

German PSG and British SEP present their European election programme at Paris meeting

Our correspondent
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The Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (PSG—Socialist Equality Party) of Germany and the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) of Britain presented their programme for the May 25 European election at a public meeting in Paris on Sunday. More than 50 people participated, including French immigrant workers and students and a delegation from Germany. The contributions were given in French and translated into Tamil.

Chairing the meeting, Antoine Lerougetel, writer for the *World Socialist Web Site* in France, explained that at the centre of the joint election campaign was the fight against the danger of war and a nuclear confrontation between the Western imperialist powers and Russia.

He pointed out the role of the Socialist Party-led French government and its pseudo-left backers, who support the imperialist intervention in Ukraine. The only political force opposing it at this year's May Day demonstrations was the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) and its supporters.

Greetings from the British SEP, sent by Assistant National Secretary Julie Hyland, were read out. Hyland said that the decision by French president François Hollande to appoint Manuel Valls, known as “the French Tony Blair,” as prime minister had to serve as a warning to all workers and youth. “It was Blair's administration,” she said, “that led to a massive growth in social inequality and facilitated the rampant criminality in the City of London, which helped bring the world economy to the point of collapse.

“Blair's right-wing policies all but destroyed the British Labour Party as an electoral force. And there is no doubt that Valls will have the same impact for the Socialist Party. In Britain, Labour's response has been

to try and compete with the right—while maintaining its commitment to the EU, of course. Under Labour leader Ed Miliband, it has adopted the slogan of ‘family, faith and the flag,’ demands greater restrictions on the free movement of EU citizens and immigrants, and is pledged to continue austerity. Meanwhile, the trade unions demand ‘British jobs for British workers.’”

The main speaker, Peter Schwarz, secretary of the ICFI and a leading member of the PSG, said: “While we are standing candidates in Germany and Britain, our campaign is aimed at all European workers. We are using the opportunity provided by the elections to popularise our programme throughout Europe and to build a new revolutionary leadership in the working class.”

“We reject the European Union,” Schwarz explained. “It does not represent the unity of Europe, but the diktat of the most powerful economic and financial interests over Europe. Our answer to the European Union is the United Socialist States of Europe. This is not just a slogan, but the basis of a revolutionary socialist programme.”

Schwarz pointed out that “the relentless attack on the social achievements and democratic rights of the working class that started in Greece, Portugal and Spain is now being continued in France and Italy.” The most pronounced manifestation of the crisis of capitalism was the crisis in Ukraine, he said. “Exactly 100 years after the outbreak of the First World War, Europe finds itself once again on the verge of a military catastrophe.”

He warned that “the confrontation with Russia is providing Germany with a welcome pretext to get rid of the policy of military restraint that it had had to adopt

after the crimes committed during Hitler's Third Reich." As in the twentieth century, Germany was once again reaching for the riches of the Black Sea region, the Caucasus, the Middle East, Central Asia and the vast expanses of Russia. The German media was furiously campaigning against Russia and the working class's resistance to war.

An important factor driving the war propaganda of the ruling elites was the growth of social tensions in Europe and the United States, Schwarz continued. The ruling class sees war as a means to divert the anger of the masses against austerity and the obscene concentration of wealth in the hands of the top 1 percent.

Turning to France, Schwarz warned of the danger posed by the National Front (FN). Valls's policies were boosting Marine Le Pen, he said, adding: "His social attacks allow her to pass herself off as the representative of the common people. His outbursts against immigrants play into the hands of the FN's own racism.... The ruling class is increasingly coming over to the notion of using the fascists to suppress the class struggle." This was demonstrated by the events in Kiev, where the European governments were closely collaborating with fascists.

"The transformation of the Socialist Party into the worst enemy of the working class, imposing the diktats of finance capital and reinforcing the National Front, demonstrates the urgency of building a new revolutionary leadership of the working class," Schwarz stressed.

All the tendencies wrongly referred to as the "extreme left" in France have consistently supported the Socialist Party (PS) electorally and will continue to do so.

The New Anti-capitalist Party (NPA), which stopped paying lip service to Trotskyism when it was founded five years ago, was now a pro-imperialist outfit, supporting the NATO bombing of Libya, demanding an imperialist intervention in Syria, and glorifying the fascist coup in Ukraine.

Schwarz concluded: "Our movement, the ICFI, was built in an ideological and political struggle against all these pseudo-left tendencies. The days when they could present themselves as Trotskyists and gain a certain influence are over. The intensification of the capitalist crisis and the rightward evolution of the PS

also expose these groups, which are closely linked to the bourgeois state and its servants in the trade unions and the PS. It is high time to build a strong section of the ICFI in France."

An intense and wide-ranging discussion ensued. Questions were asked about the nature of the regimes of Nasser in Egypt, Chavez in Venezuela and Putin in Russia. A translator familiar with events in Russia wanted to know more about the opposition to the Putin regime.

Schwarz replied that our opposition to the imperialist offensive against Russia did not imply any support for Putin, a right-wing nationalist politician who defends the interests of the oligarchs. He also explained that neither Russia nor China is an imperialist power, as the capitalist media and pseudo-left claim.



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