

One year since the official acknowledgment of the Flint water crisis

Billions for infrastructure and health care not war!

Jerry White—Socialist Equality Party candidate for US president
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Today, we are publishing this statement, which was distributed at a broadcast forum held September 15 at Mott Community College in Flint, Michigan. The host of the event was Tom Sumner, a local radio and online talk format broadcaster. The three-hour program was called “Off The Beaten Path To The White House.” The full broadcast is available online on the program’s archive.

As the Socialist Equality Party’s candidate for US president, I denounce the continued government indifference towards the residents of Flint who have been poisoned with lead. I also want to express my solidarity with the working-class families and health care experts who defied intimidation and brought this issue to national and international attention.

It is now clear that Flint is not the only city facing a water crisis. The news every day reveals cities across the country that also have dangerously high levels of lead in their water systems—Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, and cities in New Jersey, the Carolinas and Ohio. It is publicly known that the majority of states are improperly testing drinking water for lead.

As public protests in Flint peaked last year, Democratic Party politicians descended on the city. Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders held a debate here, and this was followed by the appearance of President Barack Obama. All of the false tears they shed for Flint, however, have resulted in nothing. The Democrats, no less than Snyder, Trump and the Republicans, defend the capitalist system and the systematic looting of public assets by the financial aristocracy that produced this crisis.

While they all claim there is no money to replace lead pipes and provide lifetime health care and educational

programs for the children that were poisoned by lead, a new report from Brown University just revealed that the Democrats and Republicans have spent nearly \$5 trillion on the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere since 2001. In addition to the immense human cost—from the more than a million killed in the Middle East and the tens of thousands of US soldiers killed, maimed and psychologically damaged—the US has squandered trillions on these criminal wars.

What could be done with \$5 trillion?

This is more than enough to cover the \$3.6 trillion the American Society of Civil Engineers estimates is needed by 2020 to repair water systems, bridges, schools and other crumbling infrastructure. Instead, federal spending for water infrastructure has been slashed by more than 75 percent since 1978.

A half million teachers, nurses and other public sector workers could be hired at an annual salary of \$100,000 with this money.

The wars conducted by Bush and Obama are aimed at defending the interests of the same Wall Street banks and transnational corporations that are also waging war against the working class in the United States. After the 2008 financial crash, the Obama administration oversaw the handout of trillions of dollars to the banks.

Since the so-called recovery began, 95 percent of all income gains have gone to the top 1 percent of society. Today, the richest 25 billionaires have as much wealth as the bottom half of the US population, some 152 million Americans.

Both Clinton and Trump are committed to war, state repression and the continued channeling of society’s resources into the hands of the financial aristocracy.

The Socialist Equality Party is running in the

elections to prepare the mass struggles that will emerge soon afterwards. We are fighting to unite all workers and young people—of every race and nationality—on the basis of a socialist program.

The disaster in Flint is not caused by “institutional racism.” It is caused by the failure of the capitalist system, which has allowed corporations like GM to make trillions in profits and leave nothing behind but closed factories and environmental destruction.

We call for the nationalization of the big banks and giant corporations valued at \$10 billion and more, and the seizing of the ill-gotten gains of the financial criminals.

We call for a multi-trillion-dollar public works program to replace all dangerous pipes, rebuild the country’s decaying infrastructure, and put millions of the unemployed to work at good-paying and secure jobs. This must include continuous health care and education for all the victims of lead poisoning.

We urge workers and youth to take up this fight by supporting the Socialist Equality Party election campaign.



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