

Socialist Equality Party (US) 2016 Congress Resolutions

For the unity of the working class in the United States and Latin America

27 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. This Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) calls upon the working class of the United States to unite with the workers of Central and South America in struggle to defeat their common enemy, US imperialism.

2. The exploitative operations of transnational banks and corporations objectively bind workers in a common process of production across the hemisphere. Moreover, the US itself has a population of over 55 million drawn from Latin America, with nearly 20 million of them immigrants. These powerful foundations for the unification of the US and Latin American working class must find conscious expression in the struggle to build the Trotskyist movement throughout Latin America, and to win the advanced layers of Latin American immigrant workers and youth in the US to the SEP.

3. Over the past year, the world capitalist crisis has shaken the economies of Latin America with increasing force, as both the commodities and emerging market booms have evaporated under the impact of economic deceleration, above all in China. After a nearly 30 percent fall in 2015 in the prices of commodities (which make up more than 50 percent of Latin America's exports), the region's per capita GDP is projected to fall by 2 percent this year. Unemployment and poverty are, for the first time in over a decade, again on the rise.

4. Latin America remains the world's most socially polarized region, with an immense gap between a wealthy financial oligarchy and masses of impoverished workers. Within just six years, the region's top 1 percent will have amassed more wealth than the remaining 99 percent. Latin America's billionaires have seen their fortunes rise by, on average, 21 percent a year between 2002 and 2015—six times faster than the region's GDP. On the other hand, the majority of the population lives either in poverty or on the brink of poverty. Working class incomes are stagnant throughout the region, and in Brazil, the region's largest economy, wages are falling.

5. This economic crisis has produced a series of political convulsions, along with a sharpening of the class struggle in one Latin American country after another. The first victims of this deepening crisis have been those bourgeois governments identified with the so-called "turn to the left," which began at the beginning of the 21st century with the coming to power of Chavismo in Venezuela, the Workers Party (PT) in Brazil, Evo Morales and the MAS (Movement toward Socialism) in Bolivia and the

Kirchnerista wing of Peronism in Argentina.

6. Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela has lost control of the country's legislature and is facing a recall referendum; PT President Dilma Rousseff has been ousted through an impeachment process launched by her former right-wing political allies; Bolivia's Evo Morales has been denied another term, amid rising working class struggles; and 12 years of *Kirchnerismo* came to an end with the coming to power of Mauricio Macri and the Argentine right.

7. In tandem with this reversal for the so-called "left" bourgeois regimes has come the Castro regime's rapprochement with US imperialism, as the ruling strata seek to preserve their power and privileges by facilitating the reentry of US capitalism into what had previously been its Caribbean semi-colony.

8. These developments present new dangers to the working class. In Argentina and Brazil, the most right-wing governments since the fall of the old US-backed military dictatorships have assumed power, and are embarking on sweeping attacks on living standards and basic social rights. In Venezuela, the right wing, backed by Washington in previous coup attempts and political provocations, is poised to assume power, unless the Venezuelan military, with its grip on key levers of power, does so first.

9. The evolution of these bourgeois movements and governments is also a devastating exposure of the various pseudo-left forces, which have promoted them as viable means of resisting imperialism, and even political instruments for the realization of "21st century socialism."

10. By fostering illusions in these "left" governments, the pseudo-left were echoing their previous attempts, in the 1960s and 1970s, to cast the Cuban Revolution, Castroism and petty-bourgeois guerrillaism as a new road to socialism: one that no longer required either the building of revolutionary Marxist parties or the conscious and independent revolutionary intervention of the working class. The Latin American working class has paid a terrible price for the influence of such theories, promoted, first and foremost, by the Pabloite revisionist tendency that broke with Trotskyism and the Fourth International in 1953. A whole layer of radicalized students and younger workers was diverted into suicidal armed struggles that claimed thousands of lives, served to politically disorient the workers' movement and helped pave the way for fascist-military dictatorships.

11. The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) waged an implacable struggle against this revisionist outlook, insisting that Castroism was not some new road to socialism, but only one of the most radical variants of the bourgeois nationalist movements that came to power in many of the former colonial countries during the post-war period. Basing itself upon Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution, the ICFI insisted that the task of liberating the colonial and semi-colonial countries from imperialist oppression could not be achieved under the leadership of any section of the bourgeoisie, no matter how radical, but

only by the working class, mobilizing behind it the masses of peasants and poor, while fighting to take state power into its own hands and to extend the revolution internationally.

12. The same Pabloite forces that promoted illusions in Castroism half a century ago played a key role in the creation of the Workers Party in Brazil. They also fostered political illusions in Chavismo and similar “left” bourgeois movements, which served as instruments of bourgeois rule and defenders of both foreign and domestic capital. The minimal social assistance programs initiated by these movements in order to dampen the class struggle have given way to austerity measures and attacks on the working class, which have paved the way for governments of the right.

13. A particularly destructive role has been played in Latin America by the tendency historically associated with the late Argentine revisionist Nahuel Moreno, who split with the International Committee in 1963 and joined the Pabloite United Secretariat, based on the common assessment that Castro’s revolution had established a “workers state” in Cuba. Adapting itself to Peronism in Argentina and the PT in Brazil, the hallmark of the various strands of Morenoism—from the Argentine PTS to the Brazilian PSTU—remains a rejection of the struggle for the development of revolutionary socialist consciousness in the working class and the subordination of workers’ struggles to the politics of bourgeois nationalism and the petty-bourgeois pseudo-left.

14. Objective developments have once again thoroughly vindicated the struggle undertaken by the ICFI against revisionism. What is now emerging in Latin America and internationally is an explosive growth of class struggle that poses, with immense urgency, the building of new revolutionary parties of the working class.

15. At the same time, US imperialism is increasingly returning its attention to Latin America. The Pentagon has made clear that the Obama administration’s “pivot” toward Asia, with its rising military encirclement of and direct provocations against China, must be pursued globally, with particular attention to Latin America. This takes place under conditions where China has supplanted the US as the region’s top creditor and become its second-largest export market. Chinese-Latin American trade has increased 20-fold since 2000, with China already the top trading partner of Brazil, Chile and Peru.

16. In his July 13, 2016 address to the Atlantic Council, the chief of the US Southern Command, Adm. Kurt Tidd, stressed that the Pentagon saw its mission in the region from the standpoint of a “strategic transition that touches every corner of the globe.” He emphasized that the foremost challenge facing the US military revolved around “the activities of China, Russia, Iran in the Western hemisphere,” while accusing these countries of failing to “respect the inter-American principles of peace.”

17. These and other statements from military figures have made clear that Washington is retooling the Monroe Doctrine, the 200-year-old canon of US foreign policy, which was invoked throughout the 20th century to justify dozens of direct US military interventions, along with the imposition of fascist military dictatorships. These were all aimed at maintaining Latin America as a US sphere of influence. American imperialism has no intention of peacefully ceding what it has long regarded contemptuously as its “own backyard.” There is every indication that, unlike during the First and Second World Wars, Latin America will not be spared, as the insoluble and deepening crisis of US and global capitalism drags mankind toward a new global conflagration.

18. The SEP must turn, with particular urgency, toward developments across the border in Mexico. The workers of the US and Mexico are the most closely joined in a common process of production across the militarized US-Mexican border. Since 2008, for example, the number of Mexican autoworkers has grown from 490,000 to 675,000, and Mexico has become the seventh largest auto producer in the world, as part of interlinked operations across the US, Mexico and Canada.

19. In opposition to the anti-Mexican agitation of the US trade unions and the ranting against “unfair trade deals” by Trump and Sanders, the SEP fights for the unity of US, Mexican and Canadian workers. This requires a political struggle against the pseudo-left organizations that subordinate Mexican workers to the CTM and the so-called reform unions, backed by the US State Department, the AFL-CIO, IG Metall and others.

20. At the same time, millions of Mexican workers toil in the fields, packing houses and low-paid jobs of every description in the US itself, providing a powerful objective foundation for the unification of workers on both sides of the border in a common struggle against capitalism.

21. The intensity of the class struggle in Mexico has repeatedly found bloody expression, from the massacre in Iguala and the disappearance of the 43 Ayotzinapa teaching students in 2014, to the massacre of the striking teachers in Nocixtlan, Oaxaca in June of this year. Both of these mass killings were bound up with the “Pact for Mexico,” imposed by the government of President Enrique Peña Nieto, with the backing of US imperialism. The “Pact,” which is directed at achieving a vast transfer of wealth from Mexican workers to the banks and corporations, furthers the privatization of the Mexican oil industry, as well as the profit-driven “education reform,” which has thrust teachers into struggle in the US, Brazil and elsewhere in the hemisphere.

22. On the one hand, the Mexican ruling class has responded to working class resistance with naked violence. This has been backed by Washington, which has spent billions of dollars to arm and train the country’s repressive forces through the Merida Initiative, and on the pretext of waging a “war on drugs.”

23. On the other hand, with the aid of various pseudo-left groups, the Mexican elites are seeking to create another “left” bourgeois political trap for the working class, in the form of the MORENA (National Regeneration Movement) of former Mexico City mayor and ex-Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) presidential candidate, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. This new political movement became necessary after a collapse in support for the PRD, which has been exposed as a corrupt, right-wing bourgeois party. It voted for the “Pact for Mexico” and was directly implicated in the Iguala massacre. Should MORENA succeed politically, it will inevitably play a similar role, seeking to divert and suppress the class struggle in order to better serve the interests of Mexican and US capitalism.

24. The struggle to unite the workers of the US with those of Mexico and the entire hemisphere is inseparably bound up with the irreconcilable defense of the rights of immigrant workers. Both major US capitalist parties are engaged in a relentless attack on these workers. The Obama administration has deported nearly 3 million immigrants since it came to office, more than all previous US governments combined. Women and children fleeing Central America because of grinding poverty and murderous violence—the legacy of a century of US imperialist oppression, along with near-genocidal Washington-imposed military dictatorships—have been treated as criminals, locked in detention camps to await deportation in violation of international law.

25. This policy will only intensify with the election of Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, who, as secretary of state, supported the 2009 coup in Honduras and then backed the summary deportation of child refugees fleeing the coup regime’s death squads. The Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has called for the mass roundup and deportation of millions of undocumented workers, while promising to “build the wall” on the Mexican border, which is already among the most militarized frontiers in the world.

26. The SEP must campaign relentlessly against attempts by the capitalist parties and corporate media to whip up anti-immigrant chauvinism and scapegoat this oppressed section of the working class for the unemployment, attacks on living standards and destruction of social

rights produced by the capitalist crisis. The SEP stands for the right of workers from every part of the world to live and work in the country they choose, with full citizenship rights, including the right to live, work and travel without fear of deportation and repression.

27. To advance the struggle for the unity of workers in the US with workers throughout the hemisphere, the *World Socialist Web Site* must pay the closest attention to the conditions and struggles of immigrant workers within the US, as well as to the class struggle and political crisis throughout Latin America. The WSWS must also seek to make its analysis known to the widest possible audience in the region, through the expansion and development of its Spanish and Portuguese language sections.

28. Above all, the SEP of the United States will provide the fullest collaboration and assistance to all those prepared to come forward and join the fight for the building of new sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International in Mexico and in every country of Central and South America.



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