“The two parties are both beholden to Wall Street”

A WSWS reporting team
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The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to several workers and young people attending the Socialist Equality Party Midwest regional conference, “Socialism and the 2012 Elections,” held November 4 at Wayne State University in Detroit.

Juan, a young worker from southwest Detroit, said this was his first time attending a meeting organized by the Socialist Equality Party. “It is pretty deep, but I am understanding most of it if not all of it,” he said. “It doesn’t really matter who you vote for, they are both puppets. This is where it starts. I am all for that.

“I voted for Obama in 2008. I didn’t expect much, but it isn’t what he said it was going to be. Instead everything has gotten horribly worse.”

Pointing to the example of Hurricane Sandy, Juan commented, “I like how he (Obama) showed up for two hours and left. I have friends in New York who were affected, and they don’t like it. They still don’t have power.

“There is just not enough work out there to pay the bills,” he said. “I know people who have degrees and don’t have jobs.”

Ben Baczkowski, a junior at Wayne State University, said, “I think that Jerry White and David North had a lot to say.

“I think it is sad that Obama and Romney are the best that bipartisan politics has to offer. You are picking two evils. I think people my age are coming to realize that we need to make another alternative.

“I had to take a semester off from school because I ran out of money,” Ben said. “Unfortunately I don’t qualify for financial aid and I don’t feel like committing myself to a life of indentured servitude through student loans. The bourgeoisie forces you to go to school or live in abject poverty. But then you find yourself chained to a loan company while the opportunities they promised you are not there. The problem I see is that everything is done for profit, not progress.

“I see dwindling opportunities for people my age. All the institutions are part of the bipartisan politics and the attacks on working people our government is pushing.

“We are on the verge of a big breakthrough,” Ben added. “I think it would take just a little more organizing. I think the Democrats and Republicans are far removed from what working people and young people are saying.

“I think at Wayne State there has been a lot more dialogue recently. The IYSSE has been campaigning on campus and starting to get people involved. It has been awesome.”

Ryan, a recent graduate of the pharmacy program at the University of Michigan, is now looking for work. He expressed his agreement with the speakers. “They present an accurate description of the conundrum facing the working class, and they present a viable alternative to the crisis represented by the elections, for the international working class. Only the working class can solve working class problems.”

Ryan related the stress he felt over looming student loan debt payments. “I have lots of loan debt. If I can’t find a good job, what can I do? Skip town and go to

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South America? Wind up in debtor's prison? Is that what's coming?"

"In pharmacy," he explained, "there are concerns for job security. I feel that the educational system is a profit-driven institution. Because of the profit motive, the pharmacy profession is going to produce a situation where there are too many people chasing after too few jobs. We have generally inadequate health care. The system itself, based around profit, creates conflict of interest in meeting basic needs."

"I'm grateful that the Socialist Equality Party offers me an alternative," Ryan added.

Mark, a teacher in the Ypsilanti, Michigan public schools, told the WSWS,

"I thought the meeting was great. Jerry White made some really poignant remarks and gave working people an alternative to fight corporate interests and the two-party system.

"That is precisely what people need. Politics in this country is scripted. The two parties are both beholden to Wall Street. You have to have a third party. The unions try to sell the Democratic Party as the party of the working man when really the only people they are taking care of is the union administration.

"The upper echelons of the union administration are very well-to-do," Mark stated. "They don't want to lose that so they are politically beholding to the capitalist system and in their case the Democratic Party. We have had thirty years of corporate culture that has squelched free speech of rank-and-file US workers."

Jacob is a member of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality at Wayne State University. "It's nice to hear people actually speaking to the problems we face," he said of the discussion at the conference. "The elections are kind of a farce. None of the issues are covered."

"Capitalism is the problem," he added. "Capitalism has destroyed my family. It took my father's job.

"I am writing in Jerry White on Tuesday."

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