

Socialist Equality Party (US) holds Eighth National Congress

Evan Blake
12 August 2024

The Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in the United States held its Eighth National Congress from August 4 to August 9, 2024. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Congress was held online.

The Congress unanimously adopted two resolutions, “The 2024 US elections and the tasks of the Socialist Equality Party,” which elaborates the programmatic basis of the SEP’s presidential election campaign of Joseph Kishore and Jerry White, and “Free Bogdan Syrotiuk!” These resolutions were the subject of extensive and detailed discussion by the delegates throughout the six days of the Congress.

The Congress was an international event, with substantial delegations from all the sections and sympathizing groups of the International Committee of the Fourth International. Greetings were delivered to the Congress by leading members of the ICFI from the UK, France, Germany, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Brazil.

David North was unanimously re-elected by the Congress delegates as the party’s national chairman. The newly elected National Committee re-elected Joseph Kishore as the party’s national secretary.

Kathleen Martin was elected as the party’s assistant national secretary. Lawrence Porter, who served as the party’s assistant national secretary since the SEP’s Founding Congress in 2008, announced his retirement from the position and remains in the leadership of the party. Martin, 32, joined the SEP in 2014 and has been on the National Committee of the SEP since 2018.

The incoming National Committee appointed three co-national editors of the *World Socialist Web Site*: Barry Grey, Andre Damon and Niles Niemuth.

In opening the Congress, David North paid tribute to Helen Halyard, a longtime leading member of the Socialist Equality Party and its predecessor, the

Workers League, who died on November 23, 2023, at the age of 73. Comrade Helen was a member of the National Committee of the Workers League/SEP from 1973 until her death.

“Helen played a major role in not only the history of the Workers League and Socialist Equality Party, but of the International Committee of the Fourth International,” North said. “Her contribution is embedded in the foundations of our world party. Though Helen is no longer with us physically, all that she contributed to the party lives on.”

North placed the work and tasks of the Congress in the context of the history of the party and the extraordinary crisis of the entire capitalist system.

“The Eighth Congress is being held under conditions of a massive economic and political crisis of the capitalist system,” he said, stressing that the US presidential election is dominated by two issues: “the escalation of American imperialism toward global war and the breakdown of democracy within the United States.”

The resolution, “The 2024 US elections and the tasks of the Socialist Equality Party,” outlines the features of the global capitalist crisis and the political basis of the SEP’s presidential election campaign. “The SEP does not have a separate election program,” the resolution states. “It utilizes the election campaign to develop and popularize the program of the party, which is rooted in and based on the perspective of the International Committee of the Fourth International.”

The resolution details the escalation of the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine, the imperialist-backed Israeli genocide in Gaza, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the extreme growth of social inequality and the turn of the ruling elites toward fascism and dictatorship. It states:

The crisis of global capitalism finds its most concentrated expression in the United States. Bourgeois democracy in America is on its last legs. One of the principal parties of the ruling class, the Republican Party, has acquired an increasingly overt fascist character, headed by the former president, Donald Trump, who less than four years ago instigated a coup aimed at overturning the presidential election result and the entire constitutional order. The central priority of the Democratic Party is to cover up this political transformation in order to gain the bipartisan support of the Republicans for the vast escalation of imperialist war.

The resolution points to the growth of mass opposition and class struggle throughout the world. “However, the transformation of this objective process into a conscious movement for socialism is not automatic,” it states. “Building the revolutionary leadership, in the United States and internationally, is the decisive strategic question upon which the fate of mankind depends.”

The Congress was devoted to a detailed examination of the historical background to different elements of the global crisis of capitalism and the response of the SEP.

Introducing the resolution, Joseph Kishore placed the party’s intervention in the 2024 elections in the context of a review of the political practice of the SEP in the 16 years since the party’s Founding Congress in 2008.

“It is a characteristic feature of our approach to politics that we do not respond impressionistically,” he explained. “We seek continuously to root our present analysis in the historical development of the capitalist crisis and the assimilation of the lessons of the experiences of the working class as they are consciously reflected in the history of the movement itself.”

There were extensive reports on the eruption of imperialist war (by Andre Damon), the attack on immigrants (by Eric London), the breakdown of democratic forms of rule (by Tom Mackaman and Tom Carter), the development of the class struggle and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (by Tom Hall and Jerry White), and the experience of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (by

Evan Blake and Benjamin Mateus).

One session of the Congress was devoted to a report by Clara Weiss and a discussion of the campaign by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) to free Bogdan Syrotiuk, the founder and leader of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), a Trotskyist youth organization that has declared its political solidarity with the ICFI. Members of the YGBL participated in the discussion.

Comrade Bogdan has been arrested by the fascist Zelensky regime in Ukraine on trumped-up charges for his opposition to the NATO-instigated Ukraine-Russia war and his fight for the unity of Russian and Ukrainian workers against imperialism and capitalism.

The resolution, adopted unanimously, demands the immediate and unconditional release of Bogdan and declares that the SEP “supports and encourages the widest circulation of this resolution on social media and other platforms, urging individuals and organizations to sign the petition calling for Bogdan’s release and to involve their communities in this critical campaign.”

The *World Socialist Web Site* will be publishing the resolutions, reports and greetings to the Congress over the coming days. We urge all of our readers to study these documents and make the decision to join the Socialist Equality Party.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact