

SEP meeting on Quebec student strike: Socialism and the defence of public education

6 June 2012

The Socialist Equality Party is holding a public meeting in Montreal on Thursday, June 21 as part of its fight to mobilize the working class in defence of Quebec's striking students and to make the student strike the catalyst for a cross-Canada working class offensive against all job, wage and social spending cuts. (For meeting details, please scroll to the bottom.)

The meeting will hear a report from a leader of the SEP (Canada) explaining why the students' just demand for education to be a social right has brought them into headlong conflict not only with the provincial Liberal government, but with the entire Canadian capitalist elite, its courts and police.

US SEP Presidential candidate Jerry White will also address the meeting.

White has given his full support to the Quebec students in their struggle against the Liberals' plans to raise university tuition fees by 82 percent and has sought to draw the attention of US workers to the chilling precedent established by Bill 78—legislation that criminalizes the student strike and places sweeping restrictions on the right to demonstrate.

White's decision to speak at the June 21 meeting and gain firsthand experience of the struggle in Quebec is an expression of the socialist and internationalist perspective for which he fights. The attack on education, public health care, social services, jobs and living standards is a worldwide phenomenon. Whether it be in Europe, the U.S., or Canada, big business and its political representatives are determined to place the full burden of the global capitalist crisis on workers and young people.

However, the Quebec student associations, trade unions and ostensible "left" parties have separated the fight against the provincial Liberal government's tuition fee increases from a broader struggle against big business' austerity agenda and have confined the

movement within the borders of Quebec.

During the last round of negotiations, the student associations dropped their demand for the repeal of Bill 78 and, having accepted the government's fiscal framework, agreed to the lion's share of the government's tuition fee increases. The unions, meanwhile, have blocked worker action in support of the students and announced that they will enforce Bill 78 and instruct teachers and other university and CEGEP personnel to assist the government in breaking the student strike.

Only the mobilization of the working class, the sole force with the power to fundamentally transform the socio-economic order, can prevent the students' courageous struggle from being smothered.

We urge all students, teachers and workers who want to fight for education to be free and accessible to all, to defend democratic rights, and oppose the austerity measures of the Quebec Liberal and federal Conservative governments, to attend the June 21 meeting. Questions and discussion will follow the speakers' reports.

Montreal

21 June at 7:30 PM

Centre St.-Pierre, Room 203

1212 Panet

(Near the Beaudry Metro station on the green Line)



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact