

SEP candidate Niles Niemuth says “the attacks on immigrants are aimed at the entire working class”

Our reporters
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Socialist Equality Party campaign teams continued to collect signatures in southeastern Michigan on Thursday and Friday to place Niles Niemuth on the November 6 ballot as the Socialist Equality Party’s candidate for the US House of Representatives in the state’s 12th congressional district. Niemuth and campaigners collected over 300 signatures in Ann Arbor, which includes University of Michigan, and Ypsilanti, a predominantly working-class city home to many autoworkers.

Niles issued a statement yesterday opposing the bipartisan war on immigrants being waged by the Democratic and Republican parties. “The Socialist Equality Party is fighting for the mobilization of the entire working class in defense of immigrants,” Niles said. “The attacks on immigrant workers are aimed at all workers, native-born and immigrant alike. They are intended to pit workers against one another, while the Trump administration’s erection of mass internment camps, run by the Navy, will ultimately be used against workers who oppose the ruling elite’s policies of war and austerity.”

Niles noted that the Democratic Party’s purported opposition to Trump’s immigration policies was entirely cynical: “It was the Obama administration which deported 2.7 million immigrants, more than any other previous president.”

“The Socialist Equality Party is the only party advancing an internationalist and socialist solution to the global refugee crisis. Workers everywhere must have the right to live and work wherever they choose,

with full citizenship rights.”

Niles will be campaigning at today’s demonstration against the attack on immigrants in Ann Arbor, Michigan. He called on workers and young people to read and distribute the Socialist Equality Party statement at rallies around the country.

Many of those who signed the petition to place Niemuth on the ballot also added statements in opposition to the assault on immigrants. Dianna, a registered nurse, said the anti-immigrant policies were “terrifying” and “it’s not going to stop there. I might have the wrong books on my bookshelf. One day they’re going to come for them too. It’s going more and more the way of Nazi Germany.”

Dianna said she was “not happy with the Democratic Party. They only mask their policies better than Trump does. I wish someone would stand up to Trump, but the Democrats are not going to do that.”

Johnathan, who works full-time as a cook in a bar in Ann Arbor, said he saw “no point in deporting people from the country or separating them from their children. One of the workers in my bar, his mom is concerned. She came here without documents from Mexico, but he was born here. She has been here for 23 years, what would she go back to?”

Niles told Johnathan that the attacks on immigrant workers were aimed at preventing a united struggle of all workers in defense of their social rights, including for higher wages, decent jobs, healthcare and education. “That makes sense,” Johnathan said. “There’s enough for everybody though. There’s so much money, but some people have so much that you couldn’t even spend it in your whole lifetime.”

“Maybe there should be a strike by workers

everywhere,” he added. “I’ve had so many jobs where the owners tell us that we need them. But the truth is they need us.” Johnathan asked how he could get involved in supporting the SEP’s campaign and asked to take petitions to circulate among his co-workers to get Niles on the ballot.

Ann, a student at Ann Arbor, signed the petition and told SEP campaigners that she had come to the US as an immigrant in 2004 from Bangladesh. “This is awful. No human being is illegal. They spend a trillion dollars each year on war and it is ridiculous. We could spend that money on so many things: not just on the roads, education, but we could be using those funds for immigrants, to provide decent jobs, aid and legal citizenship.”

Shira, a young mother pushing two children in a stroller, signed on Thursday. She said she is “fed up” with the Democrats, who are “getting more and more similar” to the Republicans, and that an alternative is needed.

“It’s all corporate driven politics,” she said. “I’ve been a staunch Democrat for many years, but it makes sense why Trump won.” Shira told campaigners she was one of the millions who had supported Bernie Sanders in 2016, only to be told to vote for Hillary Clinton to keep Trump out.

“Obama was more right-wing than Nixon was,” she said, adding, “at the root of it all is inequality.” She said that wars were “always fought for economic motives. I think to stop the wars we need to overhaul the entire economic system in this country.” Shira concluded that “we need an anti-establishment solution to Trump. And you can’t find that with the Democrats.”

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