

Socialist Equality Party (US) 2016 Congress Resolutions

The fight for socialism and the tasks of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality

25 August 2016

The Socialist Equality Party (US) held its Fourth National Congress from July 31-August 5 in Detroit, Michigan.

The Congress unanimously endorsed the statement of the International Committee of the Fourth International, "Socialism and the Fight Against War," and adopted three additional resolutions, Perspectives and Tasks of the Socialist Equality Party," "For the Unity of the Working Class in the United States and Latin America" and "The Fight for Socialism and the Tasks of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality."

1. Young people around the globe face a future of poverty, social inequality and war. The 2008 financial crisis, which signified the breakdown of the world capitalist economy, has made mass poverty and unemployment permanent features of social life, hitting youth particularly hard. One-third of the world's 1.8 billion young people are currently unemployed, out of school or not in job training programs. For college students, skyrocketing tuition has produced record levels of student loan debt, totaling a combined \$1.3 trillion in the United States alone. For the first time since World War II, the younger generation in the advanced capitalist countries faces a future with living standards lower than those of their parents. In the United States, funding for education has been slashed and millions of young people are unable to find work, with the official youth unemployment rate at over 10 percent.

2. The crisis of capitalism is driving extreme political instability throughout the world, which finds its most acute expression in the drive by all the major imperialist powers, above all the United States, towards ever more reckless and dangerous military adventures. The drive to war arises out of the basic contradiction between a globally integrated economy and the division of the world into competing nation states. Under the pretense of countering "Russian aggression," the US and NATO have stationed thousands of troops along the western border of Russia. Under the framework of the "pivot to Asia," the US is escalating its campaign of encirclement and aggression against China. A small incident, intentional or

accidental, could spark a nuclear war.

3. The experiences of millions of workers and young people since the 2008 economic crisis are producing a political radicalization, particularly among the youth, who have known nothing but war, repression and austerity. In the United States, where anti-communism has served for decades as a state religion, there is growing support for socialism. One recent poll found that 43 percent of American young people said they supported socialism, while only 32 percent supported capitalism.

4. The growth of anti-capitalist sentiment found an initial and contradictory reflection, during the Democratic Party primaries, in the support for Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, the self-described "democratic socialist," who claimed to be carrying out a "political revolution" against the "billionaire class." Sanders received 13 million votes in the primary process and was the overwhelming favorite among young people.

5. But Sanders' unequivocal endorsement of Hillary Clinton, a Wall Street stooge and warmonger, made clear the real purpose of his campaign: to corral, on behalf of the ruling elites, this sentiment back into the safe channels of the Democratic Party. The ignominious outcome of the Sanders campaign confirmed the warnings of the SEP and IYSSE that the senator from Vermont, far from being a socialist, is a tried and true defender of the political establishment.

6. Sanders and the Democrats are now attempting to convince workers and young people to back Clinton by invoking the dangers contained in Donald Trump's fascistic campaign. But the ability of Trump to gain a hearing is due, above all, to widespread anger and frustration with the Democrats themselves, who, under Obama, oversaw the greatest transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich in history. Meanwhile, Clinton is appealing to the military and disaffected Republicans on the basis that she is the more reliable defender of the interests of American imperialism.

7. With Sanders' capitulation, the media and the Democratic Party are seeking to bury the issue of social inequality, which

motivated support for his campaign, by promoting the politics of sexual, gender and racial identity. Working closely with their political allies in the middle-class pseudo-left groups, they have sought to present the epidemic of police murder in the United States not as the violence of the capitalist state against the working class and youth, but as an expression of an unbridgeable racial divide and initiated a campaign for tougher sentencing for sexual assaults.

8. The class basis of identity politics is complacent and well-heeled layers of the upper middle class, hostile to social equality and instilled with a hatred and fear of the working class. They utilize questions of race, gender and sexual orientation to secure access to careers and privileges for themselves. Above all, identity politics is organically opposed to the political unification of the working class on a socialist and internationalist basis.

9. The attempt to bury the question of class has been accompanied by a concerted attack on historical truth. Utilizing an irrationalist methodology that rejects the very notion of historical objectivity, history is being recast to meet the current interests of the ruling elite. The American Revolution and the Civil War have been singled out for particularly heated attacks, utilizing a racialist framework that minimizes or denies their progressive character, out of fear of the attraction of a revolutionary program among workers and youth today. The same campaign is being waged, in different forms, internationally. In Germany, academics with close ties to the state are seeking to relativize the crimes of the Nazis, in order to facilitate the revival of German militarism. Australia has seen a campaign to glorify militarism, particularly the country's involvement in World War I, and to suppress any critical evaluation of the history of Australian imperialism.

10. The United States stands on the precipice of enormous social upheavals, in which youth will play a crucial role. Millions of young people are looking for a way to fight against cuts to education and social programs, student loan debt, joblessness, poverty, police violence and the growing threat of war.

11. The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), the youth movement of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), seeks to win working class youth, high school students and college students to a genuine socialist perspective. The IYSSE insists that young people must turn to the working class, the principal revolutionary force in society. The political independence of the working class requires a fight against the pseudo-left—the International Socialist Organization, Socialist Alternative, the remnants of Occupy Wall Street, various neo-anarchist organizations and similar outfits—which seek to subordinate the working class to bourgeois politics, whether through the Democratic Party, the Green Party or other organizations.

12. An orientation to the working class requires a relentless theoretical struggle against bourgeois ideology, in which the

IYSSE must play a central role. This theoretical struggle is posed with special sharpness on college campuses, because they have long served as centers for the production and dissemination of anti-working class and anti-Marxist ideologies. The IYSSE opposes the reactionary philosophical outlooks of irrationalism and subjectivism (including post-modernism, neo-anarchism and the theoretical tendencies associated with the Frankfurt School) promoted by the pseudo-left and practitioners of identity politics, which reject the possibility of objective truth. In opposition to these philosophies, the IYSSE fights for Marxism and materialism. The IYSSE fights for historical consciousness among workers and youth, above all the history of Marxism and the Trotskyist movement, which in its struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy established itself as the sole continuation of Marxism in the 20th and 21st centuries.

13. The fight for the political independence of the working class is inseparable from the theoretical struggle of the IYSSE on university campuses. In Germany, for example, the IYSSE's campaign at Humboldt University to expose the role of German academia in ideologically justifying German militarism and police-state measures, has played a key role in the PSG's campaign against war within the German working class.

14. The IYSSE calls special attention to the danger of war and fights to build a new anti-war movement based on the working class. Young people, who are preyed upon by military recruiters and who would likely be drafted in the event of a military confrontation with Russia and China, will play an important role in the struggle against war. The orientation of the new anti-war movement must be socialist internationalism, the unification of workers and youth in every country, on the basis of a common program, in the fight against their common enemy, the capitalists in every country. There can be no fight for socialism without a struggle against war, and there can be no fight against war without a struggle for socialism.

15. This Congress of the Socialist Equality Party calls for the building of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality as a crucial element in the fight to build the revolutionary leadership of the working class.



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