

SEP campaigns on US Election Day

Our reporting team
7 November 2012

The Socialist Equality Party campaigned during Election Day, speaking to workers across the country about the need for an independent political party of the working class. SEP supporters campaigned in Detroit, Pittsburgh, New York City and other cities, explaining that the next administration—whether led by Obama or Romney—would escalate the attacks on the working class and launch new wars internationally.

Among many voters there was little confidence that conditions would improve after the election. Workers who expressed support for Obama did so out of deep hostility for the Republicans and Romney, the embodiment of the Wall Street aristocracy. There were also illusions that Obama would defend workers and the poor. The SEP explained that Obama would repay the support he received from workers by collaborating with the Republicans to destroy entitlement programs and accelerate the attack on workers' wages and benefits.

Detroit, Michigan

SEP presidential candidate Jerry White and supporters spoke to a variety of voters in the Detroit area, including postal workers, teachers and auto workers. The unions, including the United Auto Workers, campaigned for Obama, claiming that he had “saved” the auto industry. In fact, the Obama administration demanded that the next generation of auto workers labor for half the wages of their parents.

Marianne, a postal worker, said she was worried about the privatization of the US Postal Service: “The unions are saying to vote for Obama because he defends jobs. But mail is being privatized, with things like FedEx. I’m really voting against Romney.”

White explained, “The working class must fight for itself. The unions are for the Democrats because the Democrats use the unions to suppress the working class.”

“That is true,” replied Marianne. “I don’t care much about the unions. My own union, the National Association of Letter Carriers, doesn’t do anything for us. I also don’t care about the talk about abortion and gay marriage. What people do in their private lives is their business. We should be talking about cuts to jobs. I also think they should have spent all the election money on the workers, given it to the workers. And I agree that the working class should run the world.”

Charles, a middle school teacher, said, “I think the economy is the big issue. You also have to defend Medicare and Medicaid, especially if you have a parent. That’s the only way to watch out for their welfare. Jobs are also very basic. If you don’t have a job, how do you take care of your family?”

Andre Davis said, “To be honest, I’m not in favor of either one, but I did vote for Obama because I’m scared of Romney.”

In response, an SEP campaigner explained that Obama has increased the use of drones, and in particular uses them to assassinate people, including US citizens.

Andre replied, “Why isn’t this being brought up by anybody? Especially in the debates. It’s why I didn’t watch them.”

SEP supporters spoke to Demetric about the so-called fiscal cliff, the attack on Social Security, and how it is going to be used to enact more cuts, as well as the international situation.

“I knew about the Simpson-Bowles plan,” said Demetric, “and I’m going to watch the deficit reduction plans closely. Especially if Obama brought Social Security to the table.”

“There is also a lot of talk about getting tough on China because their cost of production is going up.”

The SEP explained that the cause of higher production costs is because the workers of China are beginning to fight for decent wages and living conditions.

“They should be, that’s a good thing,” responded Demetric. “I see that in South Africa too, where the miners were shot fighting for wages.”

Shannon and Sharonda spoke to White, saying, “That’s good that there is a party for the working class. The rich just keep getting richer. I was laid off from a restaurant I had worked at for eight years. You don’t know who to vote for because you don’t know what they’ll do.”

New York City, New York

When campaigning in New York City, the SEP raised the class issues revealed by the official response to Hurricane Sandy. The city’s billionaire mayor, Michael Bloomberg, made sure that power was restored to the stock exchange and wealthy neighborhoods, while abandoning storm victims in working class neighborhoods.

Samuel Mangual lives and works at the senior services center of Baruch Houses, a public housing development. “The news says they might privatize public housing,” he said. “I live in an apartment here and pay \$205 a month. Across the street at the Masaryk Tower an apartment costs \$1,500 a month. I think Obama is better than Romney, and I have voted for him.

“But I think something is going to happen here. Poor people are going to rise up. There is too much pressure on the poor people. The rich control everything in this country. Something is going to happen. People will not be able to take it anymore.

“It is a bad thing that they are going to cut Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid and food stamps. You are going to see a reaction against that by the end of the year. I would like to see a working class party for socialism that works for the poor people. There should not be any people who do not have a job.

“There are some other people who think like this. People come here to play bingo, and we talk about this, but we don’t have power against the people who have the money.”

The SEP explained that the only way to have power against the capitalist class was to unite the working class in a struggle to defend its social rights.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Jim, a maintenance worker who just left a voting precinct in the Garfield neighborhood of Pittsburgh, said he voted for Obama. “Things were very bad before he took office. I don’t want to go back to that. Romney represents the rich, they don’t care about the working class.

“I am not 100 percent for Obama. He could have done more for the working class. They spent all this money for the banks and the rich, but nothing for the working class. Jobs are really hard to come by in Pittsburgh. Those who have jobs don’t get paid enough to live.”

Kevin, who had come with John, said, “I voted for Obama too. I just didn’t think there was much of a choice. You knew what Romney is going to do. Obama says he is for the people, but he helps the rich too. Look at his record, the wars are continuing and so many people are out of work. It is the lesser of two evils. I would like to see a real alternative, someone who would stand for the people and not the rich.”

Stephanie said, “It doesn’t really matter who you voted for. They will tell you anything to get elected, but once in office, they only do what is right for the rich. I have two young girls and each year, they are closing more and more schools. The classes are horrible, in one class she has 36 kids. How are kids going to learn like that?”



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact