

Phyllis Scherrer caps tour with meetings in Chicago and Milwaukee

Our reporters
8 October 2012

Socialist Equality Party Vice Presidential candidate Phyllis Scherrer capped off a tour of several states with a meetings in Chicago, Illinois and Milwaukee, Wisconsin on Thursday and Saturday. This followed earlier meetings in Morgantown, West Virginia and her home city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

At all of the meetings Scherrer reviewed the SEP's analysis of the 2012 elections and the party's program and perspective.

In Chicago and Milwaukee she responded to the recent debate between the Democratic and Republican Party candidates, Barack Obama and Mitt Romney. "At a time when the United States is in the grip of the worst social crisis since the Great Depression of the 1930s, with record levels of long-term unemployment, record levels of hunger and homelessness, mass layoffs of workers in the public schools, deteriorating public infrastructure and deepening poverty and social misery—there was no mention of this in the debates," she said in Chicago.

Scherrer explained that the current presidential campaign is one of endless deception.

"The campaigns of Barack Obama and Mitt Romney have been, and continue to be, chiefly an exercise in deception, aimed above all at concealing from the American people what the corporate and financial elite who rule this country—and control both political parties—are planning once the elections are over."

Behind the backs of the American people both major political parties are planning massive cuts to social programs after the election, she explained. The financial oligarchy is intent on continuing the process of transferring massive amounts of wealth from the bottom to the top that began in 2008 with the bank

bailout.

"On an international scale both parties are determined to launch new wars: against Syria, Iran and ultimately China to defend the economic and geopolitical interests of US imperialism." These plans, Scherrer noted, are being made in the face of massive opposition by the American people to war with Iran.

In Chicago, Scherrer reviewed the political lessons of the recent Chicago teachers strike and last year's protests against budget cuts in Madison, Wisconsin. The Chicago teachers strike brought workers into direct conflict with the Democratic Party and Obama's right-hand man and Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel. "The strike," Scherrer noted, "exposes the whole fraudulent character of the political system, including the election. As soon as the strike began, Paul Ryan expressed bipartisan agreement with Rahm Emanuel against the teachers."

Scherrer discussed how the greatest obstacle to the teacher's success was the Chicago Teachers Union, which tied teachers to the interests of the Democratic Party, the very political organization they were struggling against. She also noted the role of the International Socialist Organization (ISO) in the strike, which holds positions in the leadership of the CTU. "The cynical role played by the ISO was to give a fake left cover to the CTU and their claims of 'social unionism' while maintaining the political domination of the Democratic Party over the teachers and the strike."

The Chicago meeting was attended by students, teachers and workers, some currently unemployed. A lively discussion followed, with several pledging to join the SEP youth movement, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality.

The 2011 Wisconsin protests were a particular focus

of Scherrer's meeting in Milwaukee. Students attending expressed their frustration at the role of the trade unions in driving the protests of workers and youth behind the Democratic Party and a recall campaign against Republican Governor Scott Walker. The Democrats support the attack on the working class no less than the Republicans, however they prefer to work with the trade unions in enforcing budget cuts and job losses.

During the question and answer periods many questions were raised by meeting attendees.

In Milwaukee, one student, Katrina, talked about her experience in the Madison protests. "It was the most politically engaged that I have ever felt. It was so disappointing to see all of that energy put into the recall campaign. The recall election changed nothing. All of the good momentum that was built went nowhere for a lot of people. I know that it ended disappointing and disillusioning a lot of people."

Scherrer engaged students and workers in discussion at the meetings held in Pittsburgh and Morgantown as well.

In Morgantown, Ted asked Scherrer about taxes. "How do we alleviate the inequality of taxes?"

"The main question," responded Phyllis, "is building up a genuine struggle against the capitalist who won't give up their power. They are the ones who set taxes, so logically they pay the lowest taxes."

Ted also bought a copy of *The Revolution Betrayed*. "You guys are Trotskyists, which interests me. I've looked a lot for what happened in the Soviet Union, and I'm glad I've run into you. With this [*The Revolution Betrayed*] I hope to really work through what happened in the USSR and find out who Trotsky was."

Rachel, a student at the University of Pittsburgh, had a lengthy conversation with the candidate after the meeting. "Cuba is really relevant for me," Rachel said. "I just came from there, and it's called a communist country."

Scherrer explained, "Cuba isn't a communist country. They had a revolution against a dictatorship, but it wasn't based on the working class. It was based on guerrilla warfare and nationalism. And there wasn't ever democracy in Cuba. They even tried to trade with

the US first, but went to Russia when they were rejected. Which of course led up to the Cuban Missile Crisis."



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact