

The class issues in the 2012 elections

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The Socialist Equality Party calls on all its supporters in the US to cast a vote for SEP candidates Jerry White for president and Phyllis Scherrer for vice president in today's election. A vote for the SEP is a class-conscious statement of support for the socialist, working-class alternative to the two parties of big business, the Democrats and Republicans.

If a winner can be determined after millions of ballots are counted today, either Obama will be reelected or Romney will be declared his successor. In either case, the basic policy of the ruling class will continue.

Even by the generally low standards of American elections, the 2012 campaign has been a debased spectacle. For all the billions of dollars spent, the unending advertisements, and the saturation coverage in the media, nothing of substance has been seriously discussed or debated.

Obama and Romney concluded their campaigns on Monday with stock speeches full of platitudes and lies. The Republican candidate sought to take from Obama's 2008 campaign the empty mantra of "change," while criticizing the president for failing to be sufficiently "bipartisan." The Democrat countered by declaring that in a second term he will ensure that "everybody is doing their fair share," while insisting that "I know what real change looks like; you've seen me fight for it."

This from a president who has, during his four years in office, continued and expanded all the right-wing policies of his predecessor, and who has overseen soaring profits and stock prices even as wages have grown at their lowest rate in generations.

The real agenda of the ruling class after the elections

is being systematically concealed from the American people.

To those who matter in the elections, Obama has already made clear that his "first order of business" will be to reach an agreement with Republicans to pass trillions of dollars in cuts to social programs, particularly Medicare and Medicaid. For his part, Romney's references to the need for bipartisanship are intended as a signal that he too is committed to working with the Democrats in quickly carrying out the demands of the banks for austerity measures.

New wars are being planned behind the backs of the American people, with Iran a principal target. Even as the campaign has progressed, the US has begun amassing warships in the Persian Gulf for potential military action by the spring.

The American ruling class has worked systematically to gain control of key countries and undermine its principal geopolitical competitors, including China and Russia. Obama has already launched one war against Libya, while his administration is presently engaged in fomenting civil war in Syria. Under conditions of global economic crisis, the eruption of American militarism is leading inexorably to a world war with catastrophic consequences.

As for democratic rights, a hallmark of these elections—to be noted by future historians—is the fact that they were carried out without any discussion of the Obama administration's global policy of extra-judicial assassination, including of US citizens.

The American government has jettisoned the core democratic principle of due process, yet this fact did not come up in any of the debates and was virtually

ignored by the media, right and “left.” By any objective legal standard, the president of the United States should be subject to impeachment proceedings—but his principal opponent and the entire media and political establishment are complicit in the crime.

Voting for White and Scherrer is only the beginning. It is a declaration of support for the fight to build a genuine political alternative. The alternative is socialism—the creation of a globally integrated economic system based on social equality, in which the productive forces are controlled democratically in the interests of social need.

There is a sense among millions of people in the United States, including many who will end up voting for Obama, that the elections will not change a thing. The broader illusions held about Obama four years ago have largely dissipated—a consequence of the actual policies that he has carried out. Workers and youth recognize there is something wrong with the entire social and political system, and are beginning to understand that nothing can be changed without a revolution.

In the backdrop to these elections is a global crisis of capitalism. All around the world, the corporations and banks are demanding that the working class accept a historic reversal in its living conditions. Capitalism holds out to the population of the United States and the world a future of poverty, unemployment, war and dictatorship.

If the ruling class thinks that it can pursue this policy without provoking mass struggles, it is delusional. Indeed, they have already begun to erupt. The working class has begun to fight back—in Europe, in South Africa, in Asia, and in the United States itself. However, for these struggles to be transformed into a conscious revolutionary movement against capitalism, a new leadership must be built.

The SEP launched its election campaign as a means of fighting to build this leadership in the working class. The campaign has won a wide hearing—intersecting with struggles of Cooper Tire workers in Ohio; Caterpillar workers in Joliet, Illinois; teachers in

Chicago; and other sections of the working class throughout the country. The campaign gave expression to a growing politicization of students and young workers, reflected in dozens of meetings throughout the country.

The SEP calls on all those who have supported its campaign to vote for White and Scherrer and take up an active fight for socialism—to join and build the Socialist Equality Party and its youth organization, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality.

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Due to the anti-democratic election laws in the United States—which often required tens of thousands of signatures just to get on the ballot—White and Scherrer’s names will appear on the ballot in three states: Wisconsin, Colorado and Louisiana. In several other states, the SEP candidates have official write-in certification. (For a full list and information on how to vote for the SEP, click here).



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