

European elections 2019

No to the EU, social inequality, fascism and war! For socialism and the unity of the European working class!

By the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP)
23 November 2018

On October 20–21, a Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) Congress voted for the party to take part in the European elections of 26 May 2019 and elected candidates for the national electoral list. The following resolution, adopted unanimously by the Congress, explains the objectives and tasks of the SGP.

In May 2019, the Socialist Equality Party (SGP) will run in the European elections with a nationwide electoral list to oppose the rise of the far right, growing militarism, the building of a police state and increasing social inequality. Together with the other sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), we are fighting for a socialist program to unify the European working class in struggle against capitalism. This is the only way to prevent the continent from relapsing into fascist barbarism and war.

1. The fight against the right-wing danger

World War II ended less than 75 years ago. At that time, in 1945, all of Europe lay in ruins. More than 60 million people had been killed on the battlefields, in the Nazis' gas chambers and in bombing raids. It was said at the time that such crimes should never happen again. But today it is becoming ever more apparent that capitalism is incompatible with democracy, prosperity or peace. Fascism and war are returning.

At the head of the United States, the most powerful capitalist country, stands an ultra-right president who threatens North Korea, Iran and nuclear-armed Russia and China with war. Far-right parties are on the rise across Europe. In nine countries—Italy, Austria, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Greece—they sit in government; in France, they are the second strongest party.

Even in Germany, which committed the greatest crimes in world history under Hitler, the Nazis are back. The AfD, whose leader Alexander Gauland glossed over the Nazis' barbarism as a "bird dropping" in "a thousand years of successful German history," is the first right-wing extremist party to sit in the *Bundestag* (Parliament). At the end of September, a neo-Nazi mob of several thousand rampaged through Chemnitz, chanting xenophobic slogans, performing the Hitler salute, and attacking a Jewish restaurant.

Unlike the Nazis in the 1930s, today's fascists are not a mass movement. But this does not make them any less dangerous. Hitler's movement had several hundred thousand armed members when, in January 1933, a conspiracy around President von Hindenburg appointed him Reich Chancellor; behind him stood the capitalists, large landowners and the military. These forces needed the Nazis to smash the organized working class and to prepare the Second World War. Today's right-wing extremists draw their strength primarily from the support they receive

from above—from the state apparatus, the intelligence services and the police, but also from the government and the established parties. The rise of the AfD is the result of a veritable conspiracy in the state and political establishment.

One of the most important pillars of the AfD is the state security apparatus. Interior Minister Horst Seehofer and then-President of the *Verfassungsschutz* (Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, the domestic intelligence agency) Hans-Georg Maaßen, openly defended the neo-Nazi march in Chemnitz. The *Verfassungsschutz* is closely intertwined with the neo-Nazi scene, which it controls and finances through informers. Many AfD MPs and officials have a military or police background.

Support for the AfD extends deeper, however. The media, the universities and every party in the *Bundestag* have paved the way for its rise, both ideologically and politically. These other parties have welcomed the AfD with open arms. They have entrusted it with the leadership of three important committees: Legal Affairs, Budget and Tourism. The Grand Coalition has adopted the AfD's program in refugee policy and internal security. Although the AfD received only 12.6 percent of the vote, it now sets the tone in federal politics.

Resistance is growing. The demonstration on October 13 in Berlin expressed the mass opposition that exists to the return of German fascism and militarism. It was the biggest demonstration since the protests against the Iraq War, 15 years ago. Nearly a quarter of a million people marched in Berlin to protest racism, the rise of the AfD, and the right-wing policies of the federal government and the established parties. In other German cities, tens of thousands have repeatedly taken to the streets in recent weeks.

These events confirm the analyses and perspectives of the Socialist Equality Party (SGP). The AfD is not the expression of a widespread right-wing mood among the population; it is being consciously promoted by the ruling class. This is what the right-wing extremist party needs in order to enforce its anti-social and militaristic policies against widespread opposition.

Political outrage and mass protests are important. However, they are not sufficient to prevent the ruling class from pursuing its reactionary goals once again, as in the 1930s, with fascist methods. The ruling class is reacting to the massive opposition among workers and youth with growing aggressiveness: it is closing ranks, suppressing democratic opposition, and stepping up its political conspiracy against the population.

The police and secret services are being strengthened and their surveillance powers massively extended. The Network Enforcement Act

forces social media to censor content or face stiff penalties. During the European election campaign, the EU intends to impose draconian fines on parties that spread “fake news”—that is, facts that contradict official “NewSpeak.” This censorship is primarily directed against leftist and socialist criticism. The *World Socialist Web Site* is the most affected by Google’s censorship, and Julian Assange faces extradition to the United States, and possibly the death penalty, because WikiLeaks uncovered war crimes committed by the US government.

Behind the scenes, influential circles in politics, the media, the secret service and the military are working to bring an openly right-wing extremist government to power in Berlin. With the AfD’s entry into the Bundestag, “something has also changed for the better,” Bundestag President Wolfgang Schäuble told the *Bild am Sonntag*. And *Spiegel* columnist Jakob Augstein demanded: “The AfD must have a say in government.”

The SGP bases its struggle against the return of fascism, militarism and war on the upsurge of the class struggle. As the ruling class worldwide moves sharply to the right, the vast majority of the working class is moving to the left and is beginning to shake off the political shackles imposed on it by the social-democratic parties and trade unions. This is reflected in an increasing number of strikes and protests, and a growing interest in socialism.

In the United States, strikes by teachers, UPS workers and other workers rebelling against their right-wing union leaders, are increasing. In Europe last year there were numerous strikes at Ryanair, Lufthansa, Air France and Amazon, against the labour market reform in France, against austerity in Greece, and in the German metal industry and public sector, to name but a few.

The intensification of the class struggle imposes enormous responsibilities on the SGP. “The same factors that drive the ruling class to war also create the objective conditions for socialist revolution,” the SGP declared in its September 2014 resolution on The return of German militarism and the tasks of the Socialist Equality Party. It stressed: “But the socialist revolution is not an automatic process. The decisions on its pace and success are made in the political sphere. As Trotsky wrote on the eve of the Second World War, the historical crisis of humanity amounts to the crisis of revolutionary leadership. The solution to this crisis depends on the decisions, actions and construction of our party.”

2. The Bankruptcy of Capitalism

The SGP fights to raise the political consciousness of the working class to the level of its historical tasks. This requires, first of all, a clear understanding of the historical experiences of the class struggle and the current objective crisis. The return to militarism and the rise of far-right parties are international phenomena. They are the reaction of the ruling class to the world crisis of capitalism. None of the problems that made the first half of the twentieth century the most conflict-ridden and violent epoch in human history has been solved. Temporarily held in abeyance, they now return with redoubled force.

The First and Second World Wars followed inexorably from the contradictions of international capitalism. “With the present level of technology and skill of the workers, it is quite possible to create adequate conditions for the material and spiritual development of all mankind,” the Fourth International declared in its 1940 *Manifesto on the Imperialist War*. “It would be necessary only to organize the economic life within each country and over our entire planet correctly, scientifically, and rationally, according to a general plan. So long, however, as the main productive forces of society are held by trusts, i.e., isolated capitalist cliques, and so long as the national state remains a pliant tool in the hands of these cliques, the struggle for markets, for sources of raw materials, for domination of the world, must inevitably assume a more and more destructive character.”

Hitler’s plans for world conquest were not the subjective product of a

deranged mind, but the expression of the objective interests of German capital, which had to subjugate Europe and conquer “living space” in the East, in order to expand and to suppress the explosive class tensions within. The German bourgeoisie therefore supported Hitler and installed him in power. Now they and the ruling classes of the other imperialist powers are returning to the same methods.

After the Second World War, German capitalism was temporarily able to expand Europe-wide and worldwide without itself waging dirty wars, as the United States did in Korea and Vietnam. Washington calculated that its own interests required that it put its German war opponent back on its feet to pacify Western Europe, serve as a bulwark against the Soviet Union in the Cold War, and offer a market for its own exports. At the same time, the US hesitated to rearm Germany. Although Germany maintained a large territorial defence army, it had no nuclear weapons, aircraft carriers, or long-range bombers of its own—weapons that are indispensable to functioning as a world military power.

The situation changed with German reunification and the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This did not inaugurate a new era of democracy and peace, but destroyed the internal balance of Europe and ushered in a new era of imperialist conflicts and wars.

The United States saw the end of the Soviet Union as an opportunity to halt the erosion of its global dominance through the unrestrained deployment of its military. It has waged criminal wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen and threatened Iran with war in pursuit of this goal. These conflicts are imperialist wars over raw materials, markets and world domination. The new US National Security Strategy (NSS) bluntly declares that preparation for war between the major powers is at the center of US military planning. “At the heart of US national security is not terrorism, but competition between major powers,” said Secretary of Defense James Mattis as he presented the NSS in December 2017. This is directed not only against China and Russia, but also against former “allies” such as Germany and Japan.

3. For the United Socialist States of Europe

The European Union does not embody the “unity of Europe.” It is the arena in which the battle for supremacy over Europe takes place. Claims that the introduction of a single market, a common currency and a gigantic bureaucracy in Brussels would overcome the division of the continent into 50 competing nation states, equalize living conditions and secure peace, have proven to be a political fraud. The EU strengthens the centrifugal forces it claims to overcome.

Since the 2008 financial crisis, the EU’s role as a tool of the most powerful capitalist interests has become increasingly naked. To secure the profits of the international banks, it dictated an austerity program to Greece that plunged the population into bitter poverty. Spending on pensions, education, health and public investment was slashed, and public debt raised to 180 percent of GDP, in order to satisfy Greece’s creditors. It will take Greece at least 42 years to pay off these debts. Brussels committed Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Italy and other countries to similar austerity programs.

Germany, which benefited economically, like no other country, from the introduction of the euro and the EU’s expansion to the east, is forcing its financial and austerity policies on other EU member states. Herfried Münkler, who advises the Federal Government on foreign policy issues, openly calls for Germany to become Europe’s “hegemon” and “disciplinarian.” With this, the ruling class is returning to the German-European power politics of the German Kaiser and of Hitler. “The national interest of Germany has a name: Europe” is the slogan of the SPD-led Foreign Office.

With social-democratic, Green and pseudo-left parties across Europe supporting the EU, right-wing nationalist parties have profited from rising popular opposition to Brussels. In Britain, a majority voted for Brexit. A bitter struggle is now raging in the ruling class between two reactionary

camps: pro-EU supporters of Brussels' austerity policies in the Remain camp, and right-wing, anti-EU nationalists of the Leave camp.

The British Socialist Equality Party refused to support either of these reactionary camps in the Brexit referendum, calling instead for an active boycott. "The Remain and Leave campaigns are both headed by Thatcherite forces that stand for greater austerity, brutal anti-immigrant measures and the destruction of workers' rights," it declared. "Their differences are over how best to defend the interests of British capitalism against its European and international rivals, under conditions of economic slump and the escalation of militarism and war. A boycott prepares the ground for the development of an independent political struggle of the British working class against these forces. Such a movement must develop as part of a continent-wide counteroffensive by the working class, which will expose the referendum as only an episode in the deepening existential crisis of the British and European bourgeoisie."

In the meantime, the EU's disintegration is progressing rapidly. Conflicts between the EU and nationalist governments in Italy, Poland and Hungary are escalating. The EU agrees entirely, however, with sealing off borders, building a police state and suppressing social struggles and political opposition. Brussels plays a leading role in transforming all of Europe into a police and surveillance state and censoring the internet. Thousands of refugees have drowned in the Mediterranean because the EU denies them any help and prosecutes rescue ships' crews as criminals. It pays dictators and criminal gangs to lock up refugees in camps, where they are enslaved, tortured and killed.

Plans to transform the EU into a military alliance that, unlike NATO, can operate independently of and against the United States, are well advanced. Berlin and Paris, in particular, are working closely together on this. Practical implementation, however, has repeatedly come to a standstill because the strategic interests of German and French imperialism conflict. Brexit has exacerbated the existential crisis of the EU and the tensions between the European powers.

The EU and all governing parties in Europe—from the pseudo-left Syriza party in Greece to the Grand Coalition in Germany and openly right-wing extremist governments in Italy, Austria and Eastern Europe—are all pushing forward austerity, militarism and anti-refugee terror. This underscores the fact that workers and youth are confronted with revolutionary tasks. European capitalism cannot be tamed. It must be overthrown and replaced by the United Socialist States of Europe.

The SGP rejects the European Union as well as all efforts to strengthen the European nation states. Together with the Socialist Equality Party in Britain and the *Parti de l'égalité socialiste* in France, it fights for the unification of the European working class on the basis of an international socialist program. This is the only way to prevent a relapse into nationalism and war, and to unite the continent in the interests of the vast majority of its population.

4. The return of German militarism

In Berlin, the decision was taken long ago to dominate Europe politically and militarily and to rebuild Germany into an aggressive great power capable of confronting other great powers. This question was at the heart of government coalition negotiations that lasted for months after the federal elections in 2013 and 2017.

In 2013, the CDU, CSU and SPD agreed on an end to military restraint, and put this into practice in government—stationing German troops at the Russian border, prolonging the German mission in Afghanistan and launching new army operations in Iraq, Mali and beyond. In 2018, they decided "to take further steps towards an 'army of Europeans'" and announced a massive increase in military spending. With the NATO target of 2 percent met, this spending will be doubled to 70 billion euros. Every second euro in spending cuts to other areas will flow into the military.

The Ministry of Defence's new "conception of the Bundeswehr" makes

clear that the German military, despite catastrophic defeats in two world wars, is again preparing large-scale war operations. The Bundeswehr should be prepared "to operate in a hybrid conflict as it develops and escalates across the full spectrum of its effects, in all its dimensions, in a joint, multi-national armed force, and in all types of operations." Blitzkrieg and mass casualties are being planned. "At the beginning of a very large, high-intensity operation, a huge deployment of readily available forces and equipment is necessary," the paper declares. "Provisions to regenerate the personnel and material must be undertaken."

In a country where more than ten million people born before 1945 are still alive and remember the horrors of war, and in which the slogan "No war ever again" was long an integral part of school lessons, the return to militarism is provoking massive opposition.

That is why official policy takes on the form of a conspiracy, why the AfD is promoted, and why history is being falsified. The growth of militarism and the advanced preparations for war require the restriction of democratic rights and further attacks on the working class, which will be made to bear the cost of militarism. The collapse of bourgeois democracy makes itself felt internationally.

In Germany, security authorities are preparing to suppress opposition to militarism and to capitalism. This is the conclusion of the latest report of the *Verfassungsschutz* (Office for the Protection of the Constitution) domestic intelligence agency, which was drawn up in close cooperation with the AfD. It denounces as "left-wing extremist" anyone who rejects capitalism and holds it responsible, in the words of the report, for "social and political grievances such as social injustice, 'destruction' of housing, wars, right-wing extremism and racism as well as environmental disasters."

In particular, the *Verfassungsschutz* explicitly lists the SGP as a "left-wing extremist party," although it admits that the SGP pursues its aims by legal means and does not carry out violent or illegal activities. The Grand Coalition government, the security authorities and their right-wing radical allies are taking action against the SGP because it is the only party that is systematically fighting against the falsification of history and the return of militarism, and is not part of the capitalist establishment. It is under observation, the *Verfassungsschutz* writes, because it advances a socialist program "against the existing state and social order, which is sweepingly denigrated as 'capitalism,' against the EU, against supposed nationalism, imperialism and militarism, as well as against social democracy, the trade unions and also against the Left Party." The ruling class fears that the historical and political perspectives of the SGP and the ICFI will find a broad response in the working class and, in Marx's words, become a material force.

Four years ago, the media launched a campaign denouncing the SGP because it opposed the revision of history and the rehabilitation of the Nazis, and criticized far-right historian Jörg Baberowski. Baberowski had defended Nazi apologist Ernst Nolte in *Spiegel* and publicly certified that Hitler "wasn't vicious." The SGP linked this position to the return of German militarism. Germany could not return to militarism, the SGP declared, without "developing a new narrative of the twentieth century ... a falsification of history that trivializes and justifies the crimes of German imperialism."

The criticism of Baberowski and other right-wing professors found powerful support among students and workers. Ruling circles were alarmed. The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* accused the SGP of "mobbing" and complained about its "effectiveness." The presidium of Humboldt University backed Baberowski and declared criticism of the right-wing extremist professor "inadmissible." For one and a half years now, Google has been censoring left-wing and progressive websites, including the *World Socialist Web Site*, in close cooperation with German government circles.

The book *Warum sind sie wieder da? (Why are they back?)* documents the SGP's struggle against the return of fascism, militarism and authoritarianism in Germany and develops it further. "The book is not written from the point of view of a neutral observer, but as a contribution to the struggle against the return of militarism and fascism. It should help to ensure that the Nuremberg Trials are held, this time, before a catastrophe occurs and not after," explains Christoph Vandreyer, Deputy Chairman of the SGP and author of the book, in the foreword.

5. The role of the SPD, Left Party, Greens and trade unions

The return of German militarism and the strengthening of the extreme right would not be possible without the active support of the SPD, the Left Party, the Greens and the trade unions.

One hundred years ago, the SPD, under Friedrich Ebert, Philipp Scheidemann and Gustav Noske, allied with the most reactionary forces in the army to defeat the November Revolution of 1918–19 and assassinate the revolutionary socialists, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. Today, the social democracy is continuing this policy. Unlike 100 years ago, however, it no longer has any connection with the working class. It is a right-wing state party which exclusively represents the interests of the banks, large corporations, secret services and the Bundeswehr (army).

It is hated by workers and young people due to its war policy and its anti-social Agenda 2010, which has plunged millions into poverty and created the largest low wage sector in Europe. The SPD has reacted to its recent election debacles by continuing the Grand Coalition government alliance with Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian-Democratic Union (CDU), and cutting deals with far-right forces behind the scenes. AfD politician Stephan Brandner, for example, owes his office as Chairman of the Bundestag's Legal Affairs Committee to the Social Democratic Vice-President of the Bundestag, Thomas Oppermann, who proposed Brandner for the post.

At Humboldt University (HU) in Berlin, President Sabine Kunst (SPD) is implementing the *Verfassungsschutz's* policy in cooperation with the AfD. After an inquiry into Berlin AfD delegate Martin Trefzer, Kunst sued the HU's student government at the end of July in order to obtain the full names of the speakers and deputies in the student parliament. The lists would allow far-right circles to identify, intimidate and attack left-wing students. Kunst's main goal is to defend the right-wing extremist Professor Baberowski against growing opposition among the student body.

The Greens have been some of the most enthusiastic supporters of German military operations for the past twenty years. They pushed through the Bundeswehr's first war mission in Yugoslavia two decades ago over bitter popular opposition. They are also far to the right on domestic and refugee policy. Each time they govern a German state—with the SPD, CDU, FDP or the Left Party—they rearm the security forces and brutally deport refugees. Their preferred coalition partner is now the CDU. Even after the Bavarian state elections, they declared themselves willing to form a coalition with the CSU, whose chairman Horst Seehofer openly backed the neo-Nazi marches in Chemnitz.

Like the Greens, the Left Party represents the interests not of workers, but of the state and the affluent middle class, standing with both feet in the camp of German imperialism. It emerged from East Germany's Stalinist state party, which suppressed the working class and supported the restoration of capitalism in the east. In 2007, this party merged with the WASG (Labour and Social Justice—The Electoral Alternative)—which consisted of old SPD bureaucrats, trade unionists and members of pseudo-left groups—to form the Left Party.

In 2013, the Left Party helped draw up a foreign policy report, titled "New Power—New Responsibility," of the *Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik* (SWP, Foundation for Science and Politics) think tank. It was thus involved in the return of German militarism from the outset. Since then, it

has loyally supported Berlin's foreign policy offensive. Wherever it governs at the state level, it sets new standards for the viciousness of its social cuts. The Left Party has made Berlin the proverbial capital of poverty. In Greece, its sister party Syriza is shattering the lives of millions, with its ruthless austerity program.

Sections of the Left Party are now openly in the camp of the right. The leader of the party's parliamentary group, Sahra Wagenknecht, has come out against the anti-far-right protest in Berlin and ridiculed the demand for open borders as "unreal and totally otherworldly." It is only a matter of time before Wagenknecht openly makes an alliance with the far right. AfD boss Alexander Gauland regularly praises her as a "courageous voice of reason," hailing her attacks on refugees ("Whoever abuses hospitality forfeits hospitality") as "very well to the point."

6. Put an end to poverty and exploitation—for social equality!

The social-democrats' assertion that class antagonisms between the working class and the bourgeoisie can be overcome by "social market economy" and social partnership has proven to be a lie. Since at least as far back as the 1980s, the gap between rich and poor has grown rapidly; it has now reached a level that defies imagination.

Worldwide, the eight richest individuals possess the same wealth as the poorer half of humanity, i.e., 3.6 billion people. This social gulf runs through every country and all of Europe. The average wage in Bulgaria, an EU member state, is eight times lower than in Germany. In Germany itself, one of Europe's richest countries, 12.9 million people live in poverty and 3.2 million work several jobs, because otherwise their low wages would not be enough to live on. Even those who earn more "normal" wages face existential problems: unaffordable rents, long commutes to work, increasing job stress and insecurity.

The trade unions and their company delegates have become co-managers in the service of the capitalists, organising social counterrevolution. There is hardly a dismissal or wage cut that does not bear their signature. They react with bitter enmity to every sign of militancy and try to either stop industrial action altogether or lead it into an impotent dead-end. To the extent that right-wing extremist parties have managed to find support among workers, it is due to outrage at the reactionary role of social democracy, the pseudo-lefts and the trade unions.

The SGP firmly rejects the capitalist system and its political henchmen. We fight for a society in which people's needs outweigh private profit interests. Great fortunes, the banks and the major corporations must be expropriated and placed under democratic control. Only in this way can the social rights of all be secured. These include the right to an adequately paid job, quality education, affordable housing, secure pensions, excellent medical care and access to culture.

7. Eighty years of the Fourth International

The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) is today the only socialist tendency representing the social interests and historical perspective of the working class. This is the result of its decades-long struggle for Marxist principles and the independence of the working class. In the history, program and political line of the ICFI, the lessons and experiences of more than 150 years of class struggles, both victories and defeats, are concentrated.

The founding of the Fourth International 80 years ago by Leon Trotsky and the International Left Opposition was the culmination of their 15-year struggle against the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union and the Communist International (Comintern). Against the nationalist program of "socialism in one country," which expressed the interests of the bureaucracy within the Soviet Union, they defended the internationalist strategy that had led the October Revolution to victory in 1917.

The subordination of the Comintern to the national interests of the Soviet bureaucracy led to devastating defeats of the international working class, culminating in the German catastrophe of 1933. Under the influence

of Moscow, the KPD (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*) down the danger of fascism and prevented a joint struggle of the German working class against the Nazis. Instead of forming a united front with the SPD, which at that time still organized millions of socialist workers, it described them as “social fascists,” who were no different to the Nazis.

The Comintern’s refusal to learn the lessons of the German catastrophe prompted Trotsky to break with it and to call for the founding of the Fourth International. Against the openly counterrevolutionary role of Stalinism, the disastrous policies of the Popular Front, and the mass murder of communists in the Soviet Union, it defended the socialist principles of internationalism and workers power.

The outcome of the Second World War and the counterrevolutionary role of Stalinism gave capitalism a breathing space. An economic upswing developed in the post-war period, supported, above all, by the resources of American capitalism. The discredited social democratic parties and trade unions regained influence. The national liberation struggles were led by bourgeois leaders who sought a compromise with imperialism.

This did not remain without its influence on the Fourth International. For decades, the International Committee had to fight against the political currents of Pabloism and state capitalism, which adapted to the Stalinist, reformist and national movements and ascribed to them a revolutionary role. Not the working class, led by the Fourth International, would lead the fight for socialism in a revolution, they all claimed in one form or another, but a “progressive” wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy, Maoist peasant armies, “leftist” social democrats and trade unionists or bourgeois nationalists like Ben Bella, Yasser Arafat and Fidel Castro would bring about a gradual transition to socialism.

In 1982 to 1986, with its split from the British Workers Revolutionary Party, which had increasingly adapted to such Pabloite positions, the orthodox Trotskyists regained control of the International Committee and were able to carry out an unprecedented theoretical and political development based on the historical legacy of the Fourth International. Its analyses of globalization, of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union, of the bankruptcy of reformism and the trade unions, have brought the party in line with the objective development of the class struggle and prepared it for the coming revolutionary struggles. This was expressed in the transformation of the sections of the ICFI from leagues into parties and the foundation of the *World Socialist Web Site* as the international online daily publication of the ICFI.

Today the perspectives of the ICFI have been confirmed. The Stalinist bureaucracy liquidated the Soviet Union and introduced capitalist property relations to secure its privileges against the working class. The Maoists turned China into a paradise of capitalist exploitation. The national movements degenerated into lackeys of the imperialist powers. And the reformist parties are in freefall because of their right-wing policies.

“The capitalist world has no way out, unless a prolonged death agony is so considered,” Trotsky wrote in 1940, shortly before his assassination by a Stalinist agent. “It is necessary to prepare for long years, if not decades, of war, uprisings, brief interludes of truce, new wars, and new uprisings. A young revolutionary party must base itself on this perspective.”

Events have confirmed this historical perspective. The Fourth International, under the leadership of the International Committee, has gathered extensive experience over the ensuing decades and clarified the central theoretical questions. Now the conditions exist to build it as the mass world party of socialist revolution.

8. The tasks of the SGP

The SGP and its sister parties in the ICFI fight for the same goal and face the same basic tasks. The resolution of the Fifth Party Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (USA) states:

“The basic task of the SEP is to build a revolutionary vanguard and

impart an ~~played~~ greater level of understanding to the working class of its aims, and clarify the nature of the movement that is developing. The SEP must fight to connect the growth of struggle in the working class to a socialist, internationalist and anti-imperialist political movement to take state power and reorganize economic life on the basis of social need instead of private profit. To the ruling class policy of war and social counterrevolution, the working class must advance a program of socialist revolution.”

The following tasks flow from this perspective for the SGP’s European election campaign:

a) A Europe-wide campaign for the perspective of the United Socialist States of Europe, conducted jointly with the Socialist Equality Party in the UK and the *Parti de l’égalité socialiste* in France. The struggle for the United Socialist States of Europe is the only way to prevent a relapse into fascism and war and to unite the continent in the interests of the vast majority of its population.

b) Systematic political work in the working class. Like the SEP in the United States, the SGP fights to build rank-and-file committees in factories and neighborhoods, independent of the trade unions, combining this with the political mobilization of the working class against the capitalist system.

c) Building an anti-war movement based on the working class, on the principles set out in the ICFI statement “Socialism and the fight against war.”

d) The defence of refugees and migrants, victims of the imperialist policies of exploitation and war. The SGP defends the right to asylum and rejects all forms of nationalism and xenophobia. Attacks on refugees are aimed at the entire working class. What is necessary is a common struggle by workers of all nationalities against capitalism. Every worker has the right to live and work in the country of their choice.

e) The development of the campaign against the return of German militarism, the attack on the SGP by the *Verfassungsschutz*, and the conspiracy of the ruling elites. The SGP will not be intimidated. The Grand Coalition and its secret service are despised and rejected by broad sections of the population and have no legitimacy. The SGP will take legal action against its surveillance by *Verfassungsschutz* and demand new elections. It will use the election campaign to advocate a socialist alternative to capitalism, war and authoritarianism and expand its influence among workers, youth and students.

f) The dissemination of the book *Why are they back?* The book is not only a result of the struggle of the SGP over the past five years, but develops that struggle and explains the need for a socialist perspective to oppose the right-wing danger.

g) An ambitious national and Europe-wide campaign to build the IYSSE in universities, vocational schools and schools. This requires a systematic theoretical and political struggle against the dominant forms of bourgeois ideology, especially against the irrationalist conceptions of postmodernism and against identity politics. There is massive resistance among students and youth to the rise of the AfD and the transformation of its learning sites into cadre schools of German imperialism. This opposition must be oriented towards the working class and requires a socialist perspective.

h) The development and dissemination of the WWS. The basis for an effective election campaign and for strong political work carried out by the candidates and the entire party, is the ongoing analysis and coverage of political, social and cultural developments through the *World Socialist Web Site*, constant polemics against the ideologues of the bourgeoisie, and the political and theoretical separation of the revolutionary party from all pseudo-left tendencies.

i) The study of history. In order to fulfill their responsibilities in the election campaign and beyond, party members must be familiar with the history of the Marxist movement. In particular, an understanding of the

rich, 80-year history of the Fourth International must be developed in the working class.

Everything will depend on what develops more rapidly: the socialist consciousness of the working class, or the drive of the ruling class towards war and dictatorship. This is not a question of passive speculation. The intervention of the revolutionary party will be decisive. What can and cannot be achieved is decided in struggle. The relationship between the crisis of the capitalist system and the class consciousness of the working class is not static but dynamic. Explosive events will undermine old beliefs and radicalize social consciousness. But only a party based on the historical lessons of the class struggle, and with a Marxist understanding of the current crisis, can raise the political consciousness of the working class to the level necessary for the overthrow of capitalism.

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

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