

The Fight for Socialism Today conference held in Los Angeles

Tom Carter
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On Saturday, April 16, the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), International Students for Social Equality (ISSE), and *World Socialist Web Site* held at California State University in Los Angeles the second of three national conferences on “The Fight for Socialism Today.” The first conference was held over the weekend of April 9-10 in Ann Arbor, Michigan; the third conference will be held in New York City on April 30.

The “Fight for Socialism Today” conferences were called to develop a program and perspective for the working class to fight back against budget cuts and imperialist war.

About 75 delegates attended the conference from a broad geographical region in the West Coast, including delegates from California, Nevada, Arizona, Washington, and Oregon. Two delegates traveled all the way from South Africa to attend. Workers and students of diverse ages and backgrounds rose to speak on the many issues that were raised at the conference.

As at the Ann Arbor conference, five resolutions were presented in the Los Angeles conference. After discussion and debate, each resolution was passed. The resolutions were entitled, “The attack on the working class and the fight for socialism,” “For the international unity of the working class!,” “No to imperialist war in Libya! Withdraw all troops from Iraq and Afghanistan!,” “Defend democratic rights!,” and “Socialism is the way forward for young people.”

Marc Wells, a leading member of the SEP in California, chaired the conference. SEP National Secretary Joseph Kishore, Assistant National Secretary Lawrence Porter, and SEP (Australia) National Organizer James Cogan joined Wells on the panel.

Kishore delivered the opening report of the

conference. In his remarks, he spoke about the war being carried out against the working class. He reviewed the massive cuts to education, health care, and social programs being prepared by Republicans and the Obama administration, as well as the Brown administration in California. These cuts, he said, were driving conditions of life for millions of people back decades. In his report, Kishore also documented the scale of the staggering individual fortunes that have been accumulated by a tiny section of the population, which far exceed the budget deficits of all 50 states.

The conference included an intense and wide-ranging discussion in which a number major political issues were raised and clarified. In particular, conference delegates debated the role of the official trade unions in enforcing the attack on workers. The trade unions in California are working closely with the Democratic Brown administration in enforcing concessions and cutting social programs.

In support of the main resolution, which included a call for a break with the unions and the formation of independent organizations of working class struggle, Larry Porter reviewed the complex history of the transformation of unions into appendages of management. The conference greeted Porter's contribution with loud applause.

James Cogan, National Organizer of the Socialist Equality Party in Australia, brought international greetings to the conference and introduced the resolution, “No to imperialist war in Libya! Withdraw all troops from Iraq and Afghanistan!” Cogan's report touched off a discussion of the nature of the US military.

In concluding the conference, Kishore stressed that the events of the first few months 2011, from the social

eruptions in Egypt and the Middle East, to the mass demonstrations in Madison, make clear that workers in the US and internationally are beginning to fight back. The key question, he said, is the question of revolutionary leadership, which only the Socialist Equality Party can provide. He urged all those in attendance to join the SEP and the ISSE.

The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke with a number of delegates afterwards. David, a student at California State University LA, commented, “I started reading articles on the WSWs, and then I heard about the Egyptian meetings, which I attended. Another student here and I are starting an ISSE chapter. I thought the presentation on the situation in Libya was important; it is just another imperialist war. In fact all the countries invading are imperialist.”

“People need to know and be more aware,” he continued. “The WSWs will really build the movement to end capitalism. It is an international web site, and the party is also, which is fundamental to the socialist movement.”

Steven, who works for a landscaping company in Los Angeles, said, “I am here to hear new ideas. I read the web site a lot, and I like what I read. The conference helped solidify my agreement with the policies. The discussion on the history of the unions helped me to understand more of their role.”

“It’s ridiculous to see how much money is out there, how much they profit while they are cutting schools.”

The WSWs urges its readers in the US to make plans to attend the remaining conference in New York (April 30). For more information and to register, click here.



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