

Socialist Equality Party (UK) launches council election campaign

5 April 2012

The Socialist Equality Party (UK) is standing candidates in local authority elections in St Helens and Peterborough to be held May 3. Stephen Woodbridge is standing in the Bretton North ward of Peterborough and Danny Dickinson in the Town Centre ward of St Helens.

For further details visit www.socialequality.org.uk

The following statement by the SEP calling for support for our candidates will be distributed in the campaign.

- Oppose all cuts in pay, jobs and services
- No to militarism and war
- Build international workers unity
- For a new socialist party

The Socialist Equality Party speaks for working people in opposition to the destruction of jobs, wages and essential services by big business and its parties—Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Labour. We fight for a socialist world, based on equality and freedom, not exploitation and oppression.

The capitalist profit system is creating an economic and social catastrophe comparable to the 1930s. Mass unemployment, rising poverty, militarism and war are a fact of life in this new age of austerity.

Pay cuts and pay freezes for workers are the order of the day, as UK unemployment edges towards three million, including more than one million 16 to 25 year olds.

Graduates leave higher education with few job prospects and saddled with massive debts, while the jobless are coerced onto workfare schemes. For many pensioners, retirement no longer exists, as poverty forces them to continue working.

Spending on education, health care and welfare is being slashed as the government carries through a massive privatisation policy—handing hospitals, schools and other essential social services over to be run for profit.

These policies have nothing to do with helping the economy recover. The government, like its counterparts in Athens, Lisbon and Madrid, is only concerned with one sort of “growth”, that of the wealth of the super-rich. While the banks and hedge fund speculators continue to receive billions from public funds, this parasitic layer is using the economic crisis it created to carry through a social counterrevolution. The aim is to reduce the conditions of workers in Britain and Europe to levels comparable to those prevailing in China and India.

This drive for profits also lies behind the never-ending drum beat for military intervention in the oil and mineral-rich regions—from Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya to the next targets, Syria and Iran.

It is a lie that there is no alternative to the existing system. From the Egyptian uprising to the mass protests in Greece, tens of millions have shown their hostility to regimes that act solely in the interests of the wealthy handful.

The mood among workers and youth in Britain is no less angry and combative. But just as in Cairo and Athens, a corrupt and anti-democratic set-up, overseen by parties of the superrich, excludes them from any say about how society is run.

The Labour Party agrees with the government that austerity must last for years to come. Labour-controlled local authorities compete with their Tory and Liberal counterparts as to which can make the most savage attacks.

The trade unions are not workers' organisations, but industrial policemen for the bosses. Faced with the most severe cuts since the Second World War, they have not lifted a finger in defence of jobs and services. After a few token gestures, they are signing up to cuts in public sector pensions, while job losses and wage cuts go unopposed up and down the country.

A new socialist party is needed that fights for a solution to the economic crisis based on the needs of the working class, the overwhelming majority of society.

The Socialist Equality Party calls for the formation of rank-and-file committees of action, independent of the trade unions, in every workplace and community. We stand for an independent movement of the working class to bring down the coalition government and replace it with a workers' government committed to socialist policies.

Only the reorganising of economic life on the basis of social need, not the enrichment of the financial elite, can put an end to war and guarantee secure jobs, decent living standards, education, health care and a future for all.

We urge all those who support this programme to take part in our election campaign, vote for our candidates and join the Socialist Equality Party.

Socialist Equality Party

The Socialist Equality Party is the British section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI). Our party has its origins in the struggle of the Left Opposition, led by Leon Trotsky, in defence of the perspective of world socialist revolution against the monstrous Stalinist bureaucracy that arose in the Soviet Union. The ICFI continues the work of the Fourth International, which Trotsky founded in 1938.

Together with our sister parties in Europe, North America, Australia and Asia we work to establish the international unity and socialist reorientation of the

working class through the daily news and analysis provided by the World Socialist Web Site.

What we stand for

For the United Socialist States of Europe

Workers in Britain must reject all forms of racism and nationalism and link their struggles with workers in Europe and throughout the world. Against the European Union and its pro-business governments, we stand for workers' rule across the continent.

End militarism and war

No more blood spilled for oil. Withdraw all British military personnel from overseas. Put the war criminals in Westminster and Washington on trial.

Defend democratic rights

Anti-terror legislation and other measures that have curtailed individual liberties must be rescinded. Withdraw all anti-trade union and anti-strike legislation.

Redistribute the nation's wealth

Cancel all debts to the international finance institutions, and transform the banks and major corporations into publicly owned and democratically controlled utilities. Wealth must be taken off the billionaires and used to meet essential social needs.

An emergency public works programme

Pour billions into the economy to end unemployment and provide decent paying jobs, free and high quality health, housing, education and social services.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact