

The socialist alternative to Bush and Kerry

• Stop the war in Iraq! Withdraw all US troops now! • For a socialist program for jobs, education and health care! • Break with the Democrats; build an independent mass party of the working class!

Socialist Equality Party
28 August 2004

The following statement is being distributed this weekend by supporters of the Socialist Equality Party at demonstrations coinciding with the Republican National Convention in New York City. The leaflet is also available in PDF format, which we urge readers and supporters to download and distribute widely.

What political alternative exists for the millions of people in this country and around the world who want to end the Iraq war and defeat Washington's policies of militarism, repression and social reaction?

This is the essential question confronting those taking part in this weekend's demonstrations against the Republican National Convention in New York City.

Tens of millions in the US and around the globe demonstrated in February 2003 to oppose a US war against Iraq. That the Bush administration launched its invasion just a month later exposes the indifference of the government to the will of the people as well as the fallacy of the perspective that merely bigger and better protests can sway whichever of the big business candidates are elected in November.

The politics of "lesser-evilism" and support for John Kerry likewise provides no means to advance the struggle against the Iraq war, the attacks on democratic rights and mounting social inequality.

Kerry is committed to continuing and even expanding the Iraqi occupation. He stated earlier this month that, even knowing that there were no weapons of mass destruction, he still would have voted to give Bush the power to wage preemptive war. This confirms that the conquest of Iraq and its oil wealth was a bipartisan policy carried out in the interests of America's financial elite.

Those like Ralph Nader and the Green Party, who claim that their participation in the election can push the Democrats to the left, are only sowing illusions that this party of American imperialism can somehow be transformed into a vehicle for peace and social reform.

The Socialist Equality Party is running in the November elections to fight for a break with the two-party system and the building of a new mass socialist movement of working people. Our campaign is advancing a genuinely democratic and socialist alternative to the Democrats and Republicans, and a program that is founded on the perspective of uniting American working people with the working class all over the world in a common struggle against global capitalism.

Only our campaign demands an end to the war in Iraq and an immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all US troops.

Our candidates for president and vice president—Bill Van Auken and Jim Lawrence—have been placed on the ballot in New Jersey, Colorado, Iowa and Washington state. We have filed petitions for ballot status in Ohio and are currently petitioning to place Van Auken and Lawrence on the ballot in Minnesota.

We have also placed Congressional candidates on the ballot—Jerry White in Michigan and Carl Cooley in Maine—as well as a candidate for state representative in Illinois, Tom Mackaman.

The Socialist Equality Party's message is that the working class must prepare politically for struggle against whatever administration—Democratic or Republican—wields power next January. The occupation of Iraq will continue and future wars are already being

prepared. Last May, Democrats joined Republicans in the US House of Representatives by a 376-to-3 margin to place Iran on notice over its nuclear program in much the same terms used in authorizing the unprovoked war on Iraq.

Whichever party wins the coming election, it will confront an insoluble economic situation fueled by unsustainable fiscal deficits and foreign debt, as well as rising prices and interest rates. This crisis must inevitably give rise to a new period of explosive struggles by the American working class.

The Socialist Equality Party directs its campaign precisely to this immensely powerful social force. We insist that the struggle against war and the defense of democratic rights can be advanced only through a turn to broad layers of workers, students, young people and professionals, fighting for the building of a mass socialist movement.

The roots of war, repression and declining living standards for masses of people lie, not in the personalities of this or that capitalist politician, but in the crisis of a system based on private ownership and control over the basic forces of economic life—a system that subordinates all human and social needs to the pursuit of profit and the accumulation of personal wealth.

Only a movement that fights to liberate the productive forces from the grip of a corporate and financial oligarchy, and place them under the democratic control of the working people, can establish real equality and end the horrors of war and poverty.

The reorganization of the American economy along these lines would make available resources to implement programs that would enormously improve the living conditions of the working class.

The SEP calls for:

- * A massive program of public works to guarantee full employment
- * A guaranteed federally funded annual income
- * Reduction of the workweek to 30 hours, at 40 hours' pay
- * Public investment to insure high-quality schools and free higher education for all
- * Universal medical coverage
- * Outlawing of union-busting and wage-cutting
- * Dismantling of the Homeland Security Department and repeal of the Patriot Act

It is to lay the political and programmatic framework for the building of a mass socialist party of the working class that the SEP is intervening in the 2004 election. The SEP urges you not only to give our party your vote, but to follow the analysis of the *World Socialist Web Site* and help us distribute our socialist program as widely as possible.

Volunteer in the Socialist Equality Party election campaign in states across the country!

<http://www.wsws.org/us2004/index.html>

Donate to the Socialist Equality Party campaign online <https://secure.wsws.org/election/sepfund.htm>



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