

SEP campaigns in California

A WSWS reporting team
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In both Northern and Southern California, campaigners for the Socialist Equality Party spoke to workers and students about budget cuts in the state and Jerry White's presidential campaign.

Northern California

In Sacramento, the SEP is hosting an election meeting on June 26, "The Crisis in California and the 2012 Elections." SEP supporters distributed several hundred leaflets at Cosumnes River College (CRC) and at Walmart, and talked with workers and youth about the impact of Democratic Governor Jerry Brown's planned budget cuts.

Brown's budget proposal will slash billions of dollars from California's already cash-strapped social services. The Democratic Party dominates the state government, which has slashed tens of billions in recent years to programs that provide much-needed services to California's working population.

Dadrian, a Human Services major at CRC, expressed enthusiasm about the White/Scherrer presidential ticket. "I think it's great that [your party] is trying to fight for the people, for the working class, and not just the rich..."

Dadrian also voiced his dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party. "The [Democrats] made a lot of promises and made it seem like they were going to help people, to change how the country and government is run, but they pretty much just continued the trend that has been going on. Our economic status is the same and getting worse. We're still in wars, more wars, and we're still doing the same thing we've been doing. There hasn't been much change and things are just going downhill."

Dadrian agreed on the need to build a party of the working class: "I think a party of the working class would be the most effective thing. We keep having elections with Democrats and Republicans, and it's the same thing over and over. We keep getting the same results, and we have to change that."

SEP campaigners also spoke with Jason Newman, the Chair of the History Department at CRC.

"They've raised tuition to \$45 [per credit hour] for the summer semester," said Professor Newman. "The Democrats' cuts are obviously falling on the most disadvantaged parts of society... I fundamentally believe that the Democrats and Republicans are two sides of the same coin."

Sanjai, a recent arrival to California, voiced his opposition to education cuts. "Education is really important, it's a foundation for all of us. It's the future, so I don't think it's the best thing to cut back on... Personally I love music, and I play guitar, and if they were to cut back more on music, who knows? There are a lot of things that education inspires people do to."

The SEP encourages all students and youth to attend the public meeting at 6:00 pm, June 26th, at Valley Hi-North Laguna Library, at 7400 Imagination Pkwy, Sacramento.

Southern California

Supporters of the SEP also distributed hundreds of leaflets in Spanish and English in Huntington Park, a working class neighborhood of Los Angeles. Workers were very willing to discuss the SEP election program.

Johnny Aguilar, a young student having trouble completing his degree due to course cuts, talked to the SEP campaigners about education. "The cost of college

is cutting off access to education and keeping us from having a better future.”

On the economic crisis, he blamed the speculators on Wall Street for allowing it to happen. “People are greedy, and that led to the crash. The blame is on multiple levels. The people in charge of the finances bet on the housing market, and they knew this crash was going to happen. They are responsible.”

Nevertheless, Johnny said he supported the current administration. “Obama is doing a good job with what he has. It’s not his fault. He would help if he could. I’m going to vote for him this year. He’s our best chance.”

SEP supporters explained that Obama no less than Bush governs on behalf of the financial elite and that he is continuing and even expanding the imperialist war agenda of his predecessor. Further, he is presiding over the destruction of living standards and the lowering of job standards in America.

Johnny also mentioned he has friends who are undocumented, good students and highly intelligent—“some of them are smarter than me,” he said. However, they can’t get into universities because of money problems and their immigration status. He considers that unfair.

Javier Gonzales is from Mexico and is naturalized. He is a union worker and has been unemployed for one year. He is a cement finisher.

Asked what he thought of Obama, Javier said, “He’s not doing well. The first thing he did wrong was to give all the money to the banks and not the people. He should help small businesses and poor people. Not the big people.”

When asked if he was going to vote in the election, he responded, “No, I’m not going to vote because I’m disappointed in the government.”

The campaigners explained the SEP program and talked about the SEP candidates and the party’s program in the election. Javier agreed that resources should be democratically managed by the working people and not just the rich. He had never heard of socialism but said he is looking for something different—“not just the Democrats and Republicans.”

SEP campaigners also spoke with Gloria, who is from Mexico, while she was waiting for the bus. On Obama she said, “He never does what he says. The students

study and study, and there’s no jobs!” Asked what she thought of the administration’s immigration policy, specifically Obama’s proposal to offer a guest worker program for younger immigrants, Gloria said, “He’s been doing more deportations than all the previous presidents. I think his new plan may help, but it’s a lie just to get votes.”



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