

Resolution of the SEP Conferences

Build the Socialist Equality Party!

5 November 2012

The following is an edited version of a resolution discussed and passed at the SEP regional conferences in Los Angeles (October 27), Berkeley (October 28) and Detroit (November 4). The conference in New York was cancelled as a result of the impact of Hurricane Sandy. A report on the Detroit conference will be published on the WSWs on November 6.

1. The 2012 elections are being held under conditions of the worst economic and social crisis since the Great Depression. Four years after the spectacular collapse of Lehman Brothers in September 2008, there is no sign that the world economic crisis is abating. World economic growth is slumping. The economy of Europe is stagnant and is expected to contract next year, and official unemployment is at a record high. Greece and Spain are mired in depression conditions of unprecedented poverty. China has entered a slowdown due to a steep fall in exports.

2. In the United States, the claims by the Obama administration that it is overseeing a “recovery” are fraudulent. The only recovery has been for the corporations, which are seeing record profits and a soaring stock market. The jobs situation, already disastrous, is getting worse. Tens of millions of people are out of work, have seen their wages slashed, or have been thrown out of their homes. The average duration of unemployment remains near the record highs set after the collapse of 2008. Half the population is categorized as poor or near-poor, while 4 million people subsist on less than \$2 a day. Student youth face soaring tuition and debt, with little prospect of a decent-paying job.

3. On the eve of the elections, Hurricane Sandy once again exposed the conflict between the basic requirements of American society and an economic system anchored in private ownership of the means of production. An event like Sandy, which impacts tens of millions of people, underscores the need for a planned and centrally coordinated social response, marshaling hundreds of billions in resources. This, however, is made impossible by a system controlled by a narrow elite that owns the productive forces. The hurricane has further exposed the immense social inequality that pervades the country. The death toll has surpassed 100 and continues to rise, and millions of people are still without power in New York, New Jersey and throughout the East Coast. The official response from the

Obama administration and state and local officials has focused on defending the interests of the corporate and financial elite. While the political establishment in New York City moved quickly to restore electricity to Wall Street and to luxury apartments, working-class residents have received only minimal assistance, at best.

4. As with so many disasters before it, including Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the devastation wrought by Sandy is the product of natural events compounded by a bankrupt social system. Warnings about the consequences of a major storm have been ignored, and necessary measures to prepare have been rejected on the grounds that there is “no money.” Vast resources have been devoted to bailing out the banks and ensuring the wealth of the corporate and financial elite, while critical social infrastructure needs—including mass transit, electrical transmission and flood prevention—have been neglected.

5. The official two-party election contest has absolutely nothing to offer the working class. The Democrats and Republicans are equally committed to the defense of the corporate and financial aristocracy. The “debate” is between a multimillionaire asset stripper (Romney) and Obama, also a multimillionaire, who has proven himself a ruthless representative of the banks. The differences that do exist between the two parties are of a tactical nature. On all issues that concern the basic interests of the corporate and financial elite, they stand united.

6. The plans of the ruling class for after the elections are being concealed from the American people. The next administration, whether led by a Democrat or a Republican, is planning huge cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, Social Security, food stamps, public education and other social programs. Obama’s health care overhaul, the fundamental purpose of which was to cut costs for corporations and the government, is only the beginning. Both parties are planning to cut corporate taxes, while eliminating deductions that benefit working people.

7. New wars are being planned. Recent reports show that US and Israeli planning for a military attack on Iran is far advanced. The American military is systematically building up its forces in the Persian Gulf. As in the run-up to the war against Iraq, denunciations of Iran for its nuclear program

provide a pretext for pursuing a policy of regime-change. A war with Iran could quickly ignite a general war in the Middle East, bringing in China and Russia and producing a military conflict between the major powers with unimaginable consequences. Washington is simultaneously escalating its neocolonial intervention in Syria.

8. After the elections, the attack on democratic rights and the expansion of the police powers of the state, launched after 9/11 and intensified under Obama, will be stepped up. The Obama administration has already implemented a global policy of state assassination, including of US citizens, without judicial review. Obama's military and intelligence advisers have developed a "disposition matrix" to institutionalize extrajudicial killings, which are already taking place on virtually a daily basis. It is only a matter of time before such methods are transferred to the United States.

9. The experience of the Obama administration has underscored the imperviousness of the political system to the interests of the vast majority of the population. The past three-and-a-half years have confirmed the SEP's assessment that Obama's election did not signal a revival of social reformism, but rather a new stage in the corporate onslaught on the jobs, living standards and social rights of working people.

10. Chief among the promoters of Obama are the official trade unions and the array of liberal and pseudo-left publications and organizations that orbit around the Democratic Party, such as the *Nation* magazine and the International Socialist Organization. These forces speak on behalf of a privileged layer of the middle class that is deeply hostile to the working class. Having proclaimed Obama's election in 2008 a "transformative event"—largely because he is the first African-American president—they are once again lining up behind his reelection.

11. The Socialist Equality Party and its candidates, Jerry White for president and Phyllis Scherrer for vice president, have intervened in the elections as a means of building a socialist leadership in the working class, uniting the struggles of workers and youth, and politically organizing them to carry out the revolutionary transformation of society. The SEP rejects the argument that since only a Democrat or a Republican can win the November 6 election, working people should support the Democrat as the "lesser evil." This has been the last line of defense of the political domination of big business in America for more than a century. The two-party political monopoly is thoroughly undemocratic and must be swept away.

12. The SEP and its candidates explain the inseparable connection between the struggle of working people for their basic social, economic and political rights and the program of international socialist revolution. The corporate and financial aristocracy's death grip on the resources of society is the main obstacle to social progress. The SEP insists that the rights of working people cannot be secured except through the independent mobilization of the working class in a struggle to

take political power, radically redistribute wealth, establish social equality, and reorganize economic life under the democratic control of the working masses so as to serve social needs, not private profit.

13. The SEP has placed at the center of its program the fight for the international unity of the working class. In the backdrop to the American elections is a global economic crisis that has already begun to produce explosive class battles—from South Africa, to Europe, to the United States itself. The interests of the working class cannot be defended on the basis of a national program. In every country, working people are oppressed by transnational corporations that scour the globe for cheap labor and profits, pitting workers of one country against their class brothers and sisters in other countries in a fratricidal race to the bottom.

14. The economic crisis is having a profound impact on the consciousness of workers and young people. The American working class is losing confidence in the capitalist system. The objective development of the crisis and the experiences of the working class create the basis for the emergence of a mass revolutionary movement in the United States, the heart of world capitalism.

15. The great and urgent task is the building of a new political leadership that gives conscious expression to the objective development of the class struggle. The working class needs its own political party, one that begins from the understanding that the capitalist system has failed. A new socialist leadership must be built in every section of the working class and among students and young people. Workers and young people face a major decision, but it is not the empty choice between Obama and Romney. It is the decision to take up an active struggle for socialism. It is not enough to bemoan the political choices as they are presented by the ruling class and its political system. It is necessary to join and build the alternative—the Socialist Equality Party and its youth organization, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality.



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