

Britain: David O'Sullivan replies to election correspondence

Our correspondent
10 May 2010

During the Socialist Equality Party's campaign in Oxford East, our candidate David O'Sullivan received a number of emails to our election site. The following is a selection of excerpts.

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Sajid wrote:

Dear David,

I myself also come from a similar background and worked for a Rolls Royce dealership in Oxford in the late 80s. I am now a teacher at a local College in Oxford. I really like what you are proposing and will be voting for you in the election. I have always been with Labour since being eligible to vote. Sick of hearing [local Labour MP] Andrew Smith's empty promises, what has he actually delivered? It's time for a change!!!

You have my "Full support" David, and I think many others as myself would like to see this party become the true voice instead of these establishment parties, who promise the Earth on run up to election time, but deliver very little to the community once in position. On learning about your proposals, it was such a refreshing change to hear someone talking sense. I sincerely hope that you are successful with your struggle to open people's eyes up to a sensible and appropriate alternative.

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Matt wrote:

Hello David,

I have been a follower of WSWs and SEP for over 10 years and I'm a daily reader of the site. I'm 35 and have never voted as my way of protest against the capitalist establishment. When I tell my friends and colleagues that I don't vote, I get a barrage of criticism, understandably, about our historical struggle for the right to vote. So I would like to vote for the very first time and I would like to give you my vote as I stand side-by-side with you and the necessity to build a new movement for working people.

I wish you all the best in Oxford and I am certain that what you say to working people there will spark their consciousness and bring them nearer to our movement.

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Carl wrote:

May I first of all wish you luck in the forthcoming election and say how glad I am to see some socialist opposition at least on one ballot in this election and thankfully within my constituency. The SEP has only just been brought to my attention and has inspired

some excitement within me.

Over the last few years my interest in politics has grown and my anger at the state and opposition of government has grown with it. So much so, that I have found myself sympathising with the anarcho-syndicalist stance. I oppose Government in all its forms and particularly the current system which is forced to answer to Capitalist greed and put wealth and power over the plight of the people who continually vote them into positions of power which they then abuse.

I am still very much of the opinion that little can be gained by partaking in the farce that is the electoral process in this so-called "democracy". Though, I can see some potential benefit in having a candidate such as yourself representing the left in parliament, little though your effectiveness would no doubt prove to be while up against the corrupt crooks, thieves and liars with the power in the house, influenced by and with the backing of big business and the mainstream media.

However, I would be very interested to hear your views and the views of your party when faced with such questions, I must say, knowledge of a Trotskyite party within my constituency and a read through your manifesto has seriously made me question my previous intention to spoil my ballot or to not vote. Regardless of how I choose to act on May 6th, I wish you, your fellow candidate and party the best of luck both in this and future elections.

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Valerie from Oxford wrote in to inquire as to the SEP policies on children's centres.

O'Sullivan replied:

We advocate the provision of free, universal high quality child care for all who require it. Child care provision is a big issue in Britain both for working families and carers of children with special needs. Families throughout Britain struggle to find affordable child care for their children.

Like all other areas of public education, private sector involvement in child care services has vastly increased under the Labour government. Child care provision is a huge big business enterprise. Hundreds of government funded centres and play groups have been forced to close over the last 15 years as primary schools were encouraged to open their own nursery schools in a desperate effort attract more funding. Children's centres have historically provided far broader services than what both schools and private enterprise can offer.

Education and all children's services must not be run on the basis of profit, they are social rights. We advocate spending billions on public works programmes to provide high quality health, housing education and social provision. This can only be achieved when the economy is organised on the basis of need and not profit. Clearly the money exists for such policies. Close to ?1 trillion was handed to the banks by the Labour government's bailout, but when it comes to socially progressive measures such as education, health and welfare, the great mass of society are being called on to accept huge cuts in public spending to pay for a financial crisis which is not of our making.

The implementation of our policies can be realised only in a struggle against the three parties of big business—Labour, Conservative and the Liberal Democrats—and establishing a workers' government.

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Ian Prichard wrote:

I am extremely concerned about the impact of the arms trade and am appalled by the UK Government's active promotion of arms sales. I am keen to know your position regarding this support and, specifically, the use of civil servants to push arms deals for private companies.

David O'Sullivan replied:

The SEP would agree wholeheartedly with the points you make in your email.

Before the banks hit the headlines the most glaring example of the way bribery, theft and fraud are entwined in the fabric of British corporate and political life revolved around the arms trade. I expect you know I am talking about the bribery of the Saudi ruling family by British Aerospace in the multibillion-pound Al Yamamah defence contract...

The Labour government called off the three-year long investigation by the Serious Fraud Office in 2006 because it had become a major political embarrassment and a danger to the economic and political interests of British imperialism. The decision showed how worthless Labour's supposedly ethical foreign policy and its calls for a responsible arms trade really were.

... Irrespective of which party comes to power after the election, it will protect corporate interests and insulate them from public accountability.

... We say Britain's armaments industry must be converted to socially useful production and the money saved used to fund essential social programmes and to pay compensation to those countries devastated by the British military. The SEP sees these measures as essential component of a socialist foreign policy based upon the unification of the world working class in a struggle against imperialist militarism, neo-colonialism and war.

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Louise Hancock asked O'Sullivan his views on the right to abortion in the United Kingdom:

If elected, would you vote to maintain the current 24 week abortion time limit? If not, when do you think the abortion time limit should be set?

Would you vote to allow women in Northern Ireland to use NHS

abortion services?

Would you vote in favour of legislation to improve access to abortion services in the UK?

Would you vote to restrict access to safe, legal and free abortion in this country in any way?

David O'Sullivan replied:

We would vote to maintain the current time limit. Access to abortion is a democratic right. It is a well-established and safe medical procedure. The Socialist Equality Party supports unequivocally this right, which can be defended only as part of a socialist system of free health care that makes available to all the great scientific breakthroughs in medicine.

We opposed the European Council offering Ireland opt-outs so that it could maintain its existing reactionary laws on abortion, euthanasia and same sex marriage in order to influence the Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty.

We oppose all attempts to sideline and ultimately diminish the principle of a woman's right to choose. We do not accept restrictions on access to safe, legal and free abortion in any way.

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Lama Halime wrote:

I would like to know whether you would be prepared to stand up for the human rights of Palestinians, and lobby for pressure to be put on Israel to comply with international law, should you be elected to the next Parliament.

David O'Sullivan replied:

We say that the fate of the Palestinians is inexorably bound with that of the working people of the entire region. It cannot be solved within the existing framework of capitalist nation states through which imperialism exerts its control or by appeals to the Western powers to put pressure on Israel.

The history of Palestine for decades shows that this perspective has not worked, is not working and will never work. What is required is the unification of the working class, Arab and Jewish alike, bringing behind it the rural poor, for the creation of a socialist federation of the Middle East. Only this can create the basis for the rational development of the region's vital resources for the benefit of all its peoples and those of the entire world. Nothing would be changed by the addition of a Palestinian mini-state dominated by the Palestinian bourgeoisie.

Central to the defence of the Palestinians is a struggle to reach out to the Jewish working class. The Arab masses must consciously repudiate the reactionary identification of the entire Jewish people with responsibility for the crimes perpetrated by the Israeli state.



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