

UK Socialist Equality Party election rally advances socialist and internationalist opposition to war

Our reporters
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National Secretary Chris Marsden introduced the Socialist Equality Party's final general election rally, held Sunday at the Indian YMCA in the London constituency of Holborn and St Pancras, by stressing its extraordinary international character.

To build a mass, international socialist anti-war movement in the UK meant breaking "once and for all with the rotten, right wing, pro-big business, anti-working class, genocide enabling, warmongers of the Labour Party." But this meant recognising that all the major problems confronting the working class "can only be fought on an international level."

The meeting's platform featured many of the principal leaders of the party that the working class needs to wage this struggle, the International Committee of the Fourth International, the world party of socialist revolution founded by Leon Trotsky.

Darren Paxton, the SEP's candidate for Inverness, Skye and West Ross-Shire, began with an appeal to support the campaign for the release of Bogdan Syrotiuk. The 25-year-old leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik Leninists was arrested on April 25 by the Zelensky regime, working closely with the Biden administration, for opposing imperialist-provoked war and advocating for the socialist unity of Ukrainian and Russian workers.

Paxton welcomed the freedom of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, victimised and imprisoned by US and British imperialism for opposing war and war crimes. "I am one of thousands of young people worldwide who learned about Assange's case through the WSWWS," he said. "All of us in the party's branch in Inverness, all in our early 20s, have been educated politically in the fight for Assange's freedom."

He warned that "Though Assange is free, the global capitalist offensive against democratic rights is only accelerating" and "the sharpest expression of the crackdown on democratic rights in the service of imperialist war is in Ukraine." Bogdan has been accused of "high treason" and faces life imprisonment, but by organising a global picket outside Ukrainian embassies on June 13, "We have put the Ukrainian government and its NATO backers on notice that we intend to redouble our global campaign for his release."

Alex Lantier brought the fraternal greetings of the Parti de l'égalité socialiste of France on the day of the first round of snap elections in that country "in which the neo-fascist National Rally (RN) is in striking distance of a parliamentary majority."

Lantier explained that what unites the snap elections called on both sides of the Channel is that "NATO is preparing a massive escalation of war with Russia and class war at home. The decisive question facing workers not only in Britain, or in France, but around the world is how to fight capitalism's plunge into world war and fascist reaction."

The "ruling class is discussing how to rule against the people to wage war." This could take the form of a far-right regime led by Le Pen's RN, or Macron "possibly suspending parliamentary democracy" and granting himself "emergency dictatorial powers of indefinite duration, unchecked by parliament or the courts."

Fundamentally, "Workers cannot pressure capitalist politicians to find a democratic policy on the national soil, because the capitalist class does not ultimately want democracy. It wants dictatorship and war. This underlies the bankruptcy of the electoral strategy proposed by the New Popular Front coalition led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon—the French ally of Podemos in Spain, the Democratic Socialists of America, and Jeremy Corbyn."

The New Popular Front is "a pro-war trap for the working class." Bringing together the Socialist Party, Communist Party, the Pabloite New Anti-capitalist Party, and Mélenchon's France Unbowed, it "supports Macron's war with Russia and the French police state."

Lantier explained: "The rise of the far right is not the result of mass support for genocide and war. It is the product of the systematic disenfranchisement of workers by the nationalist bureaucrats that the media and the ruling class promote as the 'left'... The decisive issue is the forging an international, revolutionary movement in the working class against imperialist war and fascism, and for socialism."

Christoph Vandreier, national secretary of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei, is the author of *Why are they Back?*

Historical falsification, Political Conspiracy and the return of Fascism in Germany.

The party's lead candidate in the European elections explained that the successes of the far-right were "not the result of a fascist mass movement, as was the case in Germany in the 1930s. If the right can also win votes among workers, it is because of the bankruptcy of the pseudo-left, which, like Syriza in Greece and the Left Party in Germany, pushed through the worst social cuts and promoted war policies in the name of left-wing politics. The shift to the right is not coming from below, but from above."

Vandreier said, "It is the height of cynicism when the German elites use the fight against antisemitism as an ideological lubricant for the new war machine and the suppression of resistance to it... It is not the millions of workers and young people who are showing solidarity with the oppressed Palestinians, but the ruling class that is once again taking up the brown traditions of the Nazis by rolling German tanks against Russia, declaring genocide to be a reason of state, and arming the Bundeswehr on a scale not seen since Hitler."

Vandreier insisted, "Our struggle against the falsification of history has shown how important the struggle on the ideological front is. On this basis, we achieved important success at Humboldt University in the last [student] elections, winning 7.7 percent of the vote. At the same time, the German secret service stepped up its action against us and added the IYSSE [the SEP/SGP's youth movement] to the list of extremist organisations alongside the SGP... The working class can only defend its rights, can only prevent the catastrophe of a world war, if it bases itself on historical truth and the lessons of history."

Joseph Kishore is the national secretary and presidential candidate for the Socialist Equality Party in the United States. Referring to the presidential debate between Joe Biden and Donald Trump as one of the most degraded spectacles in American political history, Kishore noted that media commentary "has focused on the cognitive decline of the American president" and his possible replacement. But what would be the aim of a "change in the candidate of the Democratic Party? What policies would it be intended to facilitate?"

Kishore's answer was "War... Such are the real priorities of the Democratic Party, whether Biden is at its head or someone else. It is a party of war, of imperialism, of the military-intelligence apparatus, of Wall Street, and the corporate-financial oligarchy that is directing this increasingly reckless militarist policy."

Biden's opponent Trump, is a "fascistic conman who, just three-and-a-half years ago, staged a coup that was aimed at overturning the results of the 2020 election and establishing a personalist dictatorship..."

"That Trump could very well win the presidency in the upcoming elections is the product of, on the one hand, the turn

of the ruling elites toward authoritarianism and dictatorship, and, on the other hand, the thoroughly right-wing character of the official opposition... To speak of a 'lesser evil' between these two parties is politically meaningless. They are two representatives of a corporate and financial oligarchy that is driving the entire world toward catastrophe."

Kishore explained that "We live in a period of shocks, sharp transformations, of mass protests and demonstrations, of snap elections and the downfall of governments. The situation can shift very rapidly. The critical question is the development, within the working class, of a political leadership capable of orienting the masses toward the conquest of power and the socialist transformation of economic and social life."

Tom Scripps is the Socialist Equality Party's general election candidate for Holborn and St Pancras and the assistant national secretary of the British section.

Scripps explained that Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunak called a snap poll "because he was told to do so by Washington and those in the British state closest to the White House and the Pentagon... A new government was needed to wage war, even if this meant Sunak falling on his sword. And the overwhelming choice to lead it in ruling circles is the Labour Party."

The SEP was alone in alerting the working class to these dangers. Any candidates standing to protest the genocide in Gaza, such as Andrew Feinstein in Holborn and St Pancras, who mostly take their cue from former Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn, "do so while refusing to make the obvious connection between British imperialism's support for mass murder and ethnic cleansing by Israel and the war it provoked in Ukraine that has already cost hundreds of thousands of lives and will cost far more unless it is stopped."

Scripps insisted, "We oppose the Labour Party as a whole, including the handful of 'lefts' who cry crocodile tears for Gaza while planning to take their seats on Starmer's government benches.... The working class, especially the younger generation, need to understand that war is the major issue on which a new socialist movement must be built."

"Starmer and the Labour Party are not going to have it all their own way," said Scripps. Theirs "will be a government of crisis and class struggle. Our task is to train political leaders who can intervene, educate and win large numbers of workers and young people looking for a way forward against war, austerity and authoritarianism, to a socialist perspective. That is the purpose of our campaign in this election."



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