

Letters from our readers

3 October 2009

On “The political significance of the Balmoral Estate Action Committee”

Revolutionary greetings to the Balmoral Estate Action Committee! You have the unrelenting support not only from the SEP in Sri Lanka, but from all sections of the ICFI and from the best of workers and youth worldwide. We look to your brave efforts as a historic milestone in the struggle for socialism. We eagerly await news of your further successes as we fight for a socialist perspective among workers in the countries we live in. You are right to trust the SEP, with its unblemished record in fighting for your interests. Best of luck! You do not fight alone!

Ed H

29 September 2009

The formation of the Balmoral Estate Action Committee is an historical milestone in the struggle for international socialism and a sign of the power of the program of the ICFI

These workers have drawn a line in the sand based on lessons learned—a class conscious internationalist socialist strategy. They know who their friends are—their fellow workers—and who they are not—the representatives of capital.

Strength and solidarity dear Sri Lankan comrades

Tony C

29 September 2009

On “The PSG and the German Left Party: An exchange of letters”

This was excellent. Peter Schwarz has given the clearest and most frank explanation of the position of the PSG and ICFI with patience and forbearance. I will forward this to as many people as I can.

Carolyn

California, USA

28 September 2009

Dear comrade Peter Schwarz.

I agree with your comments with this exchange regarding election results and the content of the socialist programme. This critic’s talk of an “occasion for a critical look at strategy” first of all downplays the role of the German PSG

in political education and development of class consciousness in the working class and those becoming drawn to the WWSW/ICFI/ISSE. You write, “Our programme is not based on whatever might find a resonance at any given time. It relies on an analysis of the objective situation and on the historical experiences of the international workers’ movement. Our criterion is not this or that immediate success, in terms of votes, but the question: Is our programme correct? Does it correspond to the tasks that flow from the changes in the objective situation? Does it prepare the working class for the coming developments? Does it promote the workers’ initiative and political independence? Does it articulate the historical interests of the working class? I can confidently say to your questions that the answer is “Yes!”

The program’s starting point is not the confusion created in the working class by the bureaucracies and “lefts,” but takes it’s starting point from the objective conditions: the world economic crisis, the failure of US-world capitalism, the opening up of a new epoch of revolution and war, the lessons drawn from the 20th Century and the resolute need for the revolutionary, political independence of the working class! The ICFI program is correct. This critic, perhaps unconsciously, reflects the “criticism” of the Steiner/Brenner “permanent revolution” group, who offered similar “criticism.” But one only need ask them, “Why did you break from the Trotskyist/ICFI movement?” Enough said.

Chris R

New Zealand

28 September 2009

On “German election: The collapse of the Social Democratic Party”

I’m sure that the present leadership of the SPD is doing all in its diminishing power to hold on to the leadership. But how likely is it that it will be successful? It has been clear for years that, like the British Labour Party, its policies and its decline in support are two sides of the same process. The SPD representatives are reformists and opportunists. They want political power and all its trappings. Now, in opposition, are they likely to stick with policies hated by their voters? No. Let me make a prediction. Within in a year

the new SPD leadership will be “Shocked, Shocked” to discover that they live in a capitalist society. Perhaps like Oscar Lafontaine, they will rediscover some pages from the *Communist Manifesto*. In any case, their biggest political burden will be their history in government. Hence, Steinmeier (and associates) will be scapegoated. The sooner they lose the leadership of the SPD the sooner they will appear as the Villains of this piece of history. Their current manoeuvrings are merely attempts to postpone the official date of their descent from grace.

Chris
Ireland
29 September 2009

This is not altogether without precedent. There may have been a typo in your piece since you gave it as dropping from 35 percent by 11 percent to 23 percent, which was possibly meant to be 24 percent. But the Social Democrats scored about 24.5 percent in the June 1932 elections, with 133 deputies elected to the Reichstag then. That's a very similar scale. The Communists in June 1932 then scored a little more than 13 percent, with 89 deputies elected; and the National Socialists a bit over 18 percent with 230. The higher number of NSDAP deputies elected more likely reflected a concentration of votes in specific districts than anything else. Even with that, it still came down to the matter of Hindenburg appointing Hitler to the chancellorship in January 1933 rather than a simple electoral victory. But the Social Democrats can honestly recall an earlier case when their vote was in this range.

Patrick M
29 September 2009

I was interested in the article by Stefan Steinberg on the results of the recent German election. The loss of votes by the ruling coalition parties showed definite voter dissatisfaction with the ruling coalition's parties. It was a vote against the austerity measures that have been implemented since 2005. The pickup of votes by the right wing capitalist party showed that some of the dissatisfaction was felt by the reactionaries in the CDU and the CSU, and they revolted, joining the more radical capitalist party. The others, the progressives, voted for the Greens and the Left Party.

Since the Left Party is being groomed to oppose class struggle at home and to support imperialist war abroad, this redounds against the workers and a sharpening of class struggle politics in the next few years. As the crisis intensifies and more working people are made unemployed, the pressure will build to make a revolution, and the Left Party will function to defuse middle class sympathy for the

poor and to bolster social patriotism for the wars in the Middle East.

I think that the lack of revolutionary militancy by the working class since the early 1920s (almost 90 years) will be a difficult problem in that middle class conservatism will tend to keep them away from an alliance with the workers except under the most severe circumstances.

I think your party's running of candidates in bourgeois elections is a mistake because this confuses working people into thinking something can change by voting in bourgeois elections. It can't, since socialist deputies in parliament are isolated and often trapped into voting for reactionary bourgeois measures. Far better to damn all such elections as fraudulent and merely designed to control people into voting for being robbed by the bourgeois scoundrels.

Steve H
Massachusetts, USA
28 September 2009

On “Obama follows Bush's modus operandi on Iran”

There is much to be read between the lines in the recent mass-media coverage of American military actions. As noted in this perspective, there is a certain “moral urgency” that is a sub-text of the quotes from the *Post* and the *Times*. It is also interesting that there was a feature on Gen. Stanley McChrystal last night on CBS's “60 Minutes” news program that noted his disgust with the way the war has been prosecuted for the past eight years, where apparently there was too much emphasis on “killing the enemy.” In the piece, he advocates the soldiers functioning more like peacekeepers, and showed some footage of their attempts to ingratiate themselves to the Afghans. It was noted that he wants more troops, and soon. Bizarrely, it was mentioned in passing that this ambassador of goodwill came from a “hunt-and-kill” unit of the US military, something that apparently shouldn't offend anybody. One must wonder if these morality-as-warfare characterizations are laying the groundwork for a conscription in the making.

Mike T
Michigan, USA
28 September 2009



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