Resolution of the Ninth Congress of the Socialist Equality Party

On the international class struggle and the building of the IWA-RFC

Socialist Equality Party (US)
31 August 2026

We are publishing here "On the international class struggle and the building of the IWA-RFC," the fourth of six resolutions adopted unanimously by the Ninth National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (US), held from August 2–7, 2026. The resolution was introduced in a report by Tom Hall.

1. The period since the Eighth Congress has seen a significant acceleration of the class struggle on every continent. In the first quarter of 2026 alone, 458 strikes were recorded across just eight European countries, including five general strikes at the national or regional level: national general strikes in Belgium and Italy, regional general strikes in Andalusia and the Basque Country and a general strike in Northern Cyprus. A national general strike swept Argentina in February; some 1.7 million state employees struck in the Indian state of Maharashtra; and general strikes have swept Africa.

2. The class struggle is also intensifying in the United States. Sixteen major strikes erupted in the first five months of 2026, ahead of the pace of 30 for all of 2025. These included the strikes by 31,000 Kaiser healthcare workers, 15,000 New York City nurses, 42,000 University of California workers, 6,400 San Francisco educators, 3,800 JBS meatpackers and the ongoing rebellion among auto-parts workers in the Midwest, expressed in massive contract rejections at Nexteer, Dana and other plants. Alongside the strike movement have come the "No Kings" demonstrations involving millions and the mass protests against ICE raids in Minneapolis and other cities.

3. This Congress affirms the assessment made in the opening report to the 2026 International May Day Rally, that the first months of 2026 "mark the point at which the resistance of the working class has emerged as a global force, contending against the offensive of the oligarchy on a scale that places the fundamental questions of the epoch—war or peace, dictatorship or democracy, socialism or barbarism—directly on the historical agenda."

4. These struggles are unfolding increasingly in direct conflict not only with employers and governments, but with the trade union bureaucracies that function as an anti-strike corporate police force. This Congress reaffirms the analysis developed in the 2018 resolution "The Resurgence of Class Struggle and the Tasks of the Socialist Equality Party" and the Seventh Congress resolution "Build the IWA-RFC in the United States!" (2022), which stressed that the nationally based, pro-corporate bureaucracies, whose degeneration is rooted in the globalization of production, are structurally incompatible with the defense of an internationally integrated working class.

5. Against the apparatus, this Congress advances the building of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), founded by the ICFI in April 2021. The IWA-RFC is based on an international strategy. Its purpose is not to influence the existing trade union bureaucracies but to organize a rank-and-file insurrection against them and to transfer power to the growing network of factory, shop floor and workplace committees. The rank-and-file committees assembled under the banner of the IWA-RFC are the fighting organizations and schools of revolution of the present period, as the committees of correspondence and safety were the schools of the American Revolution in 1773–76.

6. The strategy of the SEP proceeds from the understanding that the development of the class struggle creates the conditions for the growth of socialist consciousness, the building of revolutionary leadership and the conquest of power. There is no revolution without the entry of the working class into struggle. Conversely, the artificial suppression of the class struggle by the labor

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bureaucracy over the past 45 years has produced a massive reversal in the social position of the working class—labor's share of GDP has fallen to the lowest level on record, going back to 1947—and created the conditions for the domination of right-wing politics and reaction. To this must be added the bureaucracy's relentless promotion of economic nationalism and "buy American" chauvinism, which has fed directly into the poisonous atmosphere on which the far right thrives. The building of rank-and-file committees is aimed at breaking the grip of the bureaucracy and creating the means through which the enormous social opposition now developing can find a revolutionary expression.

7. This strategy is counterposed to that of the tendencies that rejected the fight for socialist consciousness in the working class and devoted themselves instead to the supposed reform of the bureaucracy. The Teamsters for a Democratic Union, founded a half century ago, is the model. Promoting one "reform" bureaucrat after another, it blocked the development of the political struggle of the working class at every point, even as the bureaucracy integrated itself into the structure of corporate management and the capitalist state. Fifty years later, these tendencies have themselves been absorbed into the apparatus they promised to reform, where they function as anticommunist defenders of war and of the suppression of workers' democratic rights. TDU's chosen "reformer," Sean O'Brien, appeared on the platform of the Republican National Convention.

8. This Congress gives its strongest support to the campaign of Will Lehman, the Mack Trucks worker and socialist, for president of the UAW in the 2026 elections. In the 2022 elections, Shawn Fain was presented as a "reformer" by the pseudo-left organizations that operate in and around the apparatus and the Democratic Party, including *Jacobin*, the DSA, *Labor Notes* and others. Over the past three years, Fain has presided over the betrayal of tens of thousands of auto and auto parts workers, collaborated with the Trump tariff regime, preemptively shut down academic-worker struggles, and suppressed all opposition at the 2026 Constitutional Convention, while the court-appointed monitor recently documented a "toxic culture of division and retaliation at the highest levels of the organization." The bureaucracy cannot be reformed. It must be abolished.

9. The Lehman campaign's program gives concrete form to the perspective of the IWA-RFC: the end of the dictatorship of the Solidarity House apparatus and the transfer of power to a network of rank-and-file committees on the shop floor; the replacement of nearly 50 years of pro-corporate policies with a strategy of class struggle; full recovery of wages lost to concessions and inflation, a zero-layoff policy, company-paid healthcare, and a 30-hour week with no loss of pay to stop automation-driven job cuts; the repudiation of the bureaucracy's nationalism, counterposing an international strategy based on the unified struggle of American, Canadian and Mexican workers against transnational corporations; the defense of immigrant workers against the ICE raids and deportations; and the mobilization of the industrial power of the membership against dictatorship and war.

10. The fear of the apparatus towards the rank-and-file rebellion embodied in Lehman's campaign has now found expression in open death threats. On July 16, a high-ranking UAW official and prominent Fain supporter, until recently the assistant director of Lehman's own region, posted a death threat on Lehman's campaign page: an AI-generated image depicting Lehman bound and gagged, blood running from his mouth, with a masked gunman aiming a rifle at his back. This Congress calls for the broadest campaign in defense of Will Lehman, demanding the public repudiation of the threat by the UAW. The defense of Lehman is the defense of the democratic rights of the entire working class against the gangster methods of the labor bureaucracy.

11. This Congress resolves to mobilize workers and youth behind the Lehman campaign and the campaign to defend him against the death threat issued by the UAW apparatus; to build rank-and-file committees in every factory, workplace, school, and neighborhood in which the party is active; to extend the IWA-RFC into logistics, healthcare, education and the public sector, and to develop its international coordination with the sections of the ICFI in the fight against the global assault on jobs and against war and dictatorship; to defend science and culture as social rights, connecting the struggles of educators, scientists and artists against censorship and the profit-driven assault on intellectual labor to the fight to make the cultural achievements of humanity accessible to all; and to recruit the most class-conscious workers into the SEP.

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