

Reject Obama and McCain! Support the socialist alternative in 2008! Build the Socialist Equality Party!

The Socialist Equality Party
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Jerry White
for President

The Socialist Equality Party announces today that it has selected Jerome White and Bill Van Auken as candidates for president and vice president in the 2008 US elections. White, 49, and Van Auken, 58, have decades of experience in the socialist movement and the struggles of the working class. They are both regular writers for the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Between now and Election Day, the SEP will make the case for socialism. It will explain the necessity for and encourage the development of mass popular struggles against capitalism and militarism. The SEP will point out that the fundamental issues facing working people—economic crisis, social inequality, war, and attacks on democratic rights—can be addressed only through a break with the Democrats and Republicans, the corporate-controlled parties of big business. The SEP will call on American workers to reject the national chauvinism promoted by these pro-imperialist parties and embrace a program of international working class solidarity.



Bill Van Auken
for Vice President

White and Van Auken will explain that there is no solution to the crisis of American society within the framework of capitalism. The SEP calls for the reorganization of economic life along socialist lines. The satisfaction of human and social needs, not the drive for profit and the accumulation of the personal wealth of the richest one percent of Americans, must be the goal of economic policy. Capitalist

private ownership of the productive forces of society and the dictatorship of the corporate oligarchy must be replaced with a socialist system, based on public ownership and popular democratic control over the main productive forces and resources.

The SEP issues the following warning: Neither the Democrats nor Republicans are presenting to the working class their real programs—that is, what they intend to do *after* Election Day. Neither the Democratic nor Republican candidate cares to acknowledge that this election campaign is being conducted in the midst of the most serious economic crisis of world capitalism since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

But the corporate and financial elite knows full well that the next president—regardless whether his name is McCain or Obama—will almost immediately escalate attacks on the American and international working class. The next administration will drive up unemployment, slash expenditures for desperately needed social programs, support the attacks of the corporations on wage levels and working conditions, and intensify government suppression of democratic rights. A President McCain or Obama will pursue the reckless militarist agenda of the Pentagon and seek the reintroduction of the draft to provide human cannon fodder for the wars now being planned in secret.

Unambiguously and irreconcilably opposed to imperialism and all forms of national chauvinism, the SEP campaign is directed to the American *and* international working class. All over the world, working people are following with intense interest the unfolding of the election campaign. They know that their fates are tied directly to what happens in the United States.

After eight bloody years of the Bush administration's fraudulent, criminal and sadistic "war on terror"—that is, the drive to establish American control over the world's oil and energy resources—people all over the world are hoping that the elections bring an end to US-sponsored violence and aggression. They have been led to believe by the media in their own countries that the election of Obama, the first African-American to receive the presidential nomination of one of the two major capitalist parties, would herald a decisive shift in the foreign policy of the United States.

It is the responsibility of the SEP campaign to refute this complacent and dangerous illusion. If he is elected, Obama will pursue the global imperialist interests of the American ruling class no less ruthlessly than Bush. The "war on terror" will be escalated.

The SEP says to workers all over the world: Imperialist violence will not be ended by placing a Democrat in the White House. Global peace can be achieved only through the solidarity and unified struggle of the American and international working class against capitalism, against imperialism, and for socialism!

The central issues that confront the working class in this election are:

American bombs. Those responsible for launching these wars must be prosecuted for the war crimes they have committed.

1. The world economic crisis

The United States and much of the world are already entering into recession. The living conditions of working people are deteriorating. Families are being kicked out of their homes, the cost of goods is rising, wages are declining, and unemployment is soaring. This crisis is adding to what is already a staggering level of social inequality.

The present crisis exposes the failure of the capitalist system. It has laid bare enormous levels of corruption and incompetence. But beyond the greed and criminality of corporate executives, the crisis is the product of a protracted decay in the global position of American capitalism. The American ruling class has no response but to attack the working class, while attempting to seize control of the world's resources.

The propagandists of big business pay endless tributes to capitalism and the infallibility of the "free market." This ideology, as stupid as it is reactionary, is exposed by the eruption of the sub-prime mortgage crisis that has brought the entire American and world financial system to the brink of collapse. During the past several months, hundreds of billions of dollars have been poured by the Bush administration, with the support of the Democrats, into privately-owned financial institutions. The bailout of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac has effectively doubled the national debt of the United States. The cost of these bailouts will be borne by the working class. The sole beneficiaries of these rescue operations will be, as always, corporate executives and super-rich investors.

In opposition to the state bailout of the American financial oligarchy, the SEP advocates the transformation of the giant banks and corporations into democratically controlled utilities, operated to meet social needs, not private profit. It supports a massive redistribution of wealth to benefit working people, including vastly expanded resources for social programs, jobs, health care, housing and education.

2. Militarism and the threat of world war

The eruption of American imperialism is the greatest threat to the world's population and threatens to spark a new world war, with incalculable consequences. The occupation of Iraq has now lasted for over five years, and the occupation of Afghanistan for nearly seven. These wars were not "mistakes" that were managed poorly, as stated by sections of the Democratic Party and media, but atrocious crimes for which the entire political establishment stands condemned.

Even as the election campaign season progresses, the US is carrying out further military actions. The US has begun bombing areas of Pakistan in opposition to the demands of Pakistan's government. In its attempt to assert control of a key geo-strategic area in the Caucasus and undermine Russian influence in the region, the US supported a Georgian attack on South Ossetia. Both these operations have the full support of the Democrats and Republicans.

On the basis of the doctrine of "preemptive war," the American ruling class has arrogated to itself the right to invade any country. It is responding to its declining economic position by seeking to leverage its main advantage against its rivals: the most powerful military in the world.

The SEP advocates the complete dismantling of the American war machine. US troops should be immediately withdrawn from wherever they are stationed, and a program of reparations, paid for by the American ruling elite, must be implemented to help rebuild societies shattered by

3. The crisis of American democracy

The last eight years have seen a bipartisan assault on democratic rights, in the United States and internationally. Words such as "Abu Ghraib," "Guantánamo," "rendition," "enemy combatant," "water boarding," and "enhanced interrogation" have come to symbolize the American government's descent into criminality and fascistic barbarism.

The "war on terror" has been used to justify not only military actions, but the creation of a police state apparatus in the United States, including vastly augmented police powers and spying programs without precedent.

The real purpose of the attack on democratic rights is not to deal with "terrorism," as claimed by both political parties, but to repress any sign of opposition to the policies of the American ruling class. The fight for democracy, therefore, cannot be separated from the fight for social equality.

The SEP advocates the repeal of all anti-democratic legislation, the immediate closing of Guantánamo Bay and all other US military concentration camps and secret CIA prisons around the world, and the dismantling of the American government's repressive monitoring system.

Break with the two party system!

The corporate-controlled 2008 presidential campaign offers no alternative for the American people and allows no discussion of the real issues. The Democratic and Republican candidates hurl inane and childish insults at each other, while cynically posturing as the agents of "change" who will shake up a political elite of which they are integral parts.

In the case of McCain, his campaign repackaging as an agent of "change" is breathtaking in its cynicism. The son and grandson of American admirals, he is an out-and-out militarist who has aggressively supported and promoted every military operation of the United States over the past 45 years, including his personal involvement in the Vietnam War as an air force pilot, dropping bombs on a country that had never threatened or attacked the United States.

As for his social outlook, McCain is a fervent defender of corporate interests. Personally implicated in the savings-and-loans scandals of the 1980s, McCain's "anti-corruption" credentials are nothing more than the product of a politically expedient public relations makeover. He achieved the presidential nomination of the Republican Party by reconciling himself with the most reactionary elements within that extreme right-wing party. His nomination of Sarah Palin as his running mate confirms his capitulation to the religious right.

For all the hype surrounding Obama's status as the first African-American nominee of a major political party, it is becoming increasingly clear that his rhetoric is so much empty sloganeering. He is an entirely conventional politician, a veteran of the Illinois Democratic Party machine, who will continue the same policies as his predecessors.

In a series of calculated moves over the past several weeks, Obama has sought to reassure the American ruling elite that he is a capable defender of its interests, from voting for warrantless domestic spying to backtracking on his pledge to eliminate Bush's tax cuts for the rich.

In the course of the election campaign, Obama has rapidly shed his antiwar posturing, affirming his support for the continued occupation of

Iraq, calling for stepped-up US attacks on Pakistani territory and denouncing Bush for not sending enough additional troops to Afghanistan. He has also echoed the Bush administration's bellicose and provocative stance against Russia.

The demands of American militarism will require an infusion of tens of thousands more youth to serve as cannon fodder in the US military. This is the significance of Obama's repeated calls for "service" and "sacrifice." The American ruling class is laying the foundations for a military draft.

The SEP categorically rejects the view that the Democratic Party can be pushed to the left. Those who say the construction of an independent party is "unrealistic" are in fact advancing the politics of delusion and self-deception—that the Democratic Party represents a real alternative.

The capitalist system has failed the American people; it has failed the world as well. As the world is plunged into an economic abyss, amidst the backdrop of global conflict and imperialist barbarism, millions of people will come to realize that capitalism cannot be reformed—it must be overthrown. It must be replaced by a new social system based on democratic control and rational planning of the global economy, to satisfy social needs and not private profit.

The main task in this election is to present ideas and fight for a program. The very nature of the American electoral system—with an electoral college, a winner-take-all process, prohibitive ballot access laws, and a well-established practice of fraud and manipulated elections—testifies to its completely undemocratic character.

The SEP calls on those who support its program to write in the names of our candidates when you go to the polls on November 4. However, our election campaign looks beyond this election. Political struggle cannot remain within the framework of polls ritualistically carried out every few years.

The SEP will be holding meetings across the country in the coming weeks. We call on workers and young people in the US and around the world to commit yourselves to the active struggle for international socialism by participating in our election campaign, becoming readers of the *World Socialist Web Site*, and joining the Socialist Equality Party.

Contact us to find out more about the election campaign or how to join the SEP.



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