

Workers in Britain sign up for International May Day Online Rally

Our reporters
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The Socialist Equality Party has centred its campaign in the British general election on building attendance for meetings Sunday, May 3, in Glasgow and London broadcasting the International May Day Online Rally.

Nusrat and Helal spoke to Glasgow Central candidate Katie Rhodes as she was campaigning in Govan Hill.

Helal said, “We are very happy to meet a communist and internationalist. We agree that the working class is an international class.”

He understood that “bourgeois democracy isn’t for the working class.”

Because the Scottish National Party was putting forward anti-austerity rhetoric in the election, he had been confused and was considering voting for them. He was glad he had now found in the SEP that there was another alternative.

In Glasgow, Steve told campaigners, “I am definitely attending the May Day event.

“I started out in politics around the Outrage group of Peter Tatchell in the 1980s. I was more recently involved in the referendum campaign calling for a Yes vote in Scottish independence because I thought it was a means to improve things.

“I went to a couple of meetings held by the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) and at first they seemed like a left-wing alternative. But I came to realise how corrupt they were and not an alternative at all.

“The levels of inequality today are obscene and it is in front of people’s faces, in the media. At the time of the French Revolution they had the Versailles Palace, but even then the kings didn’t have the wealth and power that the rich have today. The celebrities are not the richest by any means; the ones with the most wealth and power aren’t visible to us, but their wealth is obscene.

“What’s happening in Greece is showing that there are no easy solutions. The system itself is like a car that’s a write-off. Anything short of a revolution is like throwing good money after bad.

“I am glad there is an international socialist party that is telling people the truth. People got energized about the referendum and some were re-energized by the election, but it won’t be long before they realise that the austerity is set to continue, whoever wins the election, and that they were lied to by all the other parties. They will look for the party that told them the truth and stuck to their principles.”

Ash met Katie Rhodes campaigning on Sauchiehall Street. He decided to buy a ticket for the rally, after agreeing with our stance on war and austerity.

He explained, “I had attended a hustings for Labour and the Scottish National Party. You are the only party that I know of that say no to war and for a redistribution of wealth. War doesn’t solve anything. The SNP aren’t prepared to stand up and say no to war.”

Addressing the rise of homelessness, Ash said, “There should be a redistribution of wealth. You shouldn’t have to walk the streets of Glasgow and see people begging for money or food.”

Sue, a care worker from Linwood, Paisley, explained, “I listened in to last year’s first online May Day rally, at home alone. And when I found out this year there was going to be a live broadcast of the rally in Glasgow, I was over the moon. It’s the only genuine celebration of international workers day anywhere in the world.”

Sue’s son is 22 years old and has struggled to gain permanent employment in the construction industry. “A lot of my son’s friends have joined the armed forces due to lack of work”, Sue said. “I hate the fact that wee

boys I have seen growing up will be used to fight wars, which are nothing to do with them. Young boys are attracted to the forces because it's the only way they can afford to buy houses or a car—that is if they ever come back home to their families, or come back as the same person they left.”

Danny, a musician and primary school music teacher in London, said, “I’m coming to the meeting in Kings Cross to show my solidarity with those who fight and campaign against war and austerity. The more people in attendance at events like this, the more powerful the message to the politicians that keep spending public money on military action that should properly be directed at saving a failing welfare system.”

Dick, a university teacher, signed up to attend online. “I think the online rally on May 3 is fantastic”, he said, “mainly because it indicates that the Socialist Equality Party is a world party and not limited to individual nation states.

“I read the *World Socialist Web Site* almost every day. I see it as a way of educating myself, especially in relation to the work I do which concerns the arts. It is without doubt the only reliable source of information about political and social developments. The WSWs tells the truth and gives an international perspective on developments, which is invaluable.”

Samir, a translator, said, “I signed up to the May Day rally when I saw it on Facebook, because I consider myself to be a socialist and I think it is important to celebrate this important day together.

“The struggle of the working class is international and we must learn the lessons of history. For example, in 1865 on April 29, 100,000 workers in Kashmir went on strike. It was at the time a princely state. There were processions and clashes with the state and 29 demonstrators were killed. There were protests and arrests, but the strike was defeated. I think it is important that workers in the West know that there were and continue to be struggles in other parts of the world. By the same token, the workers in Kashmir probably don’t know what happened in Chicago in 1886, I think, when May Day first began.

“All this is even more important today, because even though conditions are different in different countries, the issues are the same for the international working class. International solidarity is essential. The traditional ways of fighting within the nation state are

no longer viable. We have to learn from the past.”

Jude from Hull said, “The political and social issues that concern me are fundamentally the future of humanity. Everything is interconnected, and I believe we have reached a watershed moment in history when we will either see the wholesale destruction of humanity and the planet through war and barbarism, or humanity will rise up and shake off the cancer of capitalism. There is no doubt in my mind that the ICFI is the only organisation with the intellectual honesty and ideology to lead this global fight.”

John from Liverpool explained, “I think I had a somewhat sceptical position at one time, but the 2008 crisis made me realise that Karl Marx was right. I have a child and we have to think about future generations. I am being forced to face up to the truth of the situation, that socialist revolution is necessary.”

“The online May Day rally is a way of bringing the international working class together”, John from Hull explained. “I think that Marx said that ideas become a material force when they grip the masses.”

David Taylor from London said, “In the Nazi blitz on London, our house was hit by an incendiary bomb. It was a write-off, so we moved to a flat, in which my little sister and I sheltered from flying glass under the table, in the blackout, listening to the bombers overhead.

“When 22, working for a few weeks in Poland, I was taken on a group visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where Ukrainian Nazis had been guards with the SS. Now, the capitalist Western governments are supporting NATO, which is supporting the Kiev regime which, both politically and militarily, is heavily dominated by neo-Nazis, attacking Ukrainians who oppose them in the east.

“I do not want to vote for any party in Britain that supports NATO. I’m nearly 79. The world needs great peace leaders, not great war leaders.”



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