

Resolutions of the SEP Congress

Build the International Youth and Students for Social Equality

3 September 2012

Published here is the fourth and final resolution adopted unanimously by the Second National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (US), held July 8-12, 2012. See also: "Socialist Equality Party (US) holds National Congress," "Resolution 1: Perspectives of the Socialist Equality Party," "Resolution 2: On the 2012 Election and the SEP campaign," and "Resolution 3: The Organization of the Working Class and the Fight for Socialism."

The adoption of this resolution was accompanied by the decision of the Congress to change the name of the student and youth organization of the Socialist Equality Party from International Students for Social Equality to International Youth and Students for Social Equality.

1. The fight to build a socialist movement of the working class requires a struggle to educate a new generation of students and working class youth in the history and principles of Marxism and the Fourth International.

2. The crisis that began in 2008 has created intolerable conditions in the United States and internationally, pushing millions of young people into political struggle. Young people are among the most deeply affected by the rise of mass unemployment. Since 2000, the US economy has lost more than 25 percent of all full-time jobs for those under 25. Only 16 percent of youth who graduated from high school between 2009 and 2011 but did not go on to college have found full-time work. Regardless of education, only 47.3 percent of Americans between the ages of 16 and 24 who are not in school have full-time jobs.

3. All over the world, the youth face no future. Young people are barely able to make enough to stay alive, while

they are menaced by war, police brutality and state repression. According to the International Labor Organization, one in eight young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are unemployed. In Greece and Spain over half of all young people are without work. In the Middle East and North Africa, one in four is jobless.

4. The Obama administration, carrying out the general policy of the ruling class, has sought to drive down the living standards of young workers in order to use them as a battering ram against the living standards of the entire working class. It was to this end that the administration insisted on the expansion of two-tier wages as a precondition of the auto bailout.

5. Students have likewise suffered a drastic erosion in their living standards. The possibility of a moderately priced higher education for working class youth is being destroyed. A decent public education is becoming the exclusive purview of the capitalists and the upper strata of the middle class. Students from less privileged backgrounds who seek an education are forced to incur debts that they will not be able to pay off for decades, even as they work themselves to the point of exhaustion just to survive.

6. The dismal economic prospects facing young people are compounded by unprecedented cuts to public education. In just the past 14 months, 470,000 local government education staff have been laid off in the US. Throughout the country, state and city governments are slashing K-12 budgets, leading to the shutdown of schools, increased class sizes, and the elimination of key components of a decent education. Year after year, states are slashing assistance to secondary education, forcing colleges to raise tuition.

7. Soaring tuition has forced an ever-growing amount of debt onto young people. The total amount of student loan debt in the United States has mushroomed to more than \$1 trillion, surpassing the total debt on both auto loans and credit cards. The class of 2010 graduated with an average student loan debt of \$25,250, up 29 percent from \$19,646 for the class of 2006. Meanwhile, wages for college graduates have fallen. The hourly income for college graduates age 23 to 29 has fallen by more than 6 percent since 2000. This means that tens of thousands of young people face the prospect of never paying off their student loans.

8. The impoverishment of the younger generation is a global phenomenon, as is the entry of youth into political struggle. Significant social movements have emerged among young people, including mass protests to defend public education in Canada, Britain, Mexico, Chile and the United States. More than one worried official commentator has noted that the masses of unemployed young workers and college graduates are a social basis for revolutionary upheaval.

9. In addition to economic disaster, the younger generation faces a future of endless war, in which they will be forced to serve as cannon fodder in the drive by the imperialist powers to conquer the world, or will be the principal targets of these wars of conquest. As the United States pursues endless war in every region of the world, military and political officials are once again raising the need for a draft.

10. No section of the political establishment in the United States offers a way forward. In 2008, the Obama administration appealed to young people in particular on the slogan of “change.” However, the past three and a half years have only demonstrated that the Democratic Party, no less than the Republican, is a tool of the corporate and financial elite. The revolutionary potential of the younger generation can be realized only through a turn to the working class as a whole. Students and youth must be armed with a political program that articulates the independent interests of the working class, fighting for the establishment of workers’ governments to carry through the socialist transformation of the world economy. Only the total reorganization of society can secure the right to free public education through university level, the abolishment of student debt, and the guarantee of decent-

paying jobs for young people.

11. The IYSSE insists that the working class is the principal revolutionary force in society. An orientation to the working class and working class youth means a relentless struggle against the reactionary, subjective, idealist and irrationalist political philosophies that dominate pseudo-left politics and are widespread on college campuses. Theoretical tendencies associated with the Frankfurt School, the varieties of post-modernism, neo-anarchism and identity politics are all rooted in their rejection of Marxism and the revolutionary role of the working class. Building the IYSSE requires a struggle for Marxism and the appropriation of the entire revolutionary heritage of the international socialist movement. Through this struggle, the IYSSE will win to its banner working class youth and the best layers of the middle class who adopt the standpoint of the working class in the struggle for socialism.

12. The turn of students and youth to the working class can be carried out only through a systematic struggle for socialist consciousness. The younger generation has grown up in the midst of a decades-long suppression of the class struggle. This makes it all the more urgent that this generation be educated in an assimilation of the lessons of the great historical struggles of the twentieth century and the experiences of the international working class, above all the significance of the Russian Revolution and the nature of Stalinism. The theoretical heritage of Marxism and the Fourth International must be brought to a new generation of youth.

13. This SEP Congress calls for the building of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality, the youth movement of the Socialist Equality Party and the International Committee of the Fourth International, to fight for this perspective among young people.



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