

# Socialist Equality Party wins warm response in Holborn and St Pancras, London

Our reporters  
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Socialist Equality Party (SEP) campaigners for Tom Scripps in Holborn and St Pancras have won support for his challenging Labour's Sir Keir Starmer on a socialist and anti-war platform.

The SEP election manifesto states:

“Mass opposition to Israel's genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza must become the spearhead of a political struggle against the broader war aims of the UK, the United States and other NATO powers. Their support for Israel's mass murder and ethnic cleansing is bound up with plans for a new military carve-up of the world and its resources, centred on advanced preparations for war with Russia, Iran and China.”

A doctor from University College London Hospitals (UCLH) told campaigners at the student encampment at SOAS university protesting the mass murder of Palestinians in Gaza: “Obviously it's devastating to see what's happening to our brother and sisters across the globe. Student encampments like this are very important as it highlights the situation that is not being brought out in the media.

“It seems like the politicians are very pro genocide.

“Certainly, there are international tensions. I haven't been following much on what's been going on in the Ukraine situation. They are very similar situations in terms of innocent people dying.”

The day before the hustings debate at Westminster Kingsway College on Wednesday where Scripps won a powerful response among students for his appeal to build a socialist anti-war movement, M. I. Khan,

formerly from Bangladesh, stopped at the campaign stall.

Khan said, “We are against any killing and anything against the environment. We want to see this world safe and sustainable for the next generations.”

Asked his views on the Labour Party and its leader Starmer supporting the genocide in Gaza and NATO's war in Ukraine, he said, “We [Khan and his friends] think it is very, very wrong, because if we help those who are hungry, if we help those people we can divert this money to humanitarian areas, we can solve this problem. I believe we need one state solution with Christians, Jews and Muslims living in a single country with harmony. What is the harm?”

Speaking about the apartheid regime in South Africa, he said, “The same thing is happening in a more vigorous, more vicious manner in Palestine. We have to fight the capitalist ruling class which is waging the war against the Palestinians, and now they're trying to attack Iran and Russia.

“Anything is good that can sort things out by discussion and not by war. In all countries, whatever the belief, human rights are the main thing. It's equally applicable for Iran, for America, for Gaza, or any other country in the world.”

Asked what he thought of Tom Scripps standing in the election, he said, “He is a young man, so that is unprecedented as a leader opposing this injustice. This young man is doing a fantastic job.”

On Thursday the election stall attracted widespread interest outside the University College London Hospitals campus on Euston Road. A Chinese student training in mental health said, “I don't know much about the UK general election, but like the US elections, I think both parties are spreading war around the world. I do not support war, and I want peace for

both sides in Gaza. For the US, they are following a Cold War mindset, to find an enemy, a rivalry centring around Russia, Iran and China. We should condemn it.

“The UK should try to get away from NATO, which is under US control. I don’t think the UK government will be supportive of stopping war. An independent movement against war is good. Western democracy is a democracy for the minority, defending the capitalists.”

A senior nurse at UCLH provided a stark picture of the crisis facing National Health Service staff and patients.

“You are waiting for surgery for months and months and this funding is going elsewhere. Not to health.

“The biggest crisis for our young people is their mental health and there is no support at all. If you look at A&E, I was an A&E nurse for 8 years, and young people were coming in and nothing was happening for them so they go back home. They fall through the cracks, no one supports them in the community nor in the hospital because we’re overrun and there are no spaces for them to be admitted.

“A newly qualified nurse is getting £24,000 a year. You can’t live on that in London. You can’t pay your rent. If you have a family, you have no chance.

“Even as a senior nurse, I am still struggling. My husband works and makes good money in construction, but we are still struggling because everything has gone up.

“I really feel bad for the NHS. Over the years I have grown up with the NHS and always worked with UCLH. The volume of patients is greater and there have been so many cuts. Some of the wards are unsafe. The patient ratio when I started was 1:7, now sometimes its 1:10 or 1:11. If we are short-staffed, that is unsafe.

“Everyone is moving abroad, moving to Australia and other places where they get more money, so now it is 30 to 40 percent less staff. Which leads to nurses being overworked and run down. The care is worse, you can’t give as much when you are tired. It really affects the nurses. Junior nurses are now coming into wards with ten patients. You have to have experience in order to care for that many people. And now they’re thrown into the deep end.

“A junior doctor makes as much as a newly qualified nurse, so very little, and they are doing more work than anybody else. Long hours, sometimes as much as 36

hours, night shifts, covering weekends. They cover nurses’ work in whatever speciality they’re in. So I support the junior doctors strikes as a healthcare professional, and most of the health community supports them. Even the consultants are supportive of the junior staff. The junior doctors are our future consultants!”

The campaign team explained that Starmer had said in the first televised election debate that he would not meet the demand of junior doctors for pay restoration to the pre-austerity 2008 rates and Labour’s Health Secretary Wes Streeting was committed to further privatisation and cuts described as “efficiencies”. Labour in government would work with the trade union leaders and big business to enforce austerity at home and war abroad, a partnership forged through the sabotage of the 2022-3 strike wave and the below inflation deals agreed for all NHS workers.

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