

The Fight for Socialism Today: Conference resolutions

Defend democratic rights!

7 May 2011

The Socialist Equality Party, World Socialist Web Site, and International Students for Social Equality last month held three regional conferences on “The Fight for Socialism Today.” The conferences were held in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on April 9-10; in Los Angeles, California, on April 16; and in New York City on April 30.

Each of these conferences discussed and adopted a series of resolutions on the basic political questions facing the working class in the US and internationally. This is the fourth resolution adopted at the conferences, “Defend democratic rights!” See also, “For the international unity of the working class,” “The attack on the working class and the fight for socialism,” “No to imperialist war in Libya! Withdraw all troops from Iraq and Afghanistan!” and “Socialism is the way forward for young people!”

We encourage all readers who agree with these resolutions to make the decision to join the Socialist Equality Party or its student organization, the International Students for Social Equality.

Resolution 4: Defend democratic rights!

The Obama administration has continued and intensified the onslaught on democratic rights initiated under George W. Bush under the pretext of a “war on terror.”

* Obama has become the first American president to openly assert his “right” to order the assassination of an American citizen. He has repudiated his pledge to close the Guantanamo Bay prison camp, reiterated the supposed power of the president to declare anyone an “enemy combatant” to be held indefinitely without charge, and has restarted the kangaroo court military commissions.

* The administration has worked deliberately to prevent the prosecution of any Bush administration officials for employing lies to invade Iraq and for engaging in torture. The US continues the practice of rendition in order to kidnap alleged terrorists and transfer them to other countries, where they are routinely tortured.

* Obama has also used the claim of “state secrets” to block victims of rendition, torture and domestic spying from going to court for redress.

* The administration has intensified the attack on immigrants, with the arrest of a record 400,000 undocumented workers in 2010 alone.

One of the most flagrant attacks on democratic rights is the Obama administration’s response to the exposure of US war crimes and diplomatic conspiracies by WikiLeaks. The US government has targeted WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange with an international smear campaign and legal efforts to have him extradited to the United States, where he could be tried for espionage or detained at Guantánamo Bay indefinitely.

The brutal treatment of the alleged source of the WikiLeaks revelations, Army Private Bradley Manning, is no less outrageous. He has been imprisoned in solitary confinement, under conditions of forced nudity and other deprivations that are tantamount to torture, and faces charges that could bring the death penalty. If he was involved in leaking documents, it was because Manning refused to condone and cover up American war crimes in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world. For that he deserves public gratitude and honor, not humiliation and abuse.

This conference demands the immediate release of Private Bradley Manning, the dropping of all charges against him, and a halt to all investigations and harassment of WikiLeaks and its supporters and

contributors, particularly Julian Assange.

Against the systematic attempts by the government, facilitated by the mass media, to keep secret its own record of crimes, the conference calls for freedom of information, including open diplomacy, as the only basis for democratic decision-making.

We demand the closing down of Guantánamo Bay and all US secret prisons and torture centers and the prosecution of all those responsible for instigating and continuing these human rights abuses.

We call for the repeal of the Patriot Act and all other police-state measures enacted as part of the “war on terror.”

We demand the abolition of the CIA, the FBI, the NSA and all of the repressive institutions of the capitalist state.

We support residency and citizenship rights for all undocumented workers, the release of all immigrants now held in detention centers, and the halting of all procedures for deportation or forced repatriation.

The attack on democratic rights pursued by both big business parties is inseparable from the character of American society—in particular, the extreme growth of social inequality. The target of the repressive measures implemented by the government is the emergence of mass opposition to the policies of the American ruling class at home and abroad. This is why the defense of democratic rights requires the mobilization of the working class on an independent basis and the struggle for socialism.



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