# Socialist Equality Party (US) holds 9th National Congress amid world war, dictatorship and political radicalization

**Socialist Equality Party (US)**
**9 August 2026**

The Socialist Equality Party (US) held its Ninth National Congress from August 2 to 7, 2026. Delegates discussed and adopted resolutions on the fight against imperialist war, the breakdown of American democracy, the defense of immigrants, the escalation of class struggle and the building of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), the attitude of socialists to AI technology and the defense of the heritage of the two American Revolutions.

The SEP has held a national congress every two years since its Founding Congress in 2008. The Ninth Congress adopted the six resolutions unanimously. The congress also heard greetings and reports from the sections and sympathizing groups of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

The opening report by David North, national chairman of the SEP, introduced the first resolution and framed the congress as a whole. “The Ninth Congress of the Socialist Equality Party convenes at a critical turning point in the political history of the United States and the world—the point of intersection of war, economic crisis, and rapidly growing social radicalization,” North stated. Denouncing the war against Iran, he continued: “The aura of American invincibility, built up over three and a half decades on the brutal strategy of ‘shock and awe’ bombardments, has been shattered.”

A third world war, North explained, is already underway, developing “in the manner of a metastatic process: It is spreading globally as a chronic and expanding condition, colonizing new regions, fusing previously separate conflicts, and progressively transforming the world economy and every national state in preparation for the general conflagration toward which it tends.”

The report examined the fusion of the war’s separate fronts. What began as a proxy war in Ukraine has evolved “indisputably, into an undeclared but very real war by the NATO powers against Russia,” with deep-strike drone attacks now directed openly by American and French intelligence against targets in European Russia. “The catastrophic implications of NATO’s direction of attacks on Russia are obvious,” North stated. “The probability of a Russian counter-attack on NATO countries is increasing by the day.”

Five months into the assault on Iran, the report continued, the outcome is “a major strategic setback.” Iran has not capitulated, the Strait of Hormuz remains a contested war zone, American munitions stockpiles are depleted, and Washington’s own strategic analysts concede that the United States has arrived at a “strategic dead end.” This will produce not retreat but further escalation, including the possibility of an invasion, which “would only increase the scale of the disaster.”

The course of the war, North stated, “will send shock waves through the entire American and international political and financial system,” exposing “the rottenness of the existing social system based on capitalism—of its two-party system, corporate-controlled media, corrupted academy, bureaucratic labor organizations, identity-obsessed affluent pseudo-left and intellectually degraded culture.”

The same contradictions driving war, inequality and the turn to dictatorship have produced the emergence of the working class as a global force of resistance. The report traced “a single ascending curve” running from the strike waves triggered by a pandemic that has claimed more than 30 million lives, through the French pension struggles and general strikes across Southern Europe and South Asia, to the three “No Kings” protests, the largest single-day demonstrations in American history.

“After an 80-year taboo,” North stated, “socialism is reemerging in the United States itself, albeit in distorted forms, channeled by the Democratic Socialists of America back toward the Democratic Party, but expressing a shift in consciousness no apparatus can permanently contain.”

What stands between this movement and its political expression, the report explained, is the crisis of revolutionary leadership—a crisis, North stressed, that the ICFI has never held “resolves itself automatically.” It is in these terms that he defined the significance of the congress itself. “A perspective is an instrument of struggle,” he said. “Its publication, its verification and its defense are themselves moments in the resolution of the crisis of leadership, which is resolved not by objective processes alone but by the conscious building of the revolutionary party within them.”

North concluded by placing this fight on its historical foundations: the struggle for Trotskyism, which the International Committee embodies. “The next congress of the SEP in 2028 will coincide with the centenary of the founding of the International Left Opposition in 1928, in which James P. Cannon played so critical a role,” he stated. “The preparation for this historic anniversary must be the focus of attention for the education of a new generation in this history. This is the indispensable precondition for the resolution of the crisis of revolutionary leadership.”

Joseph Kishore, national secretary of the SEP, introduced the second resolution, on the political situation in the United States. The report reviewed the analysis made by the SEP and the WSWS of the origins and rise of Trump, contained in the recently published *Oligarchy: Trump and the Breakdown of American Democracy*. The volume, Kishore said, “is the documentary record of the analysis upon which the resolution before this congress rests.” He urged that it be studied by every member of the party.

The report then turned to the radicalization now developing within the United States. “Under the blows of impossible living costs, endless war, ICE murder and the open construction of dictatorship, millions are being propelled into political life and are moving to the left, a movement that the Democratic Party seeks to smother and control.”

The initial beneficiary of this movement, the Democratic Socialists of America, is “a 44-year-old organization resting on a political lineage of

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nearly 90 years, every stage of which was defined by a break from Marxism and from the working class”—from Max Shachtman’s 1940 break with Trotskyism, through Michael Harrington’s program of “realignment” within the Democratic Party, to the merger that founded the DSA in 1982. “The DSA is not a working class organization,” Kishore stated. “It arose from two petty-bourgeois tendencies, it rests today on the affluent layers of the professional middle class, and its function within the political system is not to represent workers but to manage them on behalf of the Democratic Party.”

The task of the party, Kishore concluded, is to win the workers and young people now moving toward socialism to a genuinely revolutionary perspective.

Eric London introduced the third resolution, on the defense of immigrants. His report documented an administration that “has continued its efforts to establish authoritarian rule by using immigration as the instrument for dismantling the democratic rights of the entire population.”

“Whatever remained of American ‘democracy’ is breaking down in real time,” London stated. “No institution of the political establishment is stopping Trump.” Over three decades, both parties built the apparatus now being turned against the population, he explained. The administration, the report concluded, “is setting up a social clash of immense historic proportions, for which the party and the working class must be politically prepared.”

Tom Hall introduced the fourth resolution, which documents the growth of workers’ struggles on every continent. Against trade union bureaucracies that function as an anti-strike corporate police force, the resolution advances the building of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), whose purpose “is not to influence the existing trade union bureaucracies but to organize a rank-and-file insurrection against them.”

Hall concluded: “The conscious factor will be decisive. It would be a serious political error to assume that the objective crisis will resolve itself, or that our role is confined to observing events and commenting upon them after the fact.”

Evan Blake introduced the fifth resolution, on the party’s attitude to artificial intelligence (AI). The report situated its analysis within the Marxist approach to technology, explaining that none of AI’s reactionary uses “flow from the technology itself, but from the social relations within which it is developed—private ownership, the profit system and the division of the world into rival nation-states.”

On this basis, the report rejected the hostility to AI promoted across the pseudo-left, explaining that “the practical result of a categorical rejection of AI is not to disarm the corporations and the state, which will wield it regardless, but to disarm the working class alone.” Hostility to AI, Blake said, “obliterates the distinction upon which the entire Marxist attitude toward technology rests: the distinction between a machine and the social order in which it functions.” The resolution demands the expropriation of the technology monopolies and the direction of the technology toward human need within a planned world economy, and insists that not a single job be lost to AI-driven automation.

The report and subsequent discussion also emphasized the significance of Socialism AI, launched by the International Committee in December 2025, which, as Blake noted, places the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Trotsky, Luxemburg and Plekhanov and the archives of nearly three decades of the *World Socialist Web Site* “at the disposal of workers and young people entering into struggle everywhere, at once, in any language, at any hour.”

Tom Mackaman introduced the final resolution, adopted in the year of the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. The Declaration’s indictment of the King, he stated, “reads as though it were written as much against the present occupant of the White House as the former resident of Buckingham Palace.”

An oligarchy whose concentration of wealth “is incompatible with democratic forms of rule” must, Mackaman explained, “destroy the idea of equality, the most powerful idea in all of American and world history”—a repudiation advanced openly by Vice President JD Vance, who has recast the United States as a *völkisch* race-nation rather than a republic founded on the principles of the Declaration.

A separate evening session was devoted to the memory of Alan Gelfand (July 28, 1949–October 29, 2025) and to a discussion of *Security and the Fourth International*, the International Committee’s investigation into the assassination of Leon Trotsky by Stalin’s GPU and the infiltration of the Trotskyist movement by state agents. Gelfand, a Los Angeles public defender, was expelled from the Socialist Workers Party in 1979 after demanding an investigation into the presence of government agents in its leadership. In the more than four decades since, every charge Gelfand raised regarding the penetration of the SWP by state agents has been substantiated.

The congress elected a new national committee and reelected David North as national chairman. The members of the incoming national committee reelected Joseph Kishore as national secretary, Kathleen Martin as assistant national secretary, and Barry Grey and Andre Damon as co-national editors of the WSWS.

The congress was not simply an event in the life of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States. It was international in character. Representatives of all the sections and sympathizing groups of the International Committee of the Fourth International took part.

Contributions were made by Chris Marsden, national secretary of the SEP in the UK; Alex Lantier, national secretary of the PES in France; Deepal Jayasekera, general secretary of the SEP in Sri Lanka; Cheryl Crisp, national secretary of the SEP in Australia; Tom Peters, leading member of the Socialist Equality Group in New Zealand; Ula? Ate?çi, national chairman of the SEP in Turkey; Tomas Castanheira, leading member of the Socialist Equality Group in Brazil; Keith Jones, national secretary of the SEP in Canada; and Christoph Vandreier, chairman of the SGP in Germany. The congress also received greetings from the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists in the former Soviet Union.

These greetings and reports were not formalities but political contributions, bringing to the deliberations the experiences of the working class on every continent.

The resolutions adopted proceed not from American conditions but from an analysis of world economy and world politics, of which the crisis in the United States is a particular and concentrated expression. The work of the SEP is a national component of a single international struggle: the building of the world party of socialist revolution.

The documents of this congress demonstrate what a genuine Marxist analysis and a revolutionary perspective consist of. Amid an escalating world war, the open construction of dictatorship in the United States and a social crisis without precedent in modern history, no other party or organization anywhere is capable of seriously analyzing the present situation, let alone advancing a program to answer it. The congress elaborated a perspective not of maneuvering within the existing order but of mobilizing the international working class against it, on the program of world socialist revolution.

The reports, resolutions and contributions to the discussion of the Ninth National Congress will be published on the *World Socialist Web Site* in the coming days. They will play a significant role in the political education of masses of workers and young people, and they constitute the analysis and program with which the working class must arm itself in the struggles now opening up.

Everyone who is serious about the fight against war, dictatorship and capitalism—everyone looking for a genuine socialist movement—should study these documents, draw the conclusions that flow from them and make the decision to join the Socialist Equality Party.

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