

Full rights for immigrant workers!

Statement by Jerry White, SEP candidate for US president

Jerry White
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As the Socialist Equality Party's candidate for president of the United States, I condemn last week's round-up and arrest of over 3,000 immigrants in the largest Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) sweep to date.

This attack is only the latest in a long series of provocations carried out by the Obama administration against immigrant workers. The government's anti-immigrant actions have included the militarization of the US-Mexico border, a record number of deportations, and federal raids against hundreds of businesses suspected of employing undocumented workers.

Internationalism is at the center of the SEP campaign. We insist that that every worker must have the right to live wherever he or she chooses with full rights and without discrimination. They must also enjoy the fundamental right to good-paying jobs, health care, education and housing for themselves and their families.

The crackdown on immigrant workers is part of a deepening attack on the democratic and social rights of the working class as a whole. The Obama administration is spearheading a bipartisan drive to lower wages and attack social services, including education and health care, upon which millions of people depend.

The aim of the ICE raids is to maintain a constant atmosphere of fear and repression. The threat of deportations and the breaking up of families is used to prevent immigrant workers from resisting poverty wages and brutal exploitation.

In 2006, millions of people took part in the largest protests for immigrant rights in the history of the US. There was widespread popular outrage over planned legislation that would have militarized the US-Mexico

border and criminalized anyone who sheltered undocumented immigrants.

These protests involved tens of thousands of undocumented workers who courageously stood up in the face of threats by their employers and the government—at that time, the Bush administration.

The demonstrations, however, were diverted behind the political establishment. Pro-Democratic Party groups and promoters of Hispanic identity politics argued that the interests of immigrant workers could be advanced through the election of Democrats and, in 2008, Barack Obama.

Now, many of the provisions of the bill have been passed at the federal level. Other portions of it have been rolled into the draconian immigration laws passed in 2010 in Arizona as well as other states. As the incessant government raids make clear, the administration's criticisms of the Arizona law have nothing to do with the defense of immigrant rights.

Millions of immigrant workers voted for Obama in 2008, hoping that the election of the country's first minority president would bring about an improvement in the conditions. But since his election, Obama has pursued anti-immigrant policies that are just as vindictive and right-wing as those of the Republicans.

Since 2009, the annual average number of deportations has approached 400,000, according to the Department of Homeland Security. This is double the annual average during President George W. Bush's first term, and 30 percent higher than the average when he left office.

Under conditions of a worsening global economic crisis, the ruling political parties and trade unions in every country are scapegoating immigrants and blaming them for taking away jobs and vital services. But it is not immigrant workers who created the crisis,

but capitalism and the ruling class!

In opposition to the attempts by all sections of the political establishment to divide workers across national boundaries, and to turn immigrant workers into pariahs, the Socialist Equality Party calls for the closest unity of all working people to fight for their common interests.

We call on native-born workers in the United States to unify their struggles with those of immigrant workers, with the recognition that any attack on immigrant workers in the United States is an attack on the entire working class. The police-state measures being devised to round up immigrant workers will be turned against the population as a whole.

Workers of all nationalities and ethnicities have the same interests and are exploited by the same corporations—in Greece, Egypt, China, Latin America and the United States. The working class can wage a successful struggle only if it is organized on an international basis to fight the corporations, which are free to set up shop in any country they choose.

We reject the claim that there is not enough work to go around, and that immigrant workers are “stealing” the jobs of native-born workers. It is a direct result of capitalism that workers are forced into a race to the bottom for low-paying jobs. The Socialist Equality Party calls for a multi-trillion-dollar public works program that will create jobs for anyone who wants to work, and provide healthcare, housing, and education for all.

We call for an immediate demilitarization of the border, an end to all raids and persecution against immigrants, and full citizenship rights for immigrants living in the US.

Only a socialist program is capable of ending the second-class status of immigrant workers and allow for the protection of the fundamental right to live and work in any country. Socialism means the nationalization and expropriation of the banks and corporations that profit from the impoverishment of working people. These organizations should be run democratically, with the aim of providing for the social needs of all people.

My running mate Phyllis Scherrer and I are participating in this election as part of the Socialist Equality Party’s campaign to build a mass, international movement of the working class to take political power and reorganize society in its interests.

We urge everyone who supports this program to join us in this struggle, and support our campaign.

For more information on the SEP campaign and to get involved, visit socialequality.com



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