

Socialist Equality Party Inverness, Skye and West Ross-shire candidate Darren Paxton speaks at Radio Skye hustings

Our reporters
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Socialist Equality Party general election candidate Darren Paxton spoke at a hustings Thursday evening for the Inverness, Skye and West Ross-shire constituency, organised by Radio Skye.

Radio Skye broadcasts across Skye and Lochalsh and to an online audience nationally and internationally via a web stream through all the major radio apps.

The hustings were held in the Skye Gathering Hall in Portree on the Isle of Skye, with candidates invited to answer previously submitted questions and questions from the floor. The event, chaired by cultural journalist Adam Gordon, was broadcast live Thursday evening from 7p.m.

Paxton sent in two recorded messages, which can be viewed on the Socialist Equality Party's X account and on the Radio Skye web stream of the event. Paxton's opening contribution to the hustings can be heard at 00:32:27 and his concluding remarks at 00:03:04.

An opening statement by Paxton explained:

"We oppose the genocide in Gaza and the support given to it by our [Conservative] government, which would continue under a Labour government. Neither can workers rely on Labour to defend living conditions. Keir Starmer is committed to corporate enrichment at the expense of the working class. Workers must build an alternative, a mass and genuinely socialist anti-war movement.

"We also warn that the war in Ukraine is threatening to develop into open war between NATO and Russia. NATO is using the Ukrainian people as cannon fodder in a fratricidal conflict to cripple Russia, force regime

change in Moscow and use Russia as a platform for war with China. NATO is planning to send troops to Ukraine, and is discussing the use of nuclear weapons.

"This does not lessen our opposition to the Putin regime. Workers should oppose the invasion. We advocate the socialist unity of the Russian and Ukrainian working classes in a struggle against both the Putin and Zelensky regimes.

"Workers and young people will be made to pay for war with conscription and brutal austerity.

"Attacks on democratic rights are summed up in Britain's unlawful imprisonment of WikiLeaks journalist Julian Assange for exposing war crimes. Assange has finally been freed after over a decade of incarceration. Gaza protestors are slandered as antisemitic, whilst the far-right and war criminals are welcomed into government. And all the while, the climate crisis burns up the conditions of life.

"We say all of these crises are rooted in the capitalist system.

"We reject Scottish nationalism. The nation state, in the epoch of imperialism, and the global integration of the production across the entire planet, is outmoded and irrational. A real fight against Westminster and British imperialism requires, not new capitalist states but the unity of the working class across Britain in the struggle for socialism in Britain, Europe and across the world.

"Society cannot afford the super-rich. The wealth of the financial oligarchy must be expropriated by the working class and production rationally and democratically controlled by the working class. That is the perspective of the Socialist Equality Party."

Paxton received applause from the audience for his

comments.

His closing statement, below, also received applause and cheers.

“We are here to raise the alarm of the danger of war and capitalist barbarism. Death has become an acceptable policy of the capitalist ruling class. Millions the world over died in the preventable Coronavirus outbreak which was shrugged off with the terms ‘herd immunity’, ‘learn to live with it’ and ‘the cure cannot be worse than the disease’. Tens of thousands die in Palestine, hundreds of thousands in Ukraine, all on our governments money.

“My comrade and 25 year old leader of the Young-Guard of Bolshevik Leninists, Bogdan Syrotiuk, has been arrested by Zelensky for calling an end to the war on a socialist basis, in opposition to both Russian nationalism and NATO imperialism. We immediately opposed the arrest, with SEP members and supporters in Inverness creating a video on TikTok calling for his freedom which only lasted for only 20 minutes before being removed. This war time censorship and the arrest of figures like Bogdan and Julian Assange should stand as a warning to the working class and anyone who opposes the war.

“The struggle between imperialist powers for control of the world and its markets and resources is producing a worldwide catastrophe of inequality and war. But as the SEP election manifesto explains:

The same capitalist crisis that produces war also produces the basis for ending war, in the form of growing struggles against inequality, poverty and the attack on wages, jobs, healthcare, education and all the social rights of the working class.

“Such a movement must be:

international, uniting workers in every country and on every continent on the basis of their common class interests [and] must be anti-capitalist and socialist, since there can be no serious struggle against war except in the fight to end the dictatorship of finance capital and the economic system that is the fundamental cause of war.

“If you agree with this analysis and perspective then join me in building the SEP and taking up the fight against genocide and war and for socialism.”

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