

Vote Socialist Equality in 2012!

Statement by Jerry White, SEP candidate for US president

Jerry White
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The Socialist Equality Party in the United States will run candidates in the 2012 elections—Jerry White for president and Phyllis Scherrer for vice president. White, 52, is a writer for the World Socialist Web Site and was the SEP's presidential candidate in 2008. Scherrer, 48, is a school teacher in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area. This statement by White outlines the basis of the SEP campaign. Visit the SEP election site to become involved today.

I am proud to be the presidential candidate of the Socialist Equality Party. Together with my running mate, Phyllis Scherrer, I will campaign for the interests of the working class on the basis of a socialist program in this critical election year.

Within the United States and throughout the world, working people are facing the greatest economic, social and political crisis since the dark days of the Great Depression and World War II in the 1930s and 1940s.

The last great breakdown of the capitalist system led to suffering, death and destruction on a horrifying scale. Mass unemployment, poverty, fascism and war brought mankind to the very brink of ruin. When the crisis finally came to an end, the ruling class—terrified by the specter of working-class militancy and revolutionary struggles all over the world—claimed that lessons had been learned, capitalism would be reformed, and the nightmare of the past would never be repeated.

But once again the capitalist system is in desperate crisis. In the United States, millions are out of work and have lost their homes. Tens of millions have had their wages cut and their access to essential social services reduced. Young people are being deprived of the right to a decent education as schools are shut and teachers laid off, and those who make it to college are saddled with massive debts and no jobs. Millions of older workers have lost their pensions and been forced to work into their seventies and even into their eighties because their savings were wiped out. Thousands of small and medium-sized businesses are being forced to close their doors because the large banks refuse to lend.

Against the backdrop of economic crisis, the ruling elite in the United States, greedy for profits and power, grows ever more reckless in its use of military power. After more than a decade that has seen one war after another, the stage is being set for a catastrophic Third World War.

This descent into disaster must be stopped.

The program of the Socialist Equality Party provides the working class with the way forward. Phyllis Scherrer and I are basing our campaign on certain core principles.

First, we insist that the key to the future lies in the international unity of the working class. The interests of the working class cannot be defended on the basis of a national program. In every country, working people are oppressed by transnational corporations that scour the globe for profits. The financial and industrial corporate conglomerates demand the lowering of wages and the elimination of social benefits essential for a decent standard of living. In Europe, the international banks are transforming Greece into a third world country, reducing living standards by as much as 50 percent.

Regardless of nationality, ethnic background, religion or language, workers and youth throughout the world have the same interests. Therefore, the working class requires an international strategy. Workers in the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America are the allies of US workers in the global struggle against capitalism.

Second, we fight for social equality, which is the foundation of socialism and a humane society. After stagnating for nearly four decades, the living standards of the working class have plunged since the Wall Street crash of 2008. But a small segment of society, the richest five percent, has seen its wealth skyrocket. In a mass society, which requires the rational allocation of financial resources to assure decent living standards for billions of people, there is no justification for squandering hundreds of billions of dollars annually on the salaries and bonuses of the super-rich.

The SEP insists that such essential needs as decent-paying jobs, quality education, affordable housing, universal health

care, a dignified retirement and access to culture are not privileges. They are inalienable social rights, the modern-day prerequisites of “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” The workers should not plead for these rights, they must fight for them.

Capitalism has demonstrated that it cannot provide the basic necessities of modern life. It has failed and must be replaced with a more advanced economic system—socialism. The needs of the working class must come before corporate profits.

Third, the SEP opposes imperialist militarism and the assault on democratic rights, which is being led by the Obama administration. After wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya, the White House is now beating the drums for a military intervention against Syria and Iran, which carries with it the danger of war with Russia and China. The banks and corporations will stop at nothing to expand their power and profits. Under the false pretext of fighting a “war on terror” the world has been increasingly terrorized. At home, fundamental constitutional protections such as habeas corpus have been trampled on.

Fourth, the SEP opposes the political subordination of the working class to the Democrats and Republicans, which are bought-and-paid-for instruments of big business. The claim that the Democrats are some sort of “people’s party” is utterly false. The differences between the Democrats and Republicans, for all the insults the two parties hurl against each other, are negligible.

In 2008, millions voted for Obama in the hope of putting an end to the militarist and pro-corporate policies of Bush and the Republicans. President Obama has continued and even escalated these right-wing policies: bailing out the banks; attacking auto workers, teachers and other sections of the working class; joining the Republicans in cutting social programs and declaring the “right” to wage war anywhere in the world where US imperialist interests are threatened. The Obama years have underscored the fact that no change is possible through the corporate-controlled two-party system.

The SEP campaign will provide a voice to all those who are ignored by this political system. Ours will not be a conventional campaign, but one aimed at uniting the struggles of the working class and politically organizing them to carry out the revolutionary transformation of society. Private ownership of the banks, major industries and critical resources must be replaced with public ownership. The anarchy of the market must be supplanted by rational economic planning geared to the needs of the people and under their democratic control.

There are some who say this is unrealistic. But what can be more unrealistic than maintaining a system that perpetuates

the wealth of the few at the expense of the many? Is it more realistic to tell workers that they must accept a 50 percent wage cut to keep their jobs, or to tell the elderly that they must go without medical care, or to tell the young that they must go without an education?

The capitalist system is based on inequality. It places profit and private wealth over all social interests.

This country was founded on the principle that “All men are created equal.” It was renewed in a Civil War 150 years ago, which pledged that “government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.” But what do we have today? A corporate-controlled plutocracy of multimillionaires and billionaires: a government of the rich, by the rich and for the rich!

All over the country, workers are beginning to recognize the need for a fundamental change. They are waking up to the realization that the old political parties and trade unions have nothing to offer them. Workers have long been told by the capitalist politicians and the corporate-controlled media to be frightened of socialism. But to the extent that workers come to understand what socialism really means, they will realize it is the only way to fight for a future.

A new socialist movement of the working class must be built. If you agree with our program, we ask you not only to support our campaign, but to get involved. This campaign is your fight. Form an SEP 2012 election committee in your workplace, school or neighborhood to distribute our election material and build support for the campaign. Donate to our Election Fund.

In the coming weeks and months, Phyllis Scherrer and I will seek to get on the ballot in as many states as possible. But in many states, due to undemocratic laws that effectively bar ballot access for those who don’t have access to tens of millions of dollars, we will organize a write-in campaign. Help place us on the ballot or carry out the most effective possible write-in campaign in your state.

The year 2011 saw the emergence of powerful social movements from Egypt to Wisconsin, including worldwide protests against Wall Street. This was only the beginning. Through our campaign, the SEP will fight to unify the social struggles of the working class in the US and internationally and provide a political program to fight for equality, peace and socialism.



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