

“Socialism Event” in Germany: Pro-capitalist politics in a pseudo-left garb

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The pseudo-left tendencies within and around the Left Party in Germany are reacting to the growth of the international class struggle with a sharp turn to the right. This was exemplified by the so-called “Socialism Event,” which was organized last week by Socialist Alternative Voran (SAV), the German grouping of the Committee for a Workers’ International (CWI). It was held in the editorial office of the *Neues Deutschland* newspaper in Berlin.

The event had nothing to do with “socialism” or the construction of an independent revolutionary party in the working class. A more appropriate title would have been “Left Party” or “Trade Union Event.” At about 30 separate sessions, leading SAV representatives drummed up support for these thoroughly pro-capitalist and anti-working-class organizations and promoted anti-Marxist theories and policies.

One session on “60 Years of the Cuban Revolution: What did Castro and Che fight for?” celebrated the Cuban Revolution and its leaders as “an inspiration to many” and praised the “achievements of the revolution.” Another panel, “Socialists and Brexit: Can leaving the EU open up perspectives to the left?” justified the essentially right-wing and nationalist “Left Brexit” campaign of the Socialist Party, SAV’s English sister party.

One focus of the event was to mobilize support for the Left Party in the European elections in late May. The keynote speaker at the inaugural session was Özlem Alev Demirel, the Left Party’s lead candidate in the European elections. The Left Party is contesting the election on a decidedly right-wing, pro-capitalist programme. Even before the Left Party’s own congress in Bonn in preparation for the European elections, its party executive had rejected any criticism of the European Union. A passage in which the EU was called

“militaristic, undemocratic and neoliberal,” was deleted from its election programme. In Berlin, Demirel defended this course and opposed any “fundamental criticism” of the EU.

The fact that in Germany the SAV promotes the EU and at the same time supports the Brexit policy of its English sister organization is characteristic of the nationalist politics of the CWI. This “International” is not developing a common international line but sets its flag in every country according to the line followed by the ruling class.

Nearly nine years after the SAV officially joined the Left Party, there is no difference between it and the party leadership. This was particularly evident in a panel discussion with SAV national spokesperson Lucy Redler and Left Party chair Bernd Riexinger, entitled “Which way forward for the Left Party: new collective movement, ruling party or new class politics?” Redler, who has been a member of the party executive since 2016, agreed with “Bernd” on almost all issues.

In their remarks, Redler and Riexinger made no secret about the fact that in every state assembly where they are in government with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Greens—parties of war and austerity—they too are responsible for ferocious social attacks, conducting brutal deportations and developing a police state.

“The Brandenburg Left Party’s approval of the police law” and agreement to “an expansion of the secret service ... not only mortgaged the Brandenburg Left Party, but also nationwide,” explained Redler. The police law extended “stop and search,” allowed “preventive detention of up to one month on suspicion of terrorism” and would “in future be used against demonstrators and strikers.” Now the SPD-Left Party state government, in coordination with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Greens, even wanted to

“codify the debt ceiling in the constitution,” placing strict limits on public spending.

The situation is hardly better in the other federal states in which the Left Party is in coalition government. “In Berlin, under red-red-green [SPD-Left Party-Green Party], even the school buildings are being privatized. Deportations are also continuing in Berlin,” admitted Redler.

Riexinger made it clear that the Left Party’s “demand for expropriations” was really a cover for new attacks on the working class. While it supposedly meant “transferring real estate companies to the public sector,” he had previously spoken out against “expropriation without compensation.” In other words, the Left Party wants to buy back the same apartments it sold off to speculators at a song between 2001 and 2011 as a member of the SPD-Left Party Senate [Berlin state executive), only now paying billions of euros for them.

By “new class politics,” Redler and Riexinger mean the suppression of the growing political and social opposition among workers and youth with the help of the Left Party and the trade unions. Redler pointed to “left-wing developments” in the population. As examples, she mentioned, among others, the anti-deportation demonstrations in Bavaria, strikes at Ryan Air, the mass protests against police laws and the “#indivisible” mass demonstration of a quarter of a million people against racism and the return of fascism last October in Berlin. She warned, “The Left Party has to seize this mood and channel it.”

The fear of an independent movement of workers against the capitalist system terrifies the SAV leadership.

In a speech from the floor, SAV national spokesman Sascha Stani?i? warned that “the phase we had in Germany in recent years, and which was characterized by relative economic stability, is about to end.” It was “quite clear that the global economy is heading for its next crisis, which is very likely to have far more catastrophic consequences, with all the resulting political upheavals and changes in the party system, but also for a radicalization in consciousness and for the development of struggles.” Germany will then “possibly be confronted again with things that are from a few years ago.”

The SAV fears that the Left Party’s openly right-

wing and anti-working-class policies mean it will not be able to control the coming revolutionary struggles of the working class. It would be “the worst form of preparation for future struggles and fights and developing awareness and polarization, if the party continues this year to participate in government,” warned Stani?i?. He went on to make clear in the next sentence that he supports his party’s government policy. “I’m not saying anything against it now. I think this has something to do with the strategic direction.”

The return of the class struggle is relentlessly exposing the class character and political orientation of all political organizations. Pseudo-left groups such as the SAV, which represent the interests of privileged middle-class layers, can no longer hide the fact that they are actually building parties and organizations on the other side of the barricades in the class struggle. Trotsky once said of the opportunist organizations of his time, “The great events which rush upon mankind will not leave of these outlived organizations one stone upon another.” The same fate will overtake the Left Party and its pseudo-left appendages.



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