

# **US Presidential candidate Jerry White addresses Manchester audience**

**Our reporters  
6 September 2012**

US Socialist Equality Party presidential candidate Jerry White spoke at a well-attended meeting at the Mechanics Institute in Manchester, England Tuesday evening.

Introducing White, UK Socialist Equality Party National Secretary Chris Marsden explained the significance of his international tour. “All of you have come tonight, I believe, because you understand the importance of someone fighting to represent the American worker and to win him or her to a socialist programme,” said Marsden.

“No one in any country who seriously contemplates the struggle for a socialist future can believe this possible unless they factor in the active social and political opposition to America’s ruling elite from the American working class.”

White spoke extensively on the plight of the working class in America and internationally. He detailed how over several decades, the US ruling elite had driven down the conditions of workers, noting how this had accelerated over four years since the 2008 global economic meltdown.

“In every country,” White explained, “the ruling class has responded to the crisis not with measures of social reform to provide relief to the hundreds of millions who have been ravaged by the breakdown of the world capitalist system. On the contrary, in country after country, political parties and leaders, whether they call themselves liberal, conservative or social democratic, are exploiting the crisis to erase the social achievement won by the working class in more than a century of struggle. Plain and simple, this is a policy of social counter-revolution.”

White stressed, “Throughout the world, the working class is facing the consequences of the breakdown of the world capitalist system and has no means through

the existing political order to express its interests. That is why we do not consider my international tour as a diversion from our election campaign in the US, but an expression of our most essential aim: the fight for an international strategy and program to unite workers around the world. Only in this way is it possible to break the economic and political stranglehold of the corporate and financial elite over society and the socialist reorganization of economic and political life to serve human need, not private profit.”

White’s presentation opened up a wide-ranging discussion on topics such as the differences between the Communist Party of China and the Socialist Equality Party, how to overcome a media that seeks to exclude any dissenting opinion, and the character of the “Arab Spring.”

A worker in the oil and gas industry said, “Jerry spoke about realities in every country. But you’ve got to give hope for the future.” Another queried why the SEP was standing for election when the new movements such as Occupy Wall Street were non-electoral movements.

Replying White said, “Insofar as there has been an undermining of the confidence of the working class, this is bound up with decades of betrayals by the old organisations, by the trade unions.

“It’s not that the trade unions have no backbone, that they have mistaken policies. They are on the other side of the class divide. They have been transformed into the direct instruments of the ruling class. Events in South Africa must be taken very seriously. The National Union of Mineworkers and the African National Congress government supported a massacre that is akin to Sharpeville under apartheid rule. The unions would do the same in every country.”

“Objectively, the working class is coming into conflict with these organisations,” he said. It was “not a question of giving hope, but providing a perspective, a strategy and building new organisations of struggle... to fight to take political power into the hands of the working class.”

White explained, “We don’t only run in elections, but elections generally provide a period for political focus which we seek to use to tell the working class the truth. The pseudo-left groups are not running against Barack Obama. They are supporting the re-election of the Democrats and deceiving the working class.”

He continued, “There is no parliamentary road to socialism. The only way the dictatorship of the elite can be broken is through a workers’ government, through workers’ power and the establishment of genuine democratic political control and the vast redistribution of wealth. That is not possible outside of a revolutionary struggle.”

On the Occupy movement, White said its “no politics” stand was influenced by anarchism and its claim that the working class is a “co-conspirator” in its own exploitation.

“This is the politics of the upper middle class,” he said. “It represents the interests of the top 10 percent of the population, who are unhappy about the present distribution of wealth because they are missing out. They want a more equitable distribution for themselves, but they are not for getting rid of capitalism and establishing socialism. Even Obama started talking about the ‘99 percent’. What happened was that the Occupy movement was co-opted by the Democrats.”

A number of those who attended the meeting spoke to WSWS reporters after the meeting.

Ben travelled to the meeting from Birmingham in the West Midlands. He is studying the Russian Revolution and has read a number of classic Marxist works. He said of International Committee of the Fourth International, “This party seems to me to be steeped in that tradition, but has made it relevant to the contemporary crisis and for the working class.”

Alan said the “meeting was refreshing, radical and has given me hope. It put into words in a meaningful way the betrayal of the trade unions. People feel betrayed by the unions and the Labour Party.”

Rose said, “Jerry told us that conditions in America

are really bad, even worse than they are here... It’s going on everywhere. Conditions are getting worse for everyone.”

Murat said, “Jerry White’s perspective is more realistic than other politicians. He is showing the real picture. People don’t know about what’s really going on in the US. Nobody knows about the working class and what their problems are. People are hoping to improve their lives but like the Chinese working class their conditions are getting worse.”

Tony said, “Over the last two years, I have come to the way of thinking that Jerry put forward. When I met the SEP I had been looking out for views such as yours.”

Joe said, “My mother was a socialist. I’m also interested in getting into Trotskyist politics... I agreed with everything Jerry said.”



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