

Socialist Equality Party kicks off campaign on social inequality with meeting in Minneapolis

Our reporters
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The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) kicked off a campaign devoted to “Capitalism and Social Inequality” with a public meeting last Wednesday in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The meeting was hosted by the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and was attended by workers and students from the university and the surrounding area who braved -20 degree (Fahrenheit) temperatures to be present.

The meeting was conducted in the midst of an unprecedented attack on the social rights and living standards of the working class. On the day the meeting was held, the US Senate voted to slash food stamp funding by nearly \$9 billion for 850,000 families. In discussions preceding the meeting, many attendees expressed their astonishment at a recent Oxfam report that noted that the world’s 85 richest people possessed the same amount of wealth as the poorest 3.5 billion.

The report at the Minneapolis was given by WSWs reporter Eric London, who noted that the startling statistics in the Oxfam report “find expression in all aspects of social, political, and cultural life.”

London said that “the redistribution of wealth from the working class to the rich is not the product of an accidental or natural process in the development of human society. It is the result of a concerted and protracted effort by the ruling class to protect and expand its privileged historical position.

“One of the chief conspirators in this crime,” he continued, “is President Barack Obama, who with the help of the Democratic and Republican parties, has overseen a swindling of the American working class. His administration has overseen the largest transfer of wealth from the workers to the ruling class in United States history.”

The presentation also addressed the role of pseudo-

left groups like Socialist Alternative, who ran a candidate for Minneapolis City Council in last year’s elections.

London explained that groups such as Socialist Alternative and the International Socialist Organization (ISO) had to be appraised scientifically. They speak on behalf of a distinct privileged social layer, whose interests are tied to the maintenance of the capitalist system.

In addition to the phenomenal growth in the wealth of the top 1 percent in society, “In the past two or three decades, the next 9 percent has seen a continuous increase in its percentage of income share, the same period that saw the destruction of the incomes and living standards of the working class.”

“What is the political method of the representatives of this layer,” the SEP speaker asked, “who pose as ‘left’ by talking about ‘white privilege’ and individual ‘identity’? To this layer, the election of more minority, female, and LGBT members to a corporate board of directors or to Congress is seen as progress!

“Talk of inequality along these lines is harmless for the ruling class because it poses no challenge whatsoever to the private ownership of property and the heightened exploitation of the vast majority of people on the planet by a tiny layer of financial aristocrats.”

The presentation was followed by a spirited discussion that lasted for over two hours and covered a wide range of topics, including the importance of developing a genuine socialist culture and the class nature of protest politics. When the meeting concluded, the IYSSE gained several new members.

Ethan, a University of Minnesota student, told the WSWs: “I thought the points made throughout the presentation were very strong. The statistics used to back up the SEP’s argument were presented in a way

that was credible, and it was easy for me to independently synthesize the data and arrive at the same conclusions as you.”

An IYSSE member, Matt, said that “the meeting provided a very clear look into the capitalist establishment and the consequences of the system. The presentation was both succinct and comprehensive in covering capitalism and its effects on living standards and democratic rights of working class people in the US and worldwide. The figures that were presented provided insight that begs for a deeper discussion of the issues.

“The discussion afterwards was also very helpful in addressing some of the audience’s (and ultimately the general populace’s) main concerns about the Socialist Equality Party’s position on other issues such as race and gender. We also illustrated a clear picture of the party’s intentions, as well as our approach to the issue of social inequality.”



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