

Socialist Equality Party announces candidates in UK general election

Our reporter
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The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) is standing three candidates in Britain's general election. The party's election statement puts forward the following essential demands:

- *No to Brexit! No to the European Union! For the United Socialist States of Europe!*
- *No to war! Defend democratic rights! Free Julian Assange!*
- *Build the Socialist Equality Party*

Chris Marsden is standing in Sheffield Central. Marsden, 58, is the national secretary of the SEP. He joined the Trotskyist movement in 1983 and has played a leading role in the work of the International Committee of the Fourth International, writing regularly for the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Thomas Scripps is standing in the Holborn & St. Pancras constituency in London. Scripps, 24, is a graduate with a Masters Degree in Modern History. A socialist since the age of 15, he joined the Socialist Equality Party in 2011. He is a leading member of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality and a regular writer for the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Dennis Leech is standing in Manchester Central. Leech, 61, is an advice worker for a mental health service charity. Active in socialist politics for three decades, he writes for the *World Socialist Web Site* on social issues.

All three constituencies encompass large working-class areas devastated by social deprivation, worsened after a decade of austerity and the slashing of vitally needed social services.

On Saturday, an SEP team participated in a protest for Julian Assange's freedom at Trafalgar Square in central London. The lively demonstration, organised by the Julian Assange Defence Committee, was attended by over a 100 people and attracted significant attention from passers-by. Protesters carried banners declaring, "Stop the torture, free Assange now!" "WikiLeaks Saved Lives" "UN

Torture Report: Julian Assange Could Die in Belmarsh" "Julian Assange: Jailed Without Charges in Belmarsh Violates International Law" and "Publishing is Not a Crime!" They chanted, "Free Julian Assange!" "Free Chelsea Manning!" and "There's only one decision, no extradition!"

The SEP distributed copies of its election statement, which explains, "Assange is being punished for exposing war crimes, as a warning to others to keep quiet. Yet neither Corbyn's Labour Party nor a single trade union has lifted a finger in his defence. Nor have any of Britain's pseudo-left groups.

"The SEP will continue to do all in our power to mobilise opposition in the working class to defeat this vile conspiracy."

Thomas Scripps addressed the crowd. He said, "I think I speak for everyone here when I say that this campaign has taken great strides in the last few months, but also that it must take even greater strides in the next period as Julian Assange's health deteriorates dangerously and as a show-trial rendition to the United States draws nearer ...

"We are now of course in the middle of a general election, in which every one of the main parties will do their best to avoid the issue of Assange, because the decision-makers in all of them fundamentally agree with the attack on democratic rights and with making an example of this brave whistle-blower and publisher.

"To oppose this, the Socialist Equality Party is standing candidates in Sheffield, Manchester, and myself here in London, where we will be putting the fight to free Assange at the centre of our campaign. We have great confidence that this demand will gain a mass hearing. Just a few days ago, 200,000 people submitted a petition to the Australian parliament protesting his treatment.

"We call on everyone here to lend their support and congratulate them on their efforts so far."

Last Friday, Scripps and SEP members campaigned

outside London's Euston Royal Mail depot with the WSWS article, "UK High Court bans strike by 110,000 Royal Mail postal workers." They explained their call for postal workers to form rank-and-file action committees in their workplaces, independent of the Communication Workers Union, to organise wildcat strikes in opposition to the injunction taken out by Royal Mail and backed by the court and turn to workers throughout the delivery sector and other industries to win their support.

Workers were eager to discuss the issue. One told our reporters, "You can't shut down a strike of thousands of people because one manager sent in some photos. Everyone's outraged."

"I'm really worried for my pension," the worker said. "I've been paying in for 20 years and I want something to show for it at the end. You can guarantee that whatever happens, the shareholders will walk away with their pockets full."

The CWU refused to oppose the court ruling and has again appealed for the company to enter negotiations. The worker said, "You wonder about the union, about golden handshakes. How much is [CWU General Secretary] Dave Ward paid?"

In Sheffield city centre, Amanda said she was very concerned about the growth of social inequality, and particularly agreed with the need to oppose militarism and war.

Corrine, who had recently returned to Britain from Sweden, had been disturbed by the rise of the far-right Sweden Democrats, who like their counterparts throughout Europe scapegoated immigrants for the problems of capitalism.

Aerospace student William thought it was necessary to utilise advanced science and technology for the benefit of all, and not just the enrichment of a tiny layer of billionaires.

Anvesh, originally from India, said he and a group of 15 fellow Indian and Pakistani students decided to vote leave (Brexit) in the referendum, with Anvesh saying he regretted doing so. Campaigners explained that the SEP called for an active boycott in the EU referendum and discussed the internationalist perspective this was based on. Anvesh replied, "It never occurred to me that you could take an independent position like you are saying."

Chris Marsden explained the programme of the party in relation to the history of India. "The movement for the liberation of India developed initially as a unified movement and then it was divided along religious, ethnic and caste lines.

"So what are the biggest issues confronting working people? Austerity, the constant destruction of their living standards, the erosion of essential services, anti-immigrant measures, militarism and war. We try to mobilise the working class as an independent political actor and unite it across existing national borders."

Asked what he thought of the SEP's perspective, Anvesh replied, "I like that idea."

An SEP campaign team were in St. Peter's Square on Saturday outside Manchester Central Library.

Phil lives in the constituency and said he would vote for Dennis Leech. "I believe in the platform that he's running on" he said. "I'm not going to vote tactically as I have been advised to do by some of my friends, because I genuinely believe that you should vote for who you want to see in government, not who you don't want to see in government."

"I believe that the Socialist Equality Party is the only party that genuinely stands for socialism. I don't think that any other party does. I think they garb themselves in it to elevate their position among the electorate, but I don't think they believe in it. Everything they have ever done has proven that, because you can't trust what people say, only what they do. They've proven that they can't be trusted."

Phil said he had been reading the WSWS for some time and that the party had been proven correct in its assessment of all the essential questions. "Look at Greece. Every other so-called left party, you name them—they all said you had to support [Syriza leader Alexis] Tsipras in Greece. But the SEP didn't. They said what he would do and that he would betray and you were right."

To join and support our campaign visit:

<https://socialequality.org.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/sepbritain/>

https://twitter.com/SEP_Britain

The author also recommends:

Socialist Equality Party stands in UK general election:

No to austerity, militarism and war!

Free Julian Assange!

For class struggle and socialist internationalism!



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

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