants came from the Netherlands, Turkey, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark, the Ukraine, Britain, France, Romania, Poland, Russia, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Serbia, Ireland, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland, Australia, Sri Lanka and the United States, among others.

The task of these meetings was to analyse the central political events and create a scientific understanding of the class struggle among workers, students and intellectuals. The issues discussed were those deliberately left out by the major parties in order to obscure their own reactionary politics.

At the first meeting, the lessons of the revolution and

counterrevolution in Egypt were examined. It was explained that an elemental uprising of the working class was not sufficient to defend social and democratic rights. The military coup showed the necessity of a socialist programme and a revolutionary leadership for the working class.

The report highlighted the role of pseudo-left groups in Egypt and internationally. As the social contradictions intensified, these representatives of a privileged layer of the petty-bourgeoisie moved rapidly to the right and were even prepared to support a brutal military dictatorship in order to suppress the working class.

This theme was continued at the second meeting, entitled Hands off Syria. The speech that was presented worked through the central role played by the German government together with all of the parliamentary parties in the imperialist intervention in Syria. The most active role in this was played by the Left Party, which officially spoke out against military intervention, while at the same time vehemently backing the pro-imperialist opposition.

The policies of war and social attacks are not compatible with democracy, because they meet with the opposition of the overwhelming majority of the population. This question was discussed at another meeting, which concretely demonstrated how all of the parties supported the strengthening of the state apparatus. An historical parallel was drawn with 1933, and it was explained that the working class is the only social force which can defend democratic rights and prevent a relapse into war and barbarism.

Throughout the election campaign, the polemic against the Left Party and its petty-bourgeois defenders played a central role. Only in a merciless struggle against the political and theoretical conceptions of the pseudo-left can the political independence of the working class be achieved and the revolutionary party built. This struggle must be based on the historical legacy of the Fourth International, which has fought against the influence of social democracy and Stalinism since its founding. This was also a key issue at the European workers' conference.

On the basis of its political and historical perspective, the PSG developed intensive work among the working class. The PSG reported on plans for mass layoffs in large parts of industry, and discussed with those

workers affected the connection between this development and the political tasks which result from it. Systematic work was established particularly among auto workers.

In the week before the election, the PSG organised two rallies in Berlin against the war in Syria. Both met with widespread resonance. Statements and interviews against the war were collected and then broadcast as videos.

The PSG's campaign also resonated with people on the Internet. The party's web site received many more than 50,000 visitors during the campaign. Hundreds joined the PSG's newsletter or subscribed to the party's social network sites. Thousands watched videos on the YouTube channel.

The PSG's election campaign was not a mass campaign for votes. Nonetheless, the party gained a limited but significant support base. The party was able to increase its vote total from 2,957 in 2009 to 4,840 this time. This was also connected with the fact that the PSG not only stood in Berlin and North-Rhine Westphalia, but also in Hessen. In Berlin, 976 voted for the PSG, 444 less than in 2009. In NRW, by contrast, the party was able to clearly increase its vote by 879 to 2,416 votes. The party also received 1,484 votes in Hessen. With 1,325, the PSG achieved its best result to date in the Hessen state election (2008: 1,035).

The election campaign of the PSG represents the prelude to an intensive political and organisational campaign to build the party in factories and universities. The editorial board of the *World Socialist Web Site* calls on all readers to familiarise themselves with the political programme and the historical foundations of the PSG, and to take part actively in the building of the party.



To contact the WSW and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact