

Detroit workers and youth speak on the political issues in the US elections

A WSWS reporting team
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After the meeting Saturday in Detroit, reporters from the *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to many of those in attendance. (See “Socialist Equality Party holds election meeting on “The crisis in Detroit and the 2012 elections”)

Wardell Montgomery, Jr is a retired Housing & Urban Development worker. “Overall I like what I heard,” he said. “I think Jerry White’s report succinctly covered the dilemma we’re in and how the two parties are both in cahoots against the working class. I sort of knew that, but it became crystal clear with his analysis and his charts.

“It was a good presentation because it made it more clear who the ruling class is. That’s why I asked a question about the 1 percent and the 0.1 percent. When you find out it is just 30,000 people that control some \$25 trillion and get that numerical perspective, you get a clearer understanding.

“Basically I have been a Democrat. In fact, I am still a registered Democrat, but I am actually more of a ‘progressive’. As I’ve got older, I have been more and more aware of the systemic problems of America. I have become less enamored of Obama.

“When he was elected, I tried to be hopeful about him, his brilliant intellect and charisma and how people took to him. I was impressed. But I began to see the people who were backing him—the Timothy Geithners and Ben Bernanke—and I was disappointed. The people close to me suggested I needed to give him a chance, that there were reasons he couldn’t come out too strongly, basically to give him a pass. But in the end, it was a con game. At this point, I am not a socialist, but I am leaning that way.”

Viveca Watson, Charlene Broadus and Alison Wood-Folk attended the meeting because of their anger about the cuts to the Detroit Department of Transportation.

Charlene said she would be interested in setting up an election committee of DDOT riders. “I live in Garden City, and they are trying to do these cuts there too. People who are working overtime often can’t get back home at night because the buses stop now.”

Alison agreed. “Some employers won’t let you stay late or come in early. I had a job offer that I couldn’t accept because it was 3pm to 11pm and the Evergreen bus stops at 11pm. This is unfair to the working class.”

Charlene continued, “People are sleeping overnight at their jobs, in the lunchrooms and such, when they can’t get back home. The jobs that are available are [located] way out. SEMTA [Southeast Michigan Transit Authority, which covers the suburbs of Detroit] has already been cut and only comes once an hour, and only connects to DDOT at certain stops.”

“The Democrats are just in it for themselves, not the workers,” added Alison. “These cuts help the higher class, the ones that are already rich.”

Charlene added, “We are definitely going for our rights here. I just raised a question in the meeting [about whether the SEP candidate would change if elected] because I don’t want Jerry being bought like all the others have been. However, I have come to find out that Obama was always going for JP Morgan and the banks. I want to apologize because I am so sorry I voted for him.”

Priyanka is a senior at WSU. She said, “I enjoy these meetings. It is a fresh new look for me. Before, I was frustrated and thought there was no meaning in society. I no longer think the Democratic Party is the best of the

two parties, and working in our interests. The SEP and ISSE [International Students for Social Equality] represent workers' rights more exclusively. We do not just have to take it.

“I am worried about student debt when I get out of college. Then there is the problem of if there will be jobs. It is an uneasy future.”

Zac, an IT worker and ISSE member, stressed, “I think it’s really important for the working class to have political issues clarified.” Referring to Jerry White’s presentation, Zac commented, “You don’t get a presentation like this listening to the news or media. This meeting was a rare thing. Words were not minced, and there were no filters. It’s about telling the truth to the working class, explaining the true nature of the economic crisis.

“Things are always presented by the media from the standpoint that there is not enough money. Jerry White demonstrated with clarity and a detailed examination that there is money, but it is being hoarded by the ruling class while more and more is being taken from from workers. Look at Detroit. They maintain and increase their profit by extracting more and more value from the workers.

“I voted for Obama in 2008 because I thought he would end the wars. When the wars didn’t end, but expanded, I had to examine who Obama really represents. Outside of basing ourselves on the class struggle, we cannot make fundamental changes.”

Lewis Morgan had signed up for the Committee Against Utility Shutoffs last year and was attending his first political meeting. A lifelong Detroit, he lost his job during the first round of budget cuts at the Detroit Department of Education. He has been unemployed and homeless for more than two years.

“What’s the use of voting for president and mayor when they don’t do anything for us. I was just about ready to give up altogether,” he said, after being denied both Social Security payments and housing assistance from the federal HUD program.

“I have been struggling for years,” Lewis added. “What I want to know is how much longer is this going to continue. I came today to try to get an understanding

that might be able to help me in the long run. I wanted to see what it is all about.”

“It angers me every time I hear [President Obama] say he has created thousands of new jobs,” he declared. “But *where*? If that is true, then I should have a job. What is the use of voting for Obama, or whoever, if I cannot get anything?”

“The best thing I liked about this meeting is that people can speak their opinion and try to figure things out.” He emphasized his disaffection with the entire political set-up, “What is the use of having a governor or a president if they have their own agenda which does nothing for us?”



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