

Attend the WSWS/SEP Emergency Conference!

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The Socialist Equality Party and the *World Socialist Web Site* urge our readers and supporters to make plans today to attend the Emergency Conference on the Social Crisis & War, to be held April 17-18 in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

The conference has been called under conditions of a mounting crisis of the world capitalist system. This system has demonstrated its incapacity to provide for the most elementary needs of the people—jobs, housing, health care, education, even heat and light!

As the past two years have demonstrated, it is good only for further enriching the very parasites whose speculation and profiteering plunged the world into the deepest economic crisis since the Great Depression—and for fueling ever more bloody military conflagrations.

Anger, indignation and social protest are growing worldwide. The purpose of the April 17-18 conference is to elaborate a socialist program in response to the crisis and to bring together forces who will fight to provide revolutionary leadership in the coming mass struggles of the working class.

The financial meltdown of September 2008 was followed by the bailout of the banks and a global recession in which tens of millions of jobs worldwide were wiped out. A year and a half later, the crisis has entered a new stage.

The flooding of the financial system with cash has led to new speculative bubbles. The bailout has shifted the bad debts of the banks onto governments, and sovereign debt crises have hit Greece and other European countries as a consequence. Looming in the background is the massive debt of the United States.

In every country, the ruling elite is seeking to make the working class pay for the plundering of the state treasury by the banks.

Global tensions are intensifying, as rival capitalist

powers seek to resolve their own economic problems by attacking their competitors. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan drag on, with the latter entering a new and more bloody stage.

The Obama administration is escalating its threats against Iran and ratcheting up its protectionist measures against China. Europe is once again riven by tensions. Whatever the immediate intent of the various world governments, events are now unfolding that inexorably point in the direction of world war.

The new stage of the crisis is bound up with an intensification of the class struggle. Already, mass strikes have rocked Greece and the rest of Europe in response to demands for austerity. So far, these struggles have been isolated by the trade unions and reformist political organizations. However, opposition will continue to grow and seek to break free of the treacherous labor bureaucracies.

Nearly two years since the financial crash, the US remains mired in the worst recession since the 1930s. Official unemployment stands at nearly 10 percent, while real unemployment is much higher. The destruction of jobs continues. A report released Wednesday found that private companies eliminated another 23,000 jobs in March.

Millions have lost their homes. States and localities are responding to budget deficits by shutting down schools and other basic services.

The handout of trillions to the banks has been followed by calls for cost-cutting and belt-tightening. Having pushed through a health care overhaul aimed at reducing costs for corporations and the government, Obama has made clear that he is willing to confront the “tough problems” left unaddressed by his predecessors, including Social Security spending.

After more than one year of the Obama

administration, the hopes that his election would bring real change are being disabused as he carries out a right-wing policy on every front. The Obama administration has exposed once more the political bankruptcy of all those groups that promoted, and continue to promote, illusions in the Democratic Party.

If anything, the experiences of the past year have only intensified their apologetics for Obama—from the slavish support given the administration by the *Nation* magazine, to the impotent and childish calls for pressure from middle-class organizations such as the International Socialist Organization and the ANSWER coalition.

The trade unions—corporatist organizations controlled by executives entirely hostile to the interests of the working class—have worked systematically to impose brutal concessions on their own members, as demanded by the corporations and the state.

In one way or another, all of these organizations begin and end with the central premise that there can be no political alternative to the Democratic Party and the capitalist system. Whether through ignorance, wishful thinking or conscious deception, they serve to derail popular opposition and to drive it into a dead-end.

An entirely different perspective is needed, one that begins with the independent interests of the American and international working class. The SEP and the International Committee of the Fourth International encourage the growth of working class opposition. In the US, the SEP has initiated campaigns such as the Citizens Inquiry into the Dexter Avenue Fire to begin a fight back.

What is required above all is the development of a revolutionary leadership, one that proceeds from an insight into the laws of the capitalist crisis and the lessons of history, and has as its practical aim the independent political mobilization of the working class, on a world stage, for the overthrow of the capitalist system.

This leadership will not develop without a struggle. It must be built by individuals who are looking for a means to oppose the attacks on working people and see the need for a socialist alternative to the profit system. We urge all our readers and supporters to attend the April conference and make the decision to join and help

build the Socialist Equality Party.

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To register for the SEP Emergency Conference on the Social Crisis & War, or for more information, click here.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact