

# German SEP gains official ballot status for European elections

17 April 2004

On Friday, April 16, the German national electoral commission met in Berlin to decide which parties can participate in the European elections due to be held June 13. With all the votes of members of the election commission, the German Social Equality Party was granted official ballot status.

The SEP has fulfilled all the demands and requirements and had previously delivered over 4,000 certified signatures of support necessary for candidature.

From a total of 26 parties and political organisations which had declared their candidacy and election proposals, 7 were not allowed to participate. These were mainly right-wing parties, some of which had been founded only in the past few months, such as the German Youth Party (Junge Partei Deutschlands), the Peoples Party (Partei für das Volk), the Party for a Transparent Germany (Partei Deutschland Transparent) and the Peoples Bloc (Bürger-Block). Most of these organisations had failed to gather the minimum requirement of 4,000 signatures. Some of them were only able to collect a few hundred signatures.

Also failing to collect sufficient signatures were the Party of the Unemployed and Socially Disadvantaged (PASS), which has previously taken part in elections, and an organisation named Peace, Work, Culture and Transparency (FAKT), which regards itself as part of the official peace movement but was only able to collect 1,300 signatures.

Apart from parties which are already represented in the German parliament—the SPD (German Social Democratic Party), FDP (Free Democratic Party), Green Party and PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism)—(no decision was made here over the conservative opposition CDU/CSU Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union, which are putting up candidates on a state level)—most of the

remaining 21 parties allowed to take part in the election are from the right of the political spectrum. The names of the organisations are sufficient to make this clear, e.g., the “German Party,” “From now on ... Alliance for Germany,” the “Christian Centre,” the “Party of Bible-Faithful Christians,” the “Ecological Democratic Party” and the “German Centre Party.”

The Social Equality party is the only party to be accepted for the election which puts forward a socialist programme. Two parties—the PDS and DKP—have their roots in the Stalinist ruling party of the former East Germany (SED)

The PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism, formerly the ruling Stalinist party of East Germany, the SED) participates in three state-level ruling coalitions and in this capacity has implemented drastic cuts in social programmes. The DKP (German Communist Party) was the sister organisation of the SED in West Germany and received political and financial support from the GDR (German Democratic Republic, the former East Germany). Following the collapse of the GDR the DKP maintained its Stalinist politics and refused to merge with the PDS.

The SEP regards its candidacy as a direct response to the right-wing turn of the SPD and to the growing danger of militarism and war. As the SEP election manifesto states:

“The social democratic parties have discarded all their inhibitions and have become the enforcers of a tiny elite, which is ruthlessly enriching itself and plundering society. Their policies no longer differ from the right-wing bourgeois parties. Against the political bankruptcy of social democracy, we advance a fundamentally different principle. For us, the needs of the population come first and we aspire to a society that is based on the principles of social equality and justice. We defend all social achievements—pensions, health

care, education, jobs and secure incomes—that are threatened by cuts. We oppose the attacks on fundamental democratic rights and reject war and militarism.”

The SEP is the German section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI). It is carrying out its election campaign with the support of the Socialist Equality Party in Great Britain and supporters in many European countries. The election manifesto of the SEP is currently being translated into numerous European languages.

The candidacy of the SEP is also directly bound up with the election campaign currently being carried out by the Socialist Equality Party in the United States, which is standing its own candidates in this year’s presidential elections. The aim of the SEP’s European campaign is to mobilise the European working class on the basis of a socialist programme and unite with workers in the US and worldwide in a common struggle against imperialism and war.

A series of election rallies and meetings have been planned for the coming weeks, at which SEP candidates will elaborate the perspectives and programme of the party.



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