

SEP candidate Chris Marsden speaks to BBC Radio Stoke and Radio Cumbria

Our reporter
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Chris Marsden, the national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) and one of the party's eight European Election candidates in the North West region of England, was interviewed by BBC Radio Stoke and Radio Cumbria this week.

Radio Stoke covers the areas of Mid and North Staffordshire, North East Shropshire and South Cheshire, with a potential audience of around 156,000.

Interviewer Stuart George asked Marsden to explain what the Socialist Equality Party was born out of and what it stood for.

Marsden said, "The Socialist Equality Party has its origins in the struggle of Leon Trotsky against the betrayal of the Russian Revolution by Joseph Stalin and the bureaucracy which he headed. We fight for world socialism, for a system based on production for need and not profit, and for an end to all racism, nationalism and war."

Asked how the SEP's struggle for an "end to all nationalism would work in the European Union", Marsden answered, "The European Union purported to be a mechanism for lessening national divisions on the Continent, especially in the aftermath of the Second World War. But the reality is that the European Union is an instrument used by the major countries such as Germany, Britain and France to impoverish and destroy the economies of the smaller countries. If you look at what is happening in Greece and Portugal, for example, you have got 60 percent youth unemployment and the massive destruction of social conditions, services and jobs. The European Union at the same time is waging a campaign to provoke conflict with Russia over Ukraine, which threatens a terrible nightmare for the European peoples.

"The situation in Europe is absolutely appalling and degrading for millions and millions of people. If you

look at Greece, it's suffered an economic decline unprecedented outside of a wartime situation. The hospitals are without drugs, and food is being dished out by charities to families, where there is often just one or no people working. It's a terrible, terrible crime that is being perpetrated, and the instrument through which it is being carried out is the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the European Parliament."

The interviewer asked, "Are you saying then, and this may or not be a vote winner, I suppose, 'Vote for me and I'll make life in Greece better'?"

Marsden answered, "Our position is this. The working class has throughout the continent, and indeed internationally, suffered an historic decline in its social position. Wages are going down in every country; it's about a 15 percent drop. There's a huge attack on jobs, wages and social conditions. All of which is being waged by a ruling class that is allowed to get away with everything because no one speaks for the working class. We are for an international struggle of the working class against companies which themselves operate on an international basis. We are against the European Union and for the United Socialist States of Europe."

Asked why if the SEP was against the European Union, did the party want to be elected to it, Marsden said, "We are against it and if we were elected to the European Parliament, which is itself a completely undemocratic institution, we would use it as a platform to make our appeal to the working class in Britain and throughout the continent for a unified struggle against it."

The interviewer asked if Marsden could give an "example of where socialism has actually worked." Marsden said, "As I said to you at the beginning, we

owe our origins to the struggle waged by Leon Trotsky in the struggle against Stalinism. But prior to the struggle against Stalinism, there was the Russian Revolution, which was the first time the working class ever took power in world history. It went wrong not because there was something wrong with socialism, but because struggles to emulate the Russian Revolution in Europe were defeated and the Soviet Union remained isolated and backward, and that allowed a bureaucracy to emerge.

“But I would suggest that precisely because we owe our origins to the struggle waged by Leon Trotsky, we are the party absolutely imbued with the knowledge and the struggle to prevent any similar occurrence in future.”

The interviewer cited the Socialist Equality Party manifesto, which states that it is against “every form of anti-immigrant chauvinism, racism and nationalism.” Was the SEP therefore in favour of unlimited immigration?, he asked.

Marsden replied, “We are in favour of anyone being able to live wherever they want, anywhere in the world, just as the major bourgeois parties are in favour of capitalists being able to exploit anybody, anywhere in the world. The problem with this country is not immigration. The problem with the world is not immigration. This is a very unified world. The problem with the world today is capitalism, and capitalism systematically impoverishes billions of people all over the world and creates massive movements of peoples because they are just looking for somewhere to get by.”

Asked what the party would define as success in the European elections, Marsden said, “We would define success in these elections if we got over our message to as many people as possible and we convinced particularly young people that it’s necessary to take up a struggle for socialism and to change this world.”

He explained that the political situation is dominated by right-wing parties, whether that is the Conservative Party, the Labour Party or the United Kingdom Independence Party. This is “because the working class has been systematically disenfranchised and excluded from the political process. Most workers don’t see any difference from one party to another. They are all rotten and corrupt and to overcome the anti-political conclusions and fight for a genuine alternative is a major struggle in the working class and among young

people. But it is a struggle which must be waged and can be successful.”

Marsden’s interview can be heard here at 02:31:34, at the BBC Stoke web site until Tuesday, May 20.

On Friday, Marsden gave a brief two-minute statement to Radio Cumbria’s “In the Hot Seat” current affairs programme. Asked what the SEP offered the electorate, Marsden said, “a socialist alternative to all the parties that support the profit system, which includes the Labour Party. Generally, people are presented with a list of very right-wing alternatives. We think that no one in these elections speaks for the working class. No one is opposing the drive to war against Russia over the Ukraine. No one is opposing austerity and the savage attacks on jobs, wages and conditions that are being waged throughout Europe and which are hitting the British working class extremely hard.

“We fight for the working class to take political power into its own hands and form a workers’ government committed to a socialist programme. We are not in favour of the European Union at all. It is a bosses’ club, an instrument for imposing savage austerity everywhere throughout Europe. If you look at what is taking place in Greece, in Portugal, in Spain, they have imposed the most savage cuts outside of a wartime experience, which has led to 60 percent youth unemployment. We are for the United Socialist States of Europe, not simply British withdrawal.”



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