

Participants at Paris meeting speak on SEP European election campaign

Our reporter
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After Sunday's election campaign meeting in Paris, participants spoke to the WSWS about the political situation and the joint program of the Socialist Equality Party (UK) and Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (Germany) for the May 25 European elections.

Thilip, 20, studies at Milton Keynes College in England. He said: "This meeting was a new experience for me. I realise that America and the European governments are raising the risk of another world war. The Third World War is going to be far more dangerous and far more disastrous than the First and Second World Wars. Now every major power has nuclear weapons. If they are used, they could completely erase a continent from the world map.

"The genocidal war against the Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka affected me greatly. All over Europe, tens of thousands of Tamil people took to the streets against this. I too, when I was 15, participated in that protest along with the other youth, without even seeking permission from my family. But we could not stop the war.

"The question why we could not stop that war haunted me for a very long time. Today, the question of stopping a much bigger war arises. Peter Schwarz's speech on how to stop the war really gives me hope. He said: 'We can stop the war only through the solidarity of working people worldwide and by building a global anti-war movement based on that.' I think that is a very accurate analysis.

"Many historical events were discussed in the meeting. History, like Stalin's betrayal, Hitler coming to power—I had once thought all these were irrelevant to me. But now I understand that they are very important."

Arul is a father of three. He has lived in Paris for the past 30 years. He said: "I came to the meeting because

unusual events are happening in Ukraine. This meeting is taking place amidst a great danger of war. A solution has to be found for that."

He pointed to the young people sitting in the front row of the meeting. "What kind of planet are we going to leave for our children and the world's children? What will happen if a war breaks out? Peter in his speech said that if we want to stop war, then the capitalist system, which is the source of the war, has to be overcome. The working class is the only force capable of doing that. I completely agree with that.

"Politics based on ethnicity, race, religion, language is reactionary. It has led only to deterioration so far. A precise appraisal that these reactionary policies cannot bring people a solution or a peaceful life is presented only by the *World Socialist Web Site* .

"In the 1980s, I was one of those youngsters who came out to fight against the oppression of the Tamil people. Then we got attracted by campaigns for solving problems through armed struggle. We got trained in that. We believed that people would get freedom, that we could get rid of oppression and exploitation through this armed struggle. But those movements did not even get close to those questions. Nationalistic perspectives have ended disastrously. I can understand this now from my 30 years of experience.

"We don't want another worldwide disaster. I came to this meeting to stop the risk of world war."

Diane, 26, is completing a chemistry doctorate in Paris. She said: "This is the first meeting of the ICFI I've been to. I only started to read the WSWS recently—on Syria and some scientific articles. The meeting gave a full picture of what is happening in the world.

"The report was different to what is told in the media about the present situation. The speaker explained the

complex details clearly and how each subject or matter is related to every other issue.

“I understood that we are going to face a world war and that mankind is in danger. I agree that we are facing the danger of fascism in France. In my neighborhood, the National Front got 20 percent of the votes in the municipal elections.

“I was surprised and did not understand the rise of the National Front. The meeting has helped me to understand this. It’s made me interested in Trotsky’s historical work. I’m going to read his writings. It is possible and correct that the only way to stop the war is to unite the world working class.”

Naima, who had attended a previous meeting of the ICFI in Paris, said, “I would have liked an answer on the Muslim Brothers in Egypt. Nasser was a dictator and the nationalists collaborate with the reactionaries and open the way to the right. But I think the nation state can be a bulwark against the encroachments of the multi-nationals which dominate the world.”

Laurence, 50, is a local government accountant. He said: “I learned a lot from this meeting. On every issue there was a historical reminder. The media and the politicians don’t give you this, they don’t show you what is behind events, the creation of the European Union, the USSR—I had little understanding of them.

“Things are really changing. We’re being so badly treated. People are opening their minds and wondering about politics and an alternative for the right and the left.

“The role of the media is dreadful. They take the pulse of the people for the politicians. We have to show how they manipulate and what is behind this. I’ve not really thought about politics before. I’m going to have to get out of my cocoon.”



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