Worker at SEP public meeting on the Grenfell Tower fire: “We are working class and we always suffer. A few people who are rich, they call the shots.”

Our reporters
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Following the Socialist Equality Party’s public meeting August 19 in London on the Grenfell Tower fire, Delroy, from Wembley in northwest London, spoke to the WSWS. Asked his opinion of the meeting itself, he commented, “I think the meeting was very informative and gave me insight into what is happening, not just in Grenfell but around the world. I saw that people are trying to fight the system.

“Some of us don’t understand politics much when people say things, but when things are broken down, you can understand them. As a layperson you can get more of an insight—from what the various people here were saying about what the government is doing and about the judge who they appointed for the inquiry and his past history. You need to know what to look out for and to dig deeper. So today gave me an understanding of what is going on and about the injustice these people are suffering.

“We heard two survivors speaking here and the last one was very touching—to hear him describe what was actually happening on that night. I will take more interest in your organisation and read more about it so I can be informed of things that are going on.”

Delroy was pleased that Jerry White, a leading member of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States, spoke at the event : “Jerry gave me an overview about the water situation in Flint [Michigan] and the reason why that happened in the first place. It just goes to show that all over the world there is so much being done to the majority, the working class. Just that one example, but I could link it to Grenfell. A different situation, but it boils down to the same thing. We are working class and we always suffer. A few people who are rich, they call the shots.

“Governments will come and tell you things, but then you see they are doing something completely different. I heard that in Flint, Mr Obama takes a sip of his water and talks about his past when he was younger—that everyone drank water from lead pipes and nothing happened. But in today’s society we shouldn’t be looking back. Society has come a long way and people expect to be treated better.

“The rich would not live in places using that sort of water. Having a water supply that you haven’t got the capacity to treat, when there is no way to treat it, is just a money-making thing.

“People should come down here and take a look and see what happened there. If there is a march over this, I will go to support it. We do need change and we need people to stand up for the poor like your organisation is doing. I’ll make sure that I continue and try to support as much as a can with this, because my eyes are opened.”

Delroy deals with fire safety issues in his job. Asked about the flammable cladding that surrounded Grenfell and allowed the fire to engulf the entire building in minutes, he said, “People are not properly testing these products. They are just accepting what the contractors say to them. They are looking at cutting corners. They say ‘What can we cut to bring the cost down?’ Keep cutting and you will have nothing left. Regulations have to be stiffened otherwise this is going to keep happening.

“They are not taking these things seriously because

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Grenfell was a tower block where the poor were living. If it was somewhere else where the rich were living, if they complained about the fire situation, saying we haven't got a sprinkler, or any smoke detectors, then straight away that would be done.

"For working class people, it's 'Oh, you are moaning too much and should be happy with what you've got. This place is protected, etc.' and then they fob you off. They will now be saying 'Lessons learned.' But have they learned any lessons? No."

Delroy continued, "Social cleansing is everywhere. In Wembley there is a big construction programme going on. What I don't really understand is when people talk about 'affordable housing,' who is it affordable for?

"They are knocking down buildings where tenants used to live and putting up a building where it's for private sale. Everyone's being pushed out of London and when they do that they aren't going to be coming back! People will move away from their families. Simple as that. It's big money isn't it? It's the wealthy who are getting richer.

"For the working class it is always the same. We had slum clearances back in the days. It's happening now. It doesn't have to be a slum. I can see in ten or twenty years' time, most of London is just going to be for the rich. Poorer people won't be able to live in London unless they're on the streets."

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