

German Socialist Equality Party holds meeting on its election program

Our correspondents
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On Monday, the Socialist Equality Party (SEP-Germany) presented its program for the upcoming federal election at a meeting in Berlin's district of Schöneberg. The next SEP election meeting will take place this Saturday in Duisburg.

Christoph Vandreier opened the Berlin meeting by explaining the importance of a socialist response to the capitalist crisis. Vandreier is deputy chairman of the SEP and its direct candidate for the election in the constituency of Tempelhof-Schöneberg.

"150 years after the publication of Karl Marx's *Capital*, the Marxist analysis has been confirmed," Vandreier said. "It is increasingly clear that only the struggle for socialism can prevent world war and put an end to horrendous levels of social inequality."

This was nowhere more apparent than in the US. A government of billionaires, generals, and right-wing extremists is aggressively attacking the working class and promoting militarism. The ruling class is united in this respect. The Democrats criticise the Trump administration for being inadequately aggressive in pursuing war against Russia. "This confirms that Trump is not some sort of aberration, but rather that he embodies the decline of American capitalism, which is seeking to maintain its position as a world power through wars abroad and attacks on social rights at home," Vandreier said.

The ruling class in Germany has reacted by pursuing its own plans for massive rearmament and seeking to dominate Europe in order to play the role of a world power. Vandreier then went on to substantiate this with statistics and commentaries and concluded: "The government is using Brexit and the election of Trump to expand German dominance in Europe and build up a European army under German leadership".

The return of German militarism awakens the ghosts

of the past. "The ruling elite is reacting to the crisis of the capitalist system as it did in the 1930s. They are planning and carrying out military interventions, inciting nationalism, and strengthening the state's oppressive apparatus in preparation for social upheaval. The war policy and growing social inequality are directly linked. Both are the expression of a bankrupt social system."

To demonstrate this, Vandreier cited the devastating fire at London's Grenfell Tower, which has an official death toll of nearly 100. In order to guarantee the property prices of luxury villas in the neighbourhood and save just 5,000 pounds, lives of ordinary workers and their families had been sacrificed. "This is nothing more than mass murder. This is social vandalism," Vandreier stressed.

The inferno in London was a product of the enormous social inequality which prevails across the continent. "It is just not the case of London or Greece. In Germany, rates of exploitation, low-wage labor and underemployment are increasing." Vandreier noted that the horrendous development of social inequality could only be properly explained by a Marxist analysis. "It is a manifestation of a social system that is completely irrational and which offers the great majority of the population nothing but war, social attacks and dictatorship."

This development was leading to resistance from the working class. "We see our task as giving this opposition a voice and a socialist perspective." Not a single social problem could be solved without breaking the power of the rich and the oligarchs.

"The independent political intervention of the working class is necessary. Banks and big corporations must be expropriated and placed under the democratic control of the population. Only in this way can the

wealth of society be used for the needs of people rather than maximising profit,” Vandreier said.

The SEP is the only party to put forward such a program. All the other parties defend capitalism, militarism and inequality. The SPD and Greens are justly despised as parties which introduced the anti-social Hartz IV policies and led the drive to war. The Left Party is prostrating itself and offering its services to both parties to secure them a ruling majority at the election: “All of the Left Party’s rhetoric about peace and social justice merely serves to prevent a movement against capitalism.”

Just as before WWI and WWII, the Marxists alone opposed war, Vandreier declared, referring to the Marxist opposition in the SPD, the role of the Bolshevik Party in leading the October revolution and the struggle by Trotskyists to establish a united front against Hitler. “Today it is only the SEP that embodies this tradition. Now as then, only a socialist revolution can prevent war,” he concluded.

His contribution was followed by a lively discussion, in which questions were raised about the SEP’s program, the perspective of revolution, and the fight against right-wing extremism. One of the speakers in the discussion was the editor of the German WSW, Peter Schwarz.

He said, “We explain that only a mass movement of the working class can overthrow capitalism. And without overthrowing capitalism, without breaking the stranglehold of the hedge funds, bankers and multimillionaires over society, you cannot change anything.”

This perspective is based on objective developments, Schwarz explained. “If a ruling class is so degenerate that a man like Trump can enter the White House, then society is ready for revolution.” There will undoubtedly be fierce class struggles. “And we want to give them an orientation.”

For their part, figures like Jeremy Corbyn in Great Britain, or Bernie Sanders in the US, want to prevent an independent movement of the working class developing against capitalism. “The bankruptcy of this perspective is reflected in Corbyn’s refusal to call to account the people responsible for the Grenfell Tower catastrophe. Instead, he merely calls on the government to pay towards the funeral expenses of the victims,” Schwarz said.

A revolutionary movement can only be built against these tendencies, and the SEP is fighting in the working class for an understanding of its role as a revolutionary and international class, Schwarz said. “That is why we vehemently oppose xenophobia directed against immigrants and refugees.”

Discussion continued at the book table. Many participants donated towards the SEP campaign and signed the form necessary to permit the party to take part in this autumn’s election.



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