

At “World Can’t Wait” protest

Michigan SEP candidate exposes Democrats’ complicity with Bush

Our reporter
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Socialist Equality Party US Congressional candidate Jerome White spoke before students at Wayne State University in Detroit on Thursday as they gathered to participate in a protest march against the Bush administration’s war policies and attacks on democratic rights.

The demonstration, which was part of a series held around the country, was organized by a coalition of liberal academics, actors and radical protest groups allied with a section of the Democratic Party under the heading “World Can’t Wait.” The protests varied in size from several hundred in smaller cities to several thousand in New York, Chicago and San Francisco. In Portland, Oregon at least seven people were arrested, and five were arrested in Seattle.

In opposition to the political outlook advanced by the World Can’t Wait organizers—that a Democratic victory in the November mid-term elections would reverse the militarist agenda of the US government and stop the attacks on civil liberties—White argued that working people had to break with the Democratic Party and build an independent socialist movement to oppose the profit system and the two parties that defend it.

White had the opportunity to address the crowd of about 100 students after a series of speakers affiliated with World Can’t Wait spoke. They had demanded that the Bush administration be “driven out,” but failed to say who should replace Bush and the Republicans. The implication was clear, as none of the speakers made any criticisms of the Democratic Party. At the conclusion of the protest, later that afternoon, Democratic Congressman John Conyers addressed a rally organized by the group.

In opposition to this perspective, White said: “There is no doubt that the Bush administration should be removed from office, and that the president and his entire coterie should be placed before a war crimes tribunal for plotting and unleashing the illegal war in Iraq. But it would be folly to believe that the Democratic Party offers any alternative to the Republicans.

“The Democrats have provided Bush with all the political support he needs, most recently with the passage of the Military Commissions Act and the 100-0 vote in the US Senate to continue funding the war. Hillary Clinton and other leading Democrats are seeking to attack Bush from the right, saying they can do a better job in ‘winning’ the war in Iraq and the so-called ‘war on terror.’

“This is because the Democrats, just as much as the Republicans, represent the wealthy elite in America, which wants to seize the oilfields of the Middle East and establish US dominance of the world. At the same time, both parties are waging a war against working people in the US, slashing social programs and supporting the job- and wage-cutting attacks of corporate America.

“The Democrats and Republicans claim there is no money for education, health care or decent paying jobs, but they are spending hundreds of billions on this war while handing over billions more in tax cuts for the rich.”

White said the political outlook advanced by the World Can't Wait organization—of pressuring the Democrats to defend working people—was a diversion and a dead end. What was required, he said, was the “building of a powerful political movement of the working class against both big business parties to put an end to the source of war, attacks on democratic rights and social inequality—the capitalist system.” He concluded by urging students and workers to actively support his campaign and vote for him in November.

Afterwards, several students and workers expressed their support for such a perspective. A computer software engineer said, “I think you're right about the Democrats. They are supporting this war and they have allowed Bush to get away with these attacks. I think we need an alternative. I will read and consider your platform.”

In addition to Conyers, the Democratic congressman from Detroit, the World Can't Wait coalition is allied with other members of the Democratic Party's Black Congressional Caucus. Several other Democratic politicians endorsed the protests, including Maxine Waters of Los Angeles, Jesse Jackson Jr. and Bobby Rush of Chicago, Major Owens of New York and former Georgia congresswoman Cynthia McKinney. They are more than happy to support an organization that is drumming up votes for the Democrats, just as those groups who championed the “Anybody but Bush” argument were used to channel opposition to the war behind the election campaign of John Kerry in 2004.



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