

# PSG campaigns throughout Germany for public meetings on the crisis in Greece

By our correspondents  
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The Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (PSG, Socialist Equality Party) is holding a series of meetings entitled “Solidarity with the Greek workers! Fight against the dictates of Schäuble and Merkel!” Details of locations, dates and times can be found here.

The PSG is currently campaigning outside factories, at Job Centres, in universities and residential neighbourhoods to publicize the meetings. What is striking, is that despite all the media propaganda against “the Greeks”, ordinary workers express great sympathy and solidarity for the Greek people.

Workers and young people in Germany are upset by Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble’s ruthless austerity measures as well as the looting of Greek state-owned property by German companies such as Fraport.

The balance sheet of the Syriza government, which had initially awakened great hopes and which now is implementing the austerity measures, has been the subject of intense discussions. A geriatric nurse at Frankfurt employment office said that Syriza leader Alexis Tsipras was a “major disappointment”. She stated further that Tsipras and his Syriza “only belong to the rich and cheat the people!”

Saadet, a social worker in Frankfurt, was also disappointed with the experience with Syriza: “Tsipras has let himself be blackmailed, but had previously been a beacon of hope, not only for Greece but for the whole of Europe.” She continued, “In a way, he has already betrayed his working class, which I find very sad. An opportunity was missed.”

Before the election in January, Tsipras had spread the illusion that it was possible to obtain concessions from the EU, while at the same time he had promised to repay all Greece’s loans with interest to the international creditors.

Saadet said that she had initially harboured the hope that Tsipras and his Finance Minister Yanis Varoufakis would try to represent the interests of the workers: “At least they gave the appearance of doing this in the beginning, when the Greek population voted for Syriza. Maybe I’m too naïve.”

Massive pressure was probably exerted behind the scenes, she said. She thought that the measures Germany and France—mainly Wolfgang Schäuble—are now imposing on Greece were terrible. “Now everything is being rigorously privatized.”

Daniel, a student at Frankfurt’s Goethe University spoke with PSG members at the campaign table in front of the university, after two fellow students had walked by disparagingly. “We live in a class society,” Daniel said. “You’d think that the Middle Ages were over. But of course we still live in a class society, because capital plays such an important role.”

He had keenly watched the referendum on July 5, in which nearly 62 percent of the Greek population had spoken out against the EU austerity measures, and referred to this as a classic example of the fact that “democracy, i.e. the rule of the people, only exists in theory: The Greek population has clearly said no, but exactly the opposite is done.”

Unfortunately, there was virtually no critical reflection at the University—especially in economics. “As for Greece, we are not saving Greece, we are saving our banks, you have to see that clearly,” Daniel stated. He referred to the “relief funds”, which serve mainly to repay loans to the banks and which drive Greece’s debt ratio ever further upwards. “These economists understand this very well, but some are even in favor,” he said. “If you know all about this, how it is not to condemn it? That’s so obvious!”

Looking at the program of the Fourth International

and the literature on the campaign table, Daniel said, “I think it is right to work internationally from the outset, and the name of Trotsky tells me something.” Stalin was “a prime example of how not to build socialism. Historically, that cost many lives.”

The perspectives of the Fourth International were also the subject of many discussions in working class neighborhoods. A forty-year-old cleaning woman was very pleased with the proposal that the workers of all countries should fight together against finance capital. She related how she works up to 16 hours every day to make ends meet and to support her parents in Poland. She had heard that in Greece, more than a third of the population has no health insurance. “That’s not much different here,” she says. “For example, I do not have the money to pay my health insurance. I just hope that nothing happens to me.”

In Bockenheim, the campaign spoke to Anne, who was involved in several demonstrations in support of the Greek people and against the policy of the banks. She said she had read an interview with Varoufakis: “It revealed that Schäuble had ruthlessly put the Greek government under pressure.”

About the referendum on July 5, she said, “I was thrilled by the ‘OXI’ [no] decision of the Greek population, which I thought was really great and I just hope that the Greek people don’t let themselves be beaten even now.” When it was pointed out that Syriza had betrayed this decision the very next day, Anne replied, “Yes, that’s true, unfortunately, that seemed really strange to me. Heaven knows what happened behind the scenes. In any case, the EU has exerted strong pressure.”

The Greek government probably “had no chance” with the EU. “Now, large companies like Fraport are taking over the airports,” Anne continued. “That makes it clear why Schäuble has acted in this way. It’s about the sell-out of Greece. Now the powerful can help themselves and get everything they want.”

Anne agreed that Greece was a testing ground for attacks by the ruling class in other countries. “Yes, of course. First they subjugated the Portuguese, then the Spanish, and now the Greeks, and we could be the next. We’re all in the same boat, this concerns us as well.” She mentioned the massive military spending currently running to billions: “At the moment, I see the preparations for war as the greatest danger.”

Anne responded to the proposal that workers should unite internationally to defend themselves against finance capital by saying, “Yes, we need an alternative. The basic idea, that’s right, I would support that.”

Hannelore listened to the discussion at the campaign table about the social attacks on the Greek working class for a while. When the current preparations for war by the German government were mentioned, she spoke up and said that for her the most important thing was “that there is no more war!” Then she related how she can still remember the Second World War, when she had witnessed terrible air raids as a child.

When the war ended, she was six years old. “We lived in the city at the Berger Straße, and we always had to go to the bunker on Merianplatz during air raids. I was just a little girl, and once I didn’t take my doll with me, but afterwards the doll was gone. That’s what I still remember today. I know that’s absurd, because I was lucky that I survived at all. So many others died, even kids my age.”

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