Resolution of the Ninth Congress of the Socialist Equality Party

# From the first to the third American Revolution

**Socialist Equality Party (US)**
**15 September 2026**

*We are publishing here "From the first to the third American Revolution," the sixth and final resolution adopted unanimously by the Ninth National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (US), held from August 2 to 7, 2026. The resolution was introduced by the report from Tom Mackaman.*

1. July 4, 2026 marked the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, one of the great revolutionary documents in human history. In the year of the semiquincentennial, the Trump administration and the capitalist oligarchy are constructing a presidential dictatorship.

2. The first American Revolution overthrew the power of monarchy and proclaimed in universal terms—"all men are created equal"—principles that would inspire revolutionary movements for the next two and a half centuries. The second American Revolution, the Civil War of 1861-65, destroyed chattel slavery in the most thoroughgoing confiscation of property in history to that point, under the leadership of Lincoln, whose cause Marx and the First International championed. In contrast to the petty-bourgeois condemnation of the American Revolution, the Marxist movement has never dismissed the bourgeois revolutions as mere masks for property; it defends them as world-historical advances whose promises the bourgeoisie itself would betray.

3. The "self-evident truth" proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence that all men are created equal now confronts a society in which a single individual commands a trillion dollars, the top one percent holds a greater share of wealth than has ever been recorded, and the bottom half of the population holds 2.5 percent—an aristocracy of money exceeding in its privileges the monarchical order against which the Revolution was made. The existence of this oligarchy is incompatible with democratic forms of rule.

4. The heritage of the bourgeois democratic revolutions in the United States is under assault from two directions. The Trumpist right drapes its program of dictatorship in the stolen symbols of 1776, converting the Revolution into an exceptionalist nationalist mythology deployed in the service of mass deportations and presidential dictatorship. The racialist school of the *New York Times*' 1619 Project, speaking for the Democratic Party and privileged layers of the middle class, recasts the Revolution as a war for the preservation of slavery and American history as an unbroken racial struggle—dissolving class into race and delegitimizing the democratic tradition itself.

5. Against both falsifications stands the sustained historical work of the *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Committee. Beginning in 2019, the WSWS organized the definitive answer to the 1619 Project, publishing interviews with the leading historians of the American Revolution and the Civil War and collecting this work in *The New York Times' 1619 Project and the Racialist Falsification of History* (2021). This intervention demonstrated that the defense of historical truth is not an academic exercise but a political task: the racialist falsification of history is directed against the unity of the working class. Nor did it come from nowhere. Thirty years have passed since David North's *Equality, the Rights of Man and the Birth of Socialism* (1996), which defended the Enlightenment and the egalitarian heritage of the bourgeois revolutions when they were under attack from every section of the political establishment.

6. The party's defense of the American Revolution against the petty-bourgeois left has been vindicated by events. On the eve of the greatest assault on democratic

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rights in American history, the pseudo-left prepared the ground for it: the Revolution was recast as a crime, the Declaration of Independence dismissed as a slaveholder's lie, and statues of Washington, Jefferson, and even Lincoln defaced and torn down. In teaching a generation that the democratic heritage of 1776 was nothing but a mask for oppression, the pseudo-left disarmed opposition to the real conspiracy against democratic rights and ceded the symbols of the Revolution to the fascist right.

7. This work has been continued and deepened in the anniversary year. On June 25, 2026, the WSWS convened the webinar "The American Revolution and Its Place in History: From the War Against Monarchy to 'No Kings'," bringing together eminent historians of the Revolution and the Civil War. Its title draws the connection between the revolutionary struggle against monarchy in 1776 and the movement of millions today against an American would-be king. This Congress endorses this initiative and its extension through the anniversary period.

8. Political equality is a fiction where economic life is ruled by an oligarchy; the "consent of the governed" is a fiction where the state is owned by the rich. The defense of democratic rights is therefore inseparable from the conquest of political power by the working class, the expropriation of the oligarchy and the great corporations, and their transformation into public property under democratic working-class control, carried out as a component of the world socialist revolution.

9. This Congress resolves: to make the defense of the revolutionary tradition and the fight for its socialist completion a sustained axis of the work of the SEP, the IYSSE and the WSWS throughout the anniversary period; to extend the webinar and lecture series and the collaboration with serious historians of the Revolution and the Civil War; and to bring this historical work into the factories, workplaces and campuses, drawing the connection between the revolutionary traditions of the American people and the socialist revolution that will complete them.

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