

SEP campaign in Liverpool: “I think we need a real left wing party, an alternative to the three main parties”

By our reporters
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The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) election campaign team has been working in Liverpool and neighbouring St Helens over the last weeks.

Sharon came to the SEP stall in Liverpool city centre to explain that she is disillusioned with the UK’s major political parties. “I’ve always voted Labour, all my life,” she said. “I’m 43, so I’ve voted a few times. I’d never vote Labor again because they’re no different to the Tories. They don’t represent working class people any more, or even the middle class, only the rich. I think we need a real left-wing party, an alternative to the three main parties, Labour, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, who are all identical.”

Regarding the central demand of the SEP’s joint campaign with our German sister party, the *Partie für Soziale Gleichheit* (PSG), she said, “I definitely support the slogan ‘For the United Socialist States of Europe’. I would definitely vote for anyone who genuinely stands for the majority of the people, who are the working class.

“I agree with ‘End militarism and war’. The situation in Ukraine is really scary. Neither Russia nor the West is really democratic. They pretend to be. Putin is prepared to do anything. He doesn’t care what anyone thinks of him. The West is the same.”

Sharon said she was opposed to the clampdown on democratic rights and the persecution of US whistleblower Edward Snowden.

“Snowden has shown that we don’t live in a truly democratic society, either in the United States or this country. No Western country is truly democratic anymore.”

Sharon told the SEP how she had been exploited on zero hours contracts, describing them as “an absolute

joke. It’s something I’ve experienced myself through employment agencies in the past. I’ve been told one week, ‘We’ll phone you if we need you in work’. There’s no way you can live like this, pay bills, if you aren’t guaranteed a certain number of hours each week.

“Also, the minimum wage is a joke. Why do you have working tax credits anyway? We shouldn’t need those. We should be paid a living wage so we can pay our own way. If you get working tax credits, you’re accused of being a benefit scrounger. This is ridiculous. You aren’t choosing to depend on the state. You’re being forced to because the government represents only the rich, and that’s it.”

“Socialism has been turned into a dirty word, like anything that challenges the status quo,” she continued. “If you say anything that’s in any way decent, like calling for social equality, you’re called a Marxist—as if that’s an insult, as if you’re a fascist!

“We’re going the way America is, where anything remotely decent like having the National Health Service and free education is a bad thing. All the propaganda in the right-wing media always says that Marxism and socialism are bad, along with anything that says we should have equality.”

Tom is a musician at St Helens College. Speaking to the SEP in the town centre, he said, “I’m concerned that a war between the US and Russia looks to be unstoppable.” He added, “Obama has reneged on all his promises, and Putin can’t be trusted either. It’s obvious the European Union and US didn’t want Ukraine getting closer to Russia. Civil war can turn into a full-blooded international conflict so easily.”

Janet is a student at St Helens University. She said, “Ukraine has been on the agenda for a while, and it’s

scary. Obama was really annoyed over Russia's backing for Syria. It was obvious retaliation was going to happen."

Maureen works in the public sector and said she was concerned with the privatisation of the probation service. "The probation service through privatisation will move closer towards punishment and not rehabilitation," she said. Speaking about how victims of poverty and austerity are penalised for it, she said, "In hard times when a single mother gets her benefits stopped or even cut, she will do anything to feed and look after her children. People might say that's wrong until they are in that situation themselves."

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