

SEP presidential candidate Jerry White campaigns in Detroit

Our reporters
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SEP presidential candidate Jerry White spoke to shoppers outside Detroit's Eastern Market on Saturday. White explained to passersby that he and his running mate Phyllis Scherrer have entered the election to oppose the Democrats and Republicans, and to provide an independent and socialist political alternative to the two capitalist parties.

The city of Detroit has been decimated by decades of deindustrialization, accompanied by the destruction of the living conditions for the vast majority of its residents. Currently, Democrats and Republicans, along with the trade unions, are colluding in a drive to implement devastating budget cuts. An agreement between the state government and the local city council is due to be announced next week.

White received a warm and interested response from many of the working people shopping for reasonably priced produce and meat at one of the largest farmers markets in North America. He and a team of supporters distributed campaign statements from the candidate on the crisis in Detroit and the killing of Trayvon Martin.

The campaign team discussed many of the basic political questions facing the working class, including the character of the Obama administration and the Democratic Party, the reactionary and pernicious nature of the trade unions, and the role of identity politics.

Eula, a retired Dodge Main worker, who became a Detroit and Hamtramck public school teacher after the plant closed, responded to White's remarks about the war on the working class. "Obama's election has not changed a thing. They want to push us back to making \$5 an hour. It seems they have us where they want us because people are desperate."

White reminded Eula that the plants were closed with the cooperation of the UAW leadership. "I was at Dodge Main when they closed it," Eula replied. "Guess what? That Doug Fraser [former UAW president] was something. He just gave our jobs and medical care away, while he worked to help the corporation out."

Two young women from the Ann Arbor area engaged White in a discussion about the role of the banks. One of them, whose husband is an investment banker, was nevertheless alarmed by the concentration of wealth. Referring to how some banking institutions operate she said, "They're changing the way they do business. Goldman Sachs is more interested in profits than it is in its clients. When you see the greed in that way, it's disturbing."

Cynthia, a Ford worker wanted to know why she hadn't heard about the campaign. White explained that the election process and media are controlled by the rich. "It's a shame! You have a couple of people up there, and the rest of us down here."

Cynthia commented on the number of jobs being exported to India, which prompted an interesting discussion about the global nature of capitalism, and how the ruling elite pits one section of workers against another. "I'll support you," Cynthia responded, giving a donation and buying the SEP's program.

A working class couple, who recently decided to open a small business, wanted to know if workers would know how to run a bank if it were under their control. White responded by explaining that it is a question of whom the banks serve. "Obama didn't come to the American people and ask if they wanted the banks to be bailed out."

When the discussion shifted to Obama's policies, the issue of the attack on public education and the spread of charter schools came up. The couple had an experience with the charter schools, which can select or reject the students they choose to educate. "We've experienced that." They then revealed that one of their children is learning disabled. "She was enrolled in a charter school, but because of some behavior problems, that were the result of her disability, they said she has to go because they weren't equipped to deal with her."

White explained that the attack on public education, the closings of schools, libraries and recreation centers constitute social crimes against the working class.



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