

SEP candidate Jerry White speaks to Chrysler workers in Detroit

A WSWS reporting team
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SEP presidential candidate Jerry White and a team of supporters spoke to Chrysler workers at a campaign rally Friday afternoon at the Warren Truck assembly plant in suburban Detroit. The factory employs some 2,300 workers who build the Dodge Ram and Dodge Dakota.

Campaigners called on the hundreds of workers to vote for the SEP in Tuesday's election. SEP supporters also distributed hundreds of copies of the *World Socialist Web Site Auto Workers Newsletter*, which included the statement by White "A socialist policy for the victims of Hurricane Sandy."

Many workers expressed support for the socialist candidate and stopped to discuss the program advanced by the SEP. Several workers signed up to attend the Midwest Regional Conference, "Socialism and the 2012 Elections," this Sunday at Wayne State University in Detroit.

In response to a discussion about the way in which working-class residents of New York have been abandoned in the wake of the hurricane, one worker responded, "That sounds familiar. It happens to us everyday inside of there," he said, pointing to the factory.

"Everyone forgets us," another worker said. "Even the UAW [United Auto Workers]. It's unsafe in there and the conditions are getting worse. Both Obama and Romney live off the sweat of the people that work for a living."

White explained that billionaire New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg had made it a priority to ensure that power was restored to the New York Stock Exchange and luxury apartments for the rich. "In

working-class neighborhoods," White said, "workers and their families have been left to fend for themselves, without electricity, heat and water."

Many workers expressed frustration with the choice presented between president Obama and multimillionaire Republican challenger Mitt Romney. "There is no difference between them," was a common refrain.

A worker with 18 years spoke bitterly about the 2009 forced bankruptcy and restructuring of General Motors and Chrysler imposed by the Obama administration.

"There is all this talk about Obama 'saving' the auto industry. But in 2009, he told Chrysler and the UAW to go back and negotiate big concessions to get the bailout. The UAW accepted a new absentee policy that allowed the company to fire older, better-paid workers so they could be replaced with lower-paid second-tier workers. The absentee program is very strict but the management and the international UAW reps don't have to adhere to it. The White House also cut the wages for all the new hires.

"The UAW got workers to vote for the deal because they feared losing their jobs in a bankruptcy. The day after the contract was ratified, Obama announced that Chrysler was going into bankruptcy anyhow."

Other workers spoke about the impact of the betrayals carried out by the UAW. One young worker said he had been a part-timer for years and was finally hired in as a full-timer a few years ago. Under the new contract he had to take a \$7-an-hour pay cut to become a full-timer.

Bryan, with 19 years at the company, said, "We're all looking to do something for our kids and make sure that they have a better life. But all the corporations here and abroad are cutting wages to boost their profits—that's capitalism."

Another worker, responding to White's call for the building of a party of the working class, said, "We're the overworked class."

White explained that the SEP campaign represented the only genuine alternative for the working class in the 2012 elections.

The capitalist system has failed, said White. The only alternative is the international struggle by the working class for socialism. This includes the nationalization of the banks and auto industry under the democratic control of the working class. It is only through such a program that the vast productive forces of society can be utilized in a rational way to meet human needs instead of corporate profit. "I call on workers to vote for me and my running mate Phyllis Scherrer on November 6 as a class-conscious vote for the building of an independent revolutionary alternative for the working class."

For more information on the SEP campaign, click here.



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