Build an international movement against imperialist war!

Socialist Equality Party
3 November 2016

This Saturday, November 5, the Socialist Equality Party and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality are holding a conference at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, "Socialism vs. Capitalism and War." The purpose of this conference is to review the world situation and outline a political strategy and plan for building a socialist movement of the American, Canadian and international working class against militarism and the danger of a Third World War.

The conference is being held three days before the US elections, which have exposed the deep crisis of the entire political order. The outcome of the election is not yet known, but regardless whether it is headed by Clinton or Trump, the next administration will pursue a policy of war abroad and social and political reaction at home.

The conference will analyze the world crisis, the objective forces that underlie it, the political strategy that the working class must adopt, and the concrete tasks that are necessary to build a new movement against imperialist war. It will be based on the following agenda:

1. The global crisis and the danger of World War III

Twenty-five years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the First Gulf War, and 15 years after the onset of the "war on terror," the unending regional wars launched by the United States are developing into an increasingly direct global confrontation with the larger rivals of American imperialism, including Russia and China. Behind the backs of the people, generals and Washington think tanks are drawing up plans for a major conflict between nations fighting over the terms of a new imperialist carve-up of the world.

2. The 2016 US elections, war and the crisis of American capitalism

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, who has the backing of dominant sections of the military and foreign policy establishment, supports the creation of a "no fly zone" in Syria, which leading generals have said would mean war with Russia. Republican candidate Donald Trump has focused his "America First" program on China, where the US is engaged in increasingly provocative military exercises as part of the Obama administration's "pivot to Asia."

As the US election staggers to its conclusion, both Clinton and Trump are engaged in scandal-mongering, behind which different factions of the ruling class fight out internal conflicts while covering up the central issues facing workers in America and around the world.

A major motive behind the US war drive is the need of the ruling class to redirect the explosive social tensions within the United States outward, against an external enemy. The aim is to unify by means of war a country that is deeply divided and presided over by institutions that lack any popular legitimacy. The Democrats and Republicans are despised by the broad mass of the population, and the two presidential candidates are the most unpopular in the modern history of the country.

3. The strategy of anti-imperialist struggle: Lessons of history

History shows that the fight against imperialist war must be rooted in the working class and based on an internationalist and socialist program. One hundred years ago, the Russian Revolution emerged out of the horrors of World War I, which took the lives of more than 38 million people. The Fourth International, formed in opposition to the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union, was established on the eve of World War II, which led to the deaths of 60 million more.

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It is an extraordinary political fact that even though the danger of world war is more immediate today than at any point since the height of the Cold War, there is no functioning anti-war movement in the United States or internationally. All the parties of the ruling class support war, while the pseudo-left organizations of the upper-middle class have become the most fervent supporters of imperialist intervention.

The November 5 conference is based on the program of the International Committee of the Fourth International, which insists that:

- The struggle against war must be based in the working class, the great revolutionary force in society;
- It must be anti-capitalist and socialist, since there can be no serious struggle against war unless it is directed against the economic system, capitalism, that is the fundamental cause of war;
- It must be independent of and hostile to all of the political parties and organizations of the ruling class;
- Above all, it must be international, mobilizing the vast power of the working class in a unified global struggle against imperialism.

4. Building the international movement against war

A new movement against imperialist war must be built! The same capitalist crisis that underlies the imperialist war drive also creates the objective conditions for socialist revolution.

Alongside the growth of war, the class struggle is intensifying. The central task is the building of a revolutionary leadership. The political influence of the International Committee of the Fourth International and the Socialist Equality Party must be extended to every corner of the globe. Branches of the International Youth and Students for Social Equality must be established at every school and university. Factory and workplace committees must be organized in the major plants and among key sections of the working class to prepare for the struggles to come.

The November 5 conference will be a milestone in preparing a socialist movement of the international working class against war and capitalism.

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