

Perspective and tasks of the Socialist Equality Party in 2010

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The following is an amended version of a report submitted to a national aggregate meeting of the Socialist Equality Party in Ann Arbor, Michigan on January 9, 2010. David North is the national chairman of the SEP. Joseph Kishore is the national secretary of the SEP.

1. World capitalism enters the second decade of the 21st century in the midst of a deepening economic and geopolitical crisis. In January 2009, in the aftermath of the financial meltdown that had begun in September 2008, the Socialist Equality Party explained that the economic crisis signaled a turning point in the protracted decline in the global position of American capitalism. The SEP warned that economic restabilization on a capitalist basis could “be achieved only through ... a catastrophic lowering of the living standards of the working class...” We insisted that there could be no “socially neutral” resolution to the crisis, and that “the improvisational responses of the American ruling class to the economic upheaval will solve nothing.” On the eve of the inauguration of Barack Obama, the SEP predicted that he would seek a “solution to the crisis that does not touch the foundations of capitalism and the interests of the financial elite.”

2. This evaluation has proven correct. None of the fundamental causes of the crisis have been addressed. The contrast between the scale of the disaster that struck in September 2008 and the feckless character of the Obama administration’s response could not be more striking. Despite the criminally reckless speculation that wreaked havoc on the lives of millions of workers within the United States and billions of people internationally, Obama avoided any action that impinged on the wealth and interests of Wall Street. The first priority of the Obama administration was to reassure the financial elite that their wealth would be protected, and that there would be no re-imposition of “New Deal”-style restraints on Wall Street gambling. In fact, the opposite has taken place. The massive infusion of cash into the world financial system has led, predictably, to a new round of reckless speculation on Wall Street. Share values have soared, enriching rich speculators while the government does nothing to address the deep distress of the overwhelming majority of the working population.

3. The conditions confronting the global working class are dire. A substantial portion of the world’s population lives in desperate poverty. The January 12 earthquake in Haiti, which killed 200,000 people, has shocked the entire world. But the suffering of the Haitian people is unique only in the suddenness of the catastrophe. Countless thousands die each day of malnutrition, disease and the myriad consequences of global poverty. Moreover, the staggering dimensions of the Haitian tragedy are rooted in economic and political conditions created by nearly a century of brutal exploitation by American corporations. Now, the American government views the catastrophe as an opportunity to send in the military and restructure the Haitian economy even more directly in the interests of American capitalism. The US has blocked desperately needed aid while preventing refugees from fleeing to the United States. As a result, tens of

thousands more Haitians have needlessly died. As was the case with Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and the Asian tsunami of 2004, the earthquake in Haiti has revealed the ugly reality of capitalism.

4. In the United States, the working class faces double-digit unemployment and a relentless assault on jobs, wages and social programs. The structural imbalances in the world economy—including balance of trade and fiscal deficits, currency conflicts, and the threat of trade wars—have intensified during the past year, contributing to the growing tensions between the major powers. Whatever the short-term fluctuations in the markets and other economic indices, there will be no return to the status quo that existed before the September 15, 2008 meltdown. The crisis marks the breakdown in the global structure of world capitalism as it emerged from the Second World War under the political and economic leadership of the United States.

5. One hundred years ago, in 1910, the world capitalist system stood on the brink of the most devastating crisis in history. Apart from the most perceptive and far-sighted Marxist theoreticians of that period—particularly Lenin, Trotsky and Luxemburg—there was hardly to be found a political thinker who imagined that the second decade of the new 20th century would witness the upheavals of war and revolution. And yet, the accumulating contradictions of world capitalism and the imperialist system that it had fostered were leading inexorably toward catastrophe. The global political system, in which the British Empire occupied the leading position, was being undermined by the emergence of powerful capitalist nation states: in Europe, Germany; in Asia, Japan; and in North America, the United States. The mounting geopolitical tensions arose out of and intensified contradictions in the world economic system. Financial crises such as that which erupted in 1907 signaled the end of a long period of capitalist expansion. Above all, class tensions were on the rise throughout the world. Between 1911 and 1913, a series of war scares and bloody regional conflicts (especially in the Balkans) revealed the instability of the world capitalist system. Finally, in July-August 1914, World War I broke out. Less than three years later, in March 1917, the Russian Revolution began, setting the stage for the Bolshevik conquest of power in October of that year. These historic events marked the opening stages of an extended period of economic and political breakdown that persisted until the end of World War II in 1945.

6. In certain critical respects, the world of 2010 resembles the conditions that existed on the eve of World War I and World War II. Economic crisis, geopolitical tensions and social instability are greater today than at any time since 1945. One essential fact imparts to the existing situation an historically unprecedented character: the position of the United States is fundamentally different today than it was in earlier periods of global instability. In the earlier periods of crisis, the US was a rising economic power. In the aftermath of World War I, it replaced Europe as the center of world capitalism. By the end of World War II, America’s economic and political dominance over all its capitalist rivals was unchallenged. Its

vast resources proved decisive in establishing a new foundation for the restabilization of world capitalism.

7. The era of American economic dominance is over. Despite the immense military resources at its disposal, the United States is, within the framework of world economy, a rapidly declining power. This profound shift in the economic and political position of the United States has the most far-reaching implications not only for itself, but for the entire world. The ever more aggressive efforts of the United States to fend off challenges to its global dominance and to shift the burden of its economic decline onto the backs of its competitors are increasingly the most disruptive factors in international economics and politics.

8. The crash of 2007-2008 set into motion a massive restructuring of global geopolitical, economic and social relations. The crisis arising from this convulsive process will be resolved in one of two ways. The capitalist solution requires a drastic lowering of the living standards of the American and international working class, internal repression, the destruction of the democratic rights of the working class, and the unleashing of military violence on a scale not seen since World War II. The only alternative to this capitalist scenario is the socialist solution: that is, the taking of political power by the American and international working class, the establishment of popular democratic control of industrial, financial and natural resources, and the development of a scientifically planned global economy dedicated to the satisfaction of the needs of society as a whole, rather than the destructive pursuit of profit and personal wealth.

The decade in review

9. On New Year's Eve 2000, billions of people across the globe hoped that the new century would see the birth of a better world—with less violence, poverty and suffering than had existed in the 20th century. The hope that inspired the international celebration of the new millennium was sincere and deeply felt. Ten years later, little remains of these naïve hopes. There is a general sense that conditions of life for masses of people are only getting worse, and that society is turning backwards.

10. Among the ruling elites and their political representatives, the new century was greeted with ambitions of an entirely different character. They believed that the crises and revolutionary upheavals that had threatened the very survival of capitalism in the 20th century belonged to the past, that history—the record of human progress on the basis of class struggle—had come to an end. The specters of socialism, of the striving of the masses for equality, had been finally exorcised. Nowhere was the hubris of unbridled power as unrestrained as in the United States. The American ruling class had convinced itself—in the aftermath of the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and the dissolution of the Soviet Union—that its own particularly rapacious form of free-market capitalism had been triumphantly vindicated, that the global hegemony of the United States—as the world's “only superpower”—was unchallengeable, and that the booming stock market guaranteed the accumulation of ever greater sums of personal wealth. In the 21st century, the more audacious economists predicted, even the business cycle would cease to exist!

11. But then, more quickly than they either imagined or feared, reality intervened. The last decade has dealt heavy blows to the boasting self-confidence of the ruling class. The change in sentiment—from euphoria to gloom—is reflected in the many demoralized commentaries appearing in the press. In its cover story on “The Decade from Hell,” *Time* magazine

comments, “Bookended by 9/11 at the start and a financial wipeout at the end, the first 10 years of this century will very likely go down as the most dispiriting and disillusioning decade Americans have lived through in the post-World War II era.” The German magazine *Der Spiegel* writes, “It was a decade filled with crisis years: the 9/11 crisis, the climate crisis, the financial crisis and the crisis of democracy. Taken together, they represent a general crisis for the West. Things could hardly have gone any worse over the course of the decade.” The British *Financial Times* adds, “Comparing the America that began the 21st century with the America of today is to witness a country that has in some ways quite radically altered its view of itself and its relationship to the world. In short, the metallic rust of decline has crept into the American soul.”

12. The first decade of the 21st century witnessed the descent of American capitalism into criminality in all spheres of its activities, both within and beyond the borders of the United States. In foreign policy, the American ruling class seized on the events of September 11, 2001—whose shadowy provenance has never been adequately investigated or explained—to pursue global objectives that had long been under intense discussion within the highest levels of the government, the military and the intelligence agencies. The United States government, abetted by the media, lied to justify its invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. In violation of international law, the “war on terror” became a catchphrase used cynically to legitimize the ever-expanding deployment of military forces in Central Asia, the Middle East, and, most recently, the Horn of Africa. The American ruling class is determined to defend its global position by asserting control over the key geostrategic regions of the world. This military aggression has continued with the Obama administration's “surge” in Afghanistan in 2009, and the addition of a new country—Yemen—to the list of existing and potential targets.

13. Imperialism, as Lenin wrote nearly a century ago, “is reaction all down the line.” The “war on terror” unleashed a war on human rights. The nation that was born with the proclamation of man's “inalienable rights” has become the remorseless perpetrator of violence, mass terror and brutality against individuals. During the past decade, the US government and its accomplices introduced words and phrases into common usage that have become synonymous with state-sponsored sadism and inhumanity: *Guantánamo*, *Abu Ghraib*, *Blackwater*, *enemy combatant*, *enhanced interrogation*, *water-boarding*, *rendition*, *Bush*, *Cheney* and *Rumsfeld*.

14. In economics, the boundaries between legitimate business, speculation and outright fraud were effaced. A decade that began with the deflation of the dot.com stock market bubble in 2000, followed by the bankruptcy of Enron in late 2001, ended with the collapse of the bubble in mortgage-backed securities, a worldwide financial panic, and a multitrillion-dollar bailout of the banks. Amidst the concentration of staggering levels of wealth in the hands of a few, social inequality in the United States assumed obscene dimensions. For some time it had been argued by apologists for capitalism that the immense growth of inequality was a temporary phenomenon, bound up with new technologies and the transition from an industrial to an “information-based” society. Developments during the past decade have made all too clear that extreme levels of inequality are irreversible within the framework of the profit system, and are likely to grow even worse. American society has degenerated into an oligarchy, controlled by financial and corporate parasites whose interests and desires are politically reactionary, economically irrational, culturally backward and harmful in every conceivable way to the health and progress of society.

15. The state of democratic institutions within the United States reflects the pressures of unrestrained militarism, financial parasitism and social inequality. The last decade began with the theft of the 2000 presidential election. A 5-4 Supreme Court decision to halt the recount in Florida placed in power the candidate who had a half-million fewer votes than his

opponent and who had clearly lost the election. In subsequent elections, the American people sought to express their opposition to the war policies of the US government, but in every case mass sentiment was suppressed, deflected and ignored, a process in which the Democratic Party and its various liberal and middle-class supporters played a critical role.

16. After eight years of Bush, who left office the most hated president in US history, the American people elected Barack Obama. Appealing to widespread discontent and marketing himself as the candidate of “hope” and “change,” Obama became the first African-American president. But during his first year in office it has become patently clear that nothing of any real importance will change—at least, not for the better. Having elected a man whose ethnic background, it was widely hoped, would make him more sensitive to the cares of ordinary people, working people have discovered, instead, a cold-hearted president who empathizes only with the rich. The obvious continuity with the Bush administration, on every aspect of policy, has rapidly alienated public opinion, resulting in the stunning defeat for the Democratic Party in the recent Massachusetts Senate election. The “candidate of change” is proving to millions of people that change is impossible through the existing political institutions. The only change that people “can believe in” is that which emerges out of the revolutionary political struggle of the working class for socialism.

The world situation in 2010

17. The crisis of world capitalism is rooted in the contradictions of the capitalist system: between socialized production and private ownership of the means of production, and between a global economy and the nation-state system. Today, they find their most concentrated expression in the United States, which is ruled by an elite determined to defend its interests through war abroad and intensified exploitation at home. In his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in December, Obama made clear that the aggressive expansion of American imperialism will continue unabated under the new administration. Coming only a week after the escalation of the war in Afghanistan, Obama insisted in his speech that the US had the right to “act unilaterally if necessary” and to launch wars whose purpose “extends beyond self-defense or the defense of one nation against an aggressor.” In other words, the US, which the president emphasized was “the world’s sole military superpower,” proclaims the right to invade any country on virtually any pretext.

18. Whatever the hopes of the American ruling class, however, the belief that it can counteract its economic decline through military force is a reactionary delusion whose consequences, unless stopped by the conscious political intervention of the working class, can lead only to catastrophe. In Iraq, after slaughtering over a million people and destroying what was once a modern society, the US has succeeded in establishing an unstable puppet regime, balancing atop various competing sectarian interests that continually threaten to erupt into civil war. In Afghanistan, more than eight years of war have produced for the US an equally unstable regime and a situation for American imperialism that increasingly resembles Vietnam.

19. Beyond these wars, the US confronts a host of rising regional and even global powers that threaten its position—including Iran, India, Brazil and, above all, China—as well as the old powers in Europe and Russia. US attempts to dominate smaller powers increasingly threaten to spark a broader conflagration. It would not be difficult to write down one or two dozen scenarios for the outbreak of a new world war.

20. The US relationship with China is among the most volatile elements in the world geopolitical situation today. China is a challenger to the US not only in East Asia, where it is working on setting up regional trade organizations, but also Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa and even Latin America. The decline of the United States has been accompanied by the enormous economic growth of China, which now has the world’s second largest economy and just surpassed Germany as the largest exporter. As the US has been transformed from the principal creditor into the principal debtor nation, China, which owns nearly \$1 trillion in American debt, has accumulated the world’s largest current account surplus.

21. Under conditions of crisis, the economic interdependence between the US and China is fraught with tension. The Copenhagen Climate Change summit in December highlighted the strains in relations between the two countries, as well as between the United States and Europe. Early in the New Year, China reacted bitterly to US plans to approve new arms sales to Taiwan, along with Obama’s preparations to meet the Dalai Lama. The US has raised persistent demands that China allow the value of its currency to rise, while China has warned that the easy money policy of the US Federal Reserve threatens to undermine the value of the dollar and destabilize the entire world currency market. There is a very real possibility of a currency or trade war. The United States has already slapped tariffs on a number of Chinese exports, including steel and tires. Liberal *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman ended the year with a bellicose column directed against China (“Chinese New Year,” December 31). Charging that China’s economic and trade policy was “predatory,” Krugman warned, “Chinese mercantilism is a growing problem, and the victims of that mercantilism have little to lose from a trade confrontation. So I’d urge China’s government to reconsider its stubbornness. Otherwise, the very mild protectionism it’s currently complaining about will be the start of something much bigger.” In an earlier column, *Financial Times* commentator Martin Wolf had Obama speak what Wolf felt should be said to Chinese President Hu Jintao: “What you may fail to understand is the speed with which democracies can shift their attitude from the open hand to the clenched fist.”

22. The economic growth of China, India, Brazil and other countries is superimposed on societies riven by desperate poverty and staggeringly high levels of inequality. Their political structures are highly vulnerable to popular discontent. One of the principal factors behind China’s refusal to accede to American demands that it increase the value of its currency is the fear that the resulting drop in exports will lead to a surge in unemployment that could completely destabilize the regime.

23. There are other major points of geopolitical conflict. The end of the Soviet Union was seen as an opportunity by the US to intervene in regions—including Central Asia, Eastern Europe and the Caucasus—traditionally considered Russia’s backyard. The US backed a series of “color revolutions,” particularly in Georgia and Ukraine, in an attempt to place in power regimes more amenable to its interests. Tensions between the US and Russia came close to taking an open form when Georgia, backed by the United States, invaded the pro-Russian autonomous republic of South Ossetia in the summer of 2008.

24. As for US relations with Europe, the tensions that were exposed in the run-up to the Iraq war continue to fester. During the Cold War period, the United States emphasized the importance of an alliance with Western Europe. The rebuilding of Europe and the promotion of international institutions were part of the attempt by the American ruling class to contain the Soviet Union and prevent socialist revolution in Europe itself. Now, the more basic tendency in the US-Europe relationship, in which American power comes at the expense of Europe, is reasserting itself. Hopes among European powers that the election of Obama would mark a return to “multilateralism” have been shattered.

20. The US relationship with China is among the most volatile elements

The social crisis in America

25. Many decades ago, Leon Trotsky described the United States as the most frightened country in the world. This ironic observation, written when the United States was the greatest industrial power, is timelier than ever. The American ruling class sees challenges, threats and mortal danger in every corner of the globe. And yet, the greatest threat to its dominance lies in the mounting social tensions within the United States itself. The extraordinary degree to which massive wealth is concentrated in a very small percentage of the American population is not compatible with social stability. The ever-more obvious fact that gross inequality is a basic feature of American society is leading to profound and enduring changes in social consciousness among broad masses of workers. The ability of the reactionary trade unions to suppress working class resistance to exploitation and injustice is reaching its outermost limits. A new period of explosive social struggles is rapidly approaching.

26. Conditions for the broad mass of the population in the US continue to deteriorate. Some 40 million people now live in poverty, while 6 million people (or 2 percent of the population) have no income, subsisting on food stamps alone. By the end of the decade, official unemployment in the US had reached 10 percent, with some 4.2 million jobs wiped out in 2009. The latest figures released on January 8 show that the US lost another 85,000 jobs in December. The official unemployment rate remained steady largely due to the fact that tens of thousands more people have simply given up looking for work. The official labor force—those the government considers to be looking for work—actually contracted by 661,000 in the month, contributing to a rise in the broader measure of unemployment to 17.3 percent, which also includes millions of people who are involuntarily working part-time.

27. In some states and cities, the crisis has already reached Depression-like conditions. In Michigan, unemployment is officially 14.7 percent. In the state's largest city, Detroit, real unemployment is about 50 percent. California, the country's most populous state, has an official unemployment rate of 12.3 percent. Long-term unemployment is becoming a common aspect of American life, with nearly 40 percent of the unemployed having been out of work for 27 weeks or longer. The collapse of housing prices beginning in 2007 has led to a surge of home foreclosures, reaching a record 1 million in the fourth quarter of 2009. Another 3 million Americans are expected to lose their homes this year.

28. The decade was one of the worst for jobs in US history. The *Washington Post* recently noted: "There has been zero net job creation since December 1999. No previous decade going back to the 1940s had job growth of less than 20 percent. Economic output rose at its slowest rate of any decade since the 1930s as well."

29. Incomes for American workers have declined, as has the net worth of American households. In real terms, average weekly wages fell by 1 percent in 2009, even as productivity soared. An article in the *Los Angeles Times*, comments: "All the triumphalist rhetoric emanating from Wall Street and the White House notwithstanding, this was—materially speaking—a disastrous decade for US families. For the first time since World War II, according to the Departments of Commerce and Labor, an average American's net worth actually fell—by a whopping 13 percent." This contrasts with a growth in net worth of 44 percent in the 1990s; 35 percent in the 1980s; 12 percent in the 1970s; 25 percent in the 1960s; and 26 percent in the 1950s.

The Obama administration

30. Barack Obama has proved an immense disappointment to the millions of workers who voted him into office. They realize that his campaign promises were empty and dishonest. In every element of its policy, the Obama administration has confirmed its allegiance to the super-rich. In its domestic policy, the administration's single-minded aim has been to rescue the financial aristocracy and place the full burden of the crisis on the working class. Barely a year after the onset of a financial meltdown that has had such devastating implications worldwide, the American financial aristocracy is doing better than ever, thanks to the trillions of dollars provided by Obama. The administration refused to place any serious constraints on executive compensation, and as a result some of the largest Wall Street firms handed out record pay and bonuses at the end of 2009. Obama is now leading a campaign to reduce consumption, but this applies only to the working class. The signal for a national campaign of wage-cutting was given early in the administration with the forced bankruptcy of General Motors and Chrysler, which was used as an opportunity to impose, with the support of the union leadership, a new round of draconian concessions on auto workers.

31. In decades past, workers looked to the federal government as an instrument for implementing social reforms and expanding democratic rights. In the 1930s, in response to the Great Depression and the growth of class tensions, President Roosevelt oversaw a series of New Deal reforms, including Social Security, the Tennessee Valley Authority and new bank regulations. Later, in the 1960s, the federal government oversaw civil rights legislation and the creation of Medicare and Medicaid. In both circumstances, the bourgeoisie was responding to the social crisis and an upsurge in class conflict by putting in place reform measures designed to save the capitalist system. The ultimate basis of these reforms was the economic strength of the United States. This now belongs to distant history. For four decades, the federal government has spearheaded a massive attack on the working class, beginning in the early 1970s, when the administration of Richard Nixon first attempted to impose wage controls.

32. The actions of the government call into question the very structure of the United States. Every instrument of the federal state—Congress, the judiciary and the executive branch—is under the stranglehold of a financial aristocracy. Washington is consuming ever-greater resources to finance the military and bank bailouts. The Obama administration has refused aid to the states, which are facing a new round of budget deficits this year. The financial and corporate elite's junior partners in state governments are responding by slashing spending on health care, education and other social services. The meager scale of funds made available as part of the "Race to the Top" education program, conditioned on the implementation of right-wing education policies, underscores the administration's determination to force states to eliminate budget deficits on the backs of the working class. Opposition will emerge in different states and regions to this attack. New forms of political organization, spearheaded by the development of a revolutionary socialist movement, will be required to unify workers throughout the country in a common struggle.

33. The principal "reform" sought by the Obama administration—the health care overhaul—demonstrates the determination of the financial elite to slash spending on social programs. The primary purpose of this essentially reactionary initiative is to cut government spending on entitlement programs, particularly Medicare. The response of the ruling class to an aging population and rising life expectancy, combined with the availability of new tests and procedures to treat illness, is to enforce a more class-based system of health care. Obama has focused on health care cuts as the key to addressing the growing fiscal deficit in the US, enormously increased by the bank bailouts. He declared in a speech in September, "our health care problem is our deficit problem. Nothing else comes close." In the wake of the Democratic defeat in Massachusetts, the Obama administration is moving even further to the right, quickly moving

to abandon even the pretense of reform and “universal coverage” contained in the health care overhaul.

34. The provision of decent health care, education and social services to the working class is simply incompatible with the conditions of mass exploitation that the financial aristocracy is determined to impose. In a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, C. Fred Bergsten, head of the Peterson Institute, a highly influential think tank run by Democratic Party strategists, lays out some of the plans of the ruling class. To slash federal deficits, Bergsten insists that the most important step is “containing long-term medical costs, an integral component of overall health-care reform, that could save several percentage points’ worth of GDP.” Other proposals supported by Bergsten include “comprehensive Social Security reform, including gradual increases in the retirement age and an alteration of the benefits formula to reflect increases in prices rather than in wages,” and “raising taxes on consumption, which would both generate needed revenue and provide new incentives for private saving...”

The resurgence of class struggle and the tasks of the Socialist Equality Party

35. The world capitalist system is entering a new period of revolutionary upheaval. The continuation of capitalism must lead not only to the impoverishment of the working class, but also to a global imperialist war that threatens the very future of human civilization. However, there is a way out of this crisis. The objective conditions for socialist revolution—both in terms of technology and personnel—are far more developed now than ever before. The social weight of the working class has increased enormously over the past century, while revolutionary advances in communication and technology have created the conditions for coordinated action on a world scale.

36. As the crisis intensifies, the sclerotic character of the political structures becomes more and more evident. The traditional political parties and institutions provide no means by which the working class can defend itself against the capitalist onslaught. Within the United States, the Democratic and Republican parties represent the same class interests. They jointly constitute a “bipartisan” system of political and social reaction. Notwithstanding the differences in political traditions and history, the same situation prevails internationally. The old political labels of “labor,” “socialist,” and “communist” that various parties still affix to themselves in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Australia no longer signify any form of genuine opposition to capitalism—or even politically significant differences with the main right-wing bourgeois parties.

37. As for the trade unions, the analysis that was made by the International Committee of the Fourth International more than 20 years ago—that if workers are to resist the corporate attack on jobs and wages, they must first of all break free of the shackles of these organizations—has proven absolutely correct. In the US, the AFL-CIO and the Change to Win Coalition are not “working class organizations,” but auxiliary organs of the state and secondary instruments in the exploitation of the working class, presided over by upper-middle-class executives for whom the “labor movement” is a business, a means of expanding their own personal wealth. Not one of these organizations has engaged in a significant social struggle in more than a generation. They see their primary responsibility as enforcing concessions, often in exchange for lucrative payoffs to the union executives—as in the UAW’s VEBA program.

38. The absence of organized forms for the expression of mass protest creates a deceptive appearance of political stability. But beneath the

surface, popular discontent grows steadily and seeks an outlet. The time is approaching when this opposition will erupt outside of the existing and discredited framework of official political life. It will develop in direct conflict with the Democratic and Republican parties, with the Obama administration, with the trade unions and with the capitalist system. The Socialist Equality Party will do everything in its power to encourage the formation of new and independent organizations of popular struggle, and to assist in the development of their program and tactics. The deepening social crisis will provoke innumerable struggles and forms of popular resistance. But the decisive issue remains the question of revolutionary leadership. The task of organizing an international socialist movement of the working class, of educating a new generation of workers and youth in the perspectives and history of Marxism, falls on the Socialist Equality Party and our sister parties in the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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