

SEP/ISSE public meeting:

Defend Quebec's striking students! Education should be a social right!

16 May 2012

On Saturday, May 19, the International Students for Social Equality (Queen's University chapter) and the Socialist Equality Party will hold a public meeting in Kingston, Ontario as part of the fight to mobilize the working class in defence of Quebec's striking students. *For the time and place of the meeting, please scroll to the bottom.*

For fourteen weeks, tens of thousands of university and CEGEP (pre-university and technical college) students have been boycotting classes and staging demonstrations to oppose the provincial Liberal government's plan to raise university tuition fees by more than 80 percent over the next seven years.

The Charest government, like its counterparts across Canada, is determined to implement the austerity measures demanded by the ruling capitalist elite regardless of popular opposition. To this end, they have slandered the student strikers as "violent", sought court injunctions to force a return to classes, and mobilized the police to violently suppress student demonstrations.

In this effort, the Liberals have relied on the trade unions to isolate the students' struggle and prevent it becoming a catalyst for a working class counter-offensive in Quebec and across Canada.

Last week students overwhelmingly rejected a sell-out agreement negotiated by the presidents of Quebec's principal union federations and leaders of the province-wide student associations. Under that agreement the proposed tuition hike would have been implemented in full. Moreover, student and union leaders were to be enlisted alongside representatives of the state and big business in a tri-partite committee tasked with finding "efficiencies" in university budgets, i.e., with imposing budget cuts.

The Quebec government and the entire Canadian elite

have been so implacable in their opposition to the Quebec student strike because they recognize that the students' opposition to the tuition fee hikes and their insistence that education should be a social right constitute an implicit challenge to their drive to make working people pay for the global capitalist crisis.

This challenge must be made explicit: students must reject the single-issue protest politics put forward by the student associations and turn to the working class, in order to transform their struggle against the tuition fee hikes into a mass movement against all cuts to public services and in defense of all jobs.

The ISSE and SEP urge one and all to attend Saturday's meeting and hear an on-the-spot report from Eric Marquis on the developments in Quebec and their implications for workers and young people across Canada.

Saturday, May 19, at 2PM
The Artel, 205 Sydenham St.
Kingston, Ontario



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact