

US SEP presidential candidate Jerry White to speak in Toronto

Our reporter
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Jerry White, the Socialist Equality Party's candidate in the 2012 US presidential election, will be the featured speaker at a public meeting being held in Toronto next Sunday, October 14.

"Throughout this campaign, the Socialist Equality Party has insisted that American workers can only defend their rights and class interests by fusing their struggles with those of the international working class," said White, explaining why he was coming to Toronto. "There is no national road for the defense of social and democratic rights in the US or in Canada.

"Workers in the Americas, Europe, Asia, and around the world confront giant transnational corporations and global banks that are seeking to drive down living standards and destroy the achievements that workers made through generations of struggle."

White noted that the ruling class in Canada, like that in the US, has responded to the global capitalist meltdown of 2008 by launching a social counterrevolution.

"The Conservative government of Stephen Harper is emulating the pro-business policies of Barack Obama's Democratic Party administration and its Republican predecessors. Like Obama and Romney, Harper represents the interests of big business in seeking to eliminate all the social protections that workers have won, so as to swell the profits of the corporations and global banks.

"Not only in domestic policy," added White, "is the Canadian ruling class following its US partners and rivals. Canada has played a leading role in the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan, in the US-NATO war on Libya, and it has joined in the war threats against Iran.

"As in the US, the growth of social inequality, the assault on the working class and the turn towards war and militarism has been accompanied by an assault on

democratic rights. This includes the criminalization of workers struggles, such as the Air Canada, Canada Post, and CN Rail strikes, and the overturning—in the name of the phony war on terror—of long-standing democratic juridical principles, such as the presumption of innocence. The Harper government and its Liberal predecessors connived in the torture and incarceration at Guantanamo Bay of the child-soldier Omar Khadr."

In explaining the urgency of workers adopting a socialist-internationalist perspective in opposition to the trade unions and the ostensible "left" establishment parties, like Canada's social-democratic NDP, White pointed to how the US-based United Auto Workers (UAW) union and the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) union have worked hand in glove with the Obama administration and Harper governments in "restructuring" the auto industry to make it once again a lucrative source of profits for big business. The UAW and CAW have imposed massive job, wage, and benefit cuts, while pitting auto workers against each other in a race to the bottom.

"My campaign," said White "champions the need to unite workers across North America in defense of all jobs and in opposition to all concessions and to build new organizations of struggle in opposition to the pro-capitalist unions."

The Toronto meeting will be the third occasion during the course of the 2012 presidential campaign that White has spoken in Canada at the invitation of the SEP (Canada). "In June," said White, "I traveled to Quebec to witness and participate in the Quebec student strike, which was part of a growing international movement of the working class, from Greece, to Spain and Portugal, and indeed the United States itself.

"Everywhere the right to an education is coming under attack, as part of the ruling elite's drive to

dismantle public services.

“Determined as young people in Quebec were, the strike was ultimately suppressed because it was systematically isolated by the trade unions and led by organizations that are tied to Quebec nationalism and the big business Parti Québécois. This experience has highlighted the need to arm workers and young people with a socialist-internationalist program.”

In September, White's campaign traveled a second time to Canada to speak to Ford Canada workers in Windsor, Ontario. There, White urged workers to reject the nationalist policies of the CAW and unite in a common industrial and political struggle with their brothers and sisters at the US auto plants against the threat of mass layoffs and concessions.

“Everywhere I have traveled during the course of the SEP election campaign, whether in the United States, in Germany, Britain, Sri Lanka, or Canada, there is a hunger for a political alternative to the capitalist parties and a palpable sense that the entire establishment is impervious to the concerns and needs of working people,” White said.

“Internationally there is a keen interest in the struggles of the American workers. For decades popular culture and the demoralized pseudo-left have presented the US working class as complacent and passive. But the events of the past year have put the lie to the claims that there is no class struggle in America. There is a force in the United States—the working class—that is challenging U.S. imperialism. The aim of my campaign is to give voice to that force, provide it with a revolutionary political program, and fight to unite American workers with their class brothers and sisters around the world. I'm very much looking forward to meeting with workers and young people in Toronto to discuss these issues.”

White's address will be followed by questions and discussion. All those in the Toronto area looking for a socialist alternative should make plans to attend Sunday's meeting.

Meeting details:

Sunday, October 14, at 2PM

University of Toronto

Bahen Center, Room 2135

40 St. George Street (closest subway stop: Queen's Park)



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