

London: Attendees at Socialist Equality Party's general election rally speak

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Our reporters
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WSWS reporters spoke to some of those who attended the Socialist Equality Party’s general election rally held in London Sunday. The SEP’s election candidates, National Secretary Chris Marsden, Thomas Scripps and Dennis Leech were joined by Peter Schwarz, the secretary of the International Committee of the Fourth International, and Alex Lantier, national secretary of the Parti de l’égalité socialiste in France.

Zoe said, “The meeting was very good. Quite a lot of people attended, which is good to know. It shows that people are interested in what the Socialist Equality Party has to say. Many of the things said today I have read on the *World Socialist Web Site*. I have been reading it for a few months now.”

Asked about WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, whose freedom the SEP made a central pillar of its campaign, Zoe said, “I think it is a very important matter. I don’t hear this from any other party in this election, but it is very important regarding freedom and the rights of journalists, freedom of expression, freedom in general. It should be talked about and Julian Assange has to be defended. And if any party is not defending Julian Assange then we have to think, what is the reason behind this?”

“The Labour Party is saying that they are standing for the rights of the working class, but why is it then that they don’t say anything about Julian Assange? They have gone really quiet. Doesn’t that mean that they are not different from the rest of them, from the parties of the bourgeoisie, in their core?”

Asked about Labour’s lack of response to the Open Letter signed by more than 60 doctors internationally,

demanding that Assange be given emergency healthcare, Zoe said “Yes, there is no reply from [Labour shadow home secretary] Diane Abbott or any reaction from Jeremy Corbyn or any MPs. We haven’t heard anything. These are all questions that we have to ask before going to vote on the 12th. We have to be sure voting Labour is right.”

Manuel is a sociologist and has been reading the WSWS for several years. He said, “I found the meeting very illuminating, especially Chris Marsden and Peter Schwarz. The key idea of Peter’s was that the new Balkans are the Middle East and may be the breaking point for a new world war. It is an idea I hadn’t heard of.”

Asked about the plight of Julian Assange, Manuel said, “It is a necessary fight [to free him]. He has been attacked by the whole bourgeoisie, the world bourgeoisie. He is alone and no one, not the pseudo-left, is defending him. It is a correct political decision to take up the fight.”

Asked about the SEP’s views on Brexit, Europe and its strategy of the United Socialist States of Europe. Manuel said, “It is a correct position. It is what Trotsky said. Many left parties here support a Lexit, which is a wrong view. It is national socialism, it is only socialism for Britain, and is a refashioning of Stalinism.”

A-level student **Stephen**, 17, attended the rally with his friend **Maisy**. Maisy heard SEP candidate Chris Marsden address hustings at her school, King Edward VII, in Sheffield.

Stephen said, “[Maisy] told me how well the SEP was received at her school. Among the public,

including students, there is a lot of frustration towards politicians about how they pretend to have the interests of people at heart but then they never act on it.

“I was very impressed by all the speakers today. When they were talking about leaderless revolutions being catalysed by social media ... maybe it needs some organization and leadership that can coordinate it.”

Stephen agreed with the need to build a new party because “the parties that we have currently are not working in the interests of the working class. We need international cooperation ... Jeremy Corbyn isn’t actually standing up to the billionaires, though students think he is more trustworthy than Boris Johnson.”

Maisy said, “I learned a lot more at the meeting than we did at the debate. There was a lot more information—more about the origins and the international point of view. This meeting was more focused on the party and global issues. I really liked Peter’s report on how left extremism is denounced [by the German security service] ... It’s really interesting seeing the left side, who are trying to do more for the people, that’s also shut down.

“I enjoyed seeing the international point of view of the party. Before I only knew about what Chris Marsden said on the SEP rather than the SGP in Germany. It was good to see the international side of it and I liked that.

“I was always a Labour supporter and just recently with Jeremy Corbyn and the elections. I’ve just not really resonated with it as much as I had. I was really excited for the debate at my school—to see all the different sides and see if I could get more politically enthralled again, because I used to be really active especially in Brexit from the 2016 election.

“Then I just got bored of it all [at the Sheffield school hustings] until Chris Marsden spoke and I thought, wow, this is something I really resonate with. He explained the more radical side of it, because the radical problems in society need to be dealt with by radical solutions. That’s kind of what he encouraged and it got the most applause and connection with the audience. He had more young people on his side than the Labour candidate did.

“I did more research when I got home and thought this is something I’ve been preaching for a while now, a more extreme side of it. If you look into it, Labour are more centrist and there are different factions in it. I

think the Socialist Equality Party has one goal and that’s what I feel most inclined toward, the class struggle, because it just includes everyone. No matter what other discriminations there are, everyone’s trying to deal with that.

“I feel my politics are much more with the SEP and I want to support that more and get involved. Me and my friends talk about it a lot and we all stayed behind after the debate and talked to Chris Marsden about it for about 20 minutes.”

Elsa Collins said, “I came into contact with the party while campaigning for the freedom of Julian Assange because his freedom is our freedom. I met Chris from the Socialist Equality Party. I have learnt a lot. We, the working class, need to get together and work together.”

Elsa said that she wanted to fight austerity. “We need to counteract all this reaction because this is inhumane and illegal what they are doing to the people. Many children are going hungry, students are in massive debt throughout their lives. There are people without homes who are living in the streets. Yet some live with millions and millions of pounds. We need more social equality.

“The working class need their own government because we demand justice, transparency and social equality for all.”

Elsa opposed war saying, “Do not attack other countries, leave them alone to live. Because when our governments attack them, they destroy their infrastructure and also they kill thousands in many countries throughout the Middle East. And now they are attacking Latin America. They, the imperialist governments, are liars and the United States’ policies are inhumane.”



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