

# The Breakdown of Capitalism and the Fight for Socialism in the United States Program of the Socialist Equality Party

## Part three

### For social equality

97. One of the basic tests of whether a society is moving forward or backward is whether it is becoming more equal or less equal. The levels of inequality that exist in the US are virtually without precedent in history. The past four decades have seen a shocking growth of inequality. In the 1970s, the top 1 percent of the population took in about 8 to 9 percent of annual income. By 2007, its share had soared to 23.5 percent, a level not seen since the 1920s, on the eve of the Great Depression. During this same period, 58 percent of all income growth has gone to the top one percent of the population, and 35 percent to the top one-tenth of one percent. Income for the bottom 60 percent of the population declined by about 5 percent.

98. On a world scale, there are now more than one thousand billionaires, including more than 400 in the US. Collectively, this layer of the super-rich saw their wealth grow by 50 percent in 2009, to \$3.6 trillion. The wealth of this layer has grown amidst the greatest economic

crisis in generations due to the policies of governments throughout the world, above all the Obama administration. The multi-trillion-dollar bailout of the financial system was accompanied by the rejection of any measures that would curb compensation for corporate executives and hedge fund managers.

99. The apologists for capitalism claim that inequality is not related to the economic crisis, as if the withdrawal of trillions of dollars from productive use has no economic impact. The continual and insatiable drive of the financial aristocracy for more and more money has bankrupted the country and fueled one speculative binge after another. The same corporate CEOs who say they have no money to pay decent wages and who carry out massive job cuts somehow manage to pay themselves and their top executives millions or even tens of millions of dollars every year.

100. Immediate measures must be taken to promote social equality and a radical redistribution of wealth, including a progressive income tax that places the burden of taxation on the rich, while lowering taxes for the vast majority of the

population. Taxes on the profits of all major corporations must also be sharply increased.

101. The expropriation of the rich is justified not only economically and politically, but also morally and legally. Balzac's adage that behind every great fortune stands a great crime is certainly true of today's aristocracy. From Enron to the subprime mortgage racket, so much of this wealth has been garnered through methods that have been thoroughly destructive and outright criminal. Yet only an insignificant handful of these corporate criminals have been held accountable, and those most culpable get off scot-free. The SEP advocates the investigation and prosecution of those involved in speculative activities and criminal misappropriation of social and corporate resources.

102. The fight for social equality includes opposition to all forms of discrimination based on race, gender, ethnicity, religion, national origin and sexual orientation. However, genuine equality does not mean the rationing out of limited education and job opportunities on the basis of race or

other categories. Such affirmative action policies benefit only a privileged few, while pitting white and minority workers and students against one another in a divisive struggle for jobs and college admission. We insist on full equality, within the framework of a massive social investment to guarantee all social needs, including free and open admission to universities. Only such a policy, based on the unity in struggle of all sections of working people, can create the conditions for a society in which all people can enjoy economic security and realize their full potential.

Political and Democratic Demands

103. There are, finally, a series of democratic and political demands that are of critical importance to the future of the working class. Its struggle cannot be confined to demands of an economic character, however important they are in themselves. Working people must be continuously mindful of the broader political and international context in which the fight against "their" ruling class unfolds. The SEP includes in its program demands that address themselves to crucial political issues:

### Defend democratic rights

104. The growth of social inequality is incompatible with democracy. The new aristocracy brings with it the aristocratic principle of government, in which the state functions ever more openly as an instrument of class rule. From ancient Rome to pre-revolutionary France and Russia and up to the present, those who have accumulated great wealth will use any means to keep it. Basic democratic rights in the US established by the American Revolution and Civil War—including the rights of free speech and political association, the right to vote, the right to due process safeguards in criminal proceedings, and protections against illegal searches and seizures—are today under relentless assault.

105. The attacks of September 11 have been used as a pretext to massively expand domestic spying, restrict freedom of speech and association, and increase the powers of the executive branch. The American ruling class has erected a vast "national security state," including the Department of Homeland Security, backed by hundreds of separate government agencies and private companies. The powers of the FBI and the National Security Agency to spy on the population have been expanded through the Patriot Act and executive orders. The US government has declared the power to hold anyone, including US citizens, indefinitely without charge.

106. The attack on democratic rights is deeply rooted in the structure of American society, particularly its extreme levels of social inequality, and is not the product of one administration. This is proven by the actions of the Obama White House, which has deepened the anti-democratic policies of Bush. It has opposed the investigation of Bush administration officials for violations of the Constitution, continues to support the Patriot Act and other anti-democratic legislation, has suppressed the publication of photos depicting torture and other evidence of criminality, and has in-

voked the state secrets privilege to block lawsuits by victims of torture. Obama has also sharply expanded the persecution of government whistleblowers and is leading a campaign against WikiLeaks for publishing documents that reveal the criminality of US military operations.

107. Lacking any solution to the crisis besetting American society, the American ruling elite and its government resort to locking up a greater portion of the population than any other country on earth. The self-proclaimed leader of the "free world" holds 2.3 million people behind bars under conditions of extreme brutality, while more than 5 million are on supervised parole or probation. The US remains one of the few advanced countries to employ the death penalty, executing 1,216 individuals since the Supreme Court sanctioned the resumption of judicial killings in 1977.

108. The defense of democratic rights requires shutting down the national security state apparatus and its multiple agencies—the Department of Homeland Security, the CIA, FBI, NSA—and the repeal of the Patriot Act and other police-state measures imposed in the name of the "war on terror." The working class must launch a counteroffensive against the attempts by the ruling elite to whip up reactionary social and political forces in support of its attacks on basic rights. It must strive not only to defend the democratic and social gains of the past, but to democratize American society. This must include the repeal of the death penalty and the dismantling of the domestic police and prison complex.

### Oppose militarism and war

109. The growth of militarism poses the starkest threat to democratic rights. Half a century ago, President and former World War II commander Dwight D. Eisenhower warned against the emergence of a "military industrial complex" with the "potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power." The American people, he cautioned, "should take nothing for granted." The military's power has grown uninterrupted in the intervening decades, while its transformation into an "all-volunteer" force has isolated it increasingly from the democratic sentiments of the population.

110. Today's soldiers, largely drawn from among working class youth, are subjected to continuous deployments. Tens of thousands suffer post-traumatic stress, horrific injuries or death in Washington's neo-colonial wars. They are taught that they are "warriors" in an attempt to create what amounts to a separate military caste. The officer corps has become increasingly politicized and right-wing, with its senior members openly challenging the civilian government on matters of policy. In its social position and ideology, the American military has become more and more like its counterparts throughout the world that have carried out armed coups and imposed bloody dictatorships.

111. The military plays an ever more direct role in American political life. The Posse Comitatus Act, which prohibits the use of the

military within the US, has been undermined through the open use of the military in domestic settings. The creation of the Northern Command has established for the first time a military command structure overseeing the US. All of these measures are the embryonic foundation for military-police rule in the United States.

112. The world economy is integrated as never before in a single system of production, and yet this has only exacerbated the conflicts between nation-states and heightened the danger of war. Bush's "wars of the Twenty-First Century" began with the US invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001, now the longest military engagement in the country's history. This was followed by the invasion of Iraq in March 2003. These two wars have been accompanied by a series of smaller engagements and the growing threat of a much broader conflict between the major powers.

113. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqis and Afghans have been killed by US aggression, and millions more turned into refugees. About 7,000 US and other foreign occupation troops have lost their lives. All over the world, atrocities carried out by the American military against civilians have become routine, while the US openly upholds the right to assassinate its perceived opponents—including US citizens.

114. The Obama administration has expanded these wars, including a massive surge of US soldiers in Afghanistan. Bombing campaigns in Pakistan have increased, and the administration is expanding threats and sanctions against Iran.

115. Enormous resources are expended by the American state in producing the most advanced means of destruction imaginable. Adding together the military budget and direct spending for US war abroad (over \$700 billion total) to military-related spending outside of the Department of Defense, total annual military spending exceeds \$1 trillion.

116. Both Republican and Democratic administrations invoke the strange and unexplained events of September 11, 2001 as justification for an unending global "war on terror." In reality, this is merely a pretext for wars of aggression that are being fought to secure US hegemony over regions that are of vital geo-strategic importance and contain much of the world's oil, gas and other natural resources.

117. The economic crisis has sharply increased global tensions, which threaten at any point to break out into war. The US is actively preparing for a military conflict with China, while the old divisions in Europe that led to two world wars are reemerging. American imperialism's attempts to exploit the collapse of the Soviet Union to expand its influence in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics is leading to increasing tensions with Russia, which poses the threat of direct military conflict, as seen in the US-backed Georgian assault on South Ossetia in August 2008. And, just as in the 1930s, economic and trade

## LOCAL TENDER BOARD

FOR THE CITY OF WINDHOEK



### Tender Invitation

#### TENDER NO.M 90/10

**Title:** SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION OF TIME-OF-USE COMPATIBLE METERS FOR THE CITY OF WINDHOEK.

**Description:** The Electricity department of the City of Windhoek wish to procure services of a private entity/entities for the supply and installation of Time-of-Use compatible meters at demand customer sites of the City of Windhoek.

**Compulsory Site Meeting:** Will be held on Friday the 01<sup>st</sup> October 2010 at 10h00 at the Electrical Department, c/o Stokes and Armstrong Street, Southern Industrial Area.

**Closing Date:** Friday, 15 October 2010 at 11h00

**Tender Documents:** Available as from Monday, 27 September 2010 at 14h00, at the Customer Care Centre, Rev. Michael Scott Street, Windhoek.

**Levy:** N\$ 250.00 (Non-refundable)

**Enquiries Technical:** Ms. Tuhupa Zatzirua- Tel: +264 61- 2902337

#### Tender No.:M102/10

**Description:** REPAIR OF 75 kW AERATOR GEARBOX FOR THE CITY OF WINDHOEK.

**Closing Date:** 15 October 2010 at 11h00

**Site Inspection:** A compulsory site inspection will be held at the Bulk and Waste Water Offices, Pullman Street, Windhoek on Thursday 30 September 2010, at 11h00.

**Tender Documents:** Available as from the 27 September 2010 at 9h00, at the Customer Care Centre, Rev. Michael Scott Street, Windhoek.

**Levy:** N\$ 100.000 (Non-refundable).

**Contact Person:** Mr. CJ Brinkmann. -Tel: +264-(0)61-290 2418 - Fax: +264-(0) 61-290 2404

E-mail: [cjb@windhoekcc.org.na](mailto:cjb@windhoekcc.org.na)

#### TENDER NO.M 104/10

**Title:** Consulting Service to Review and Upgrade the proposed Klein Windhoek Extension 4 EIA Report

**Description:** To review and upgrade the Klein Windhoek Extension 4 EIA Report in terms of the potential impacts of the proposed development on the environment and to facilitate the issuance of the Environmental Clearance Certificate by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism

**Compulsory Site Meeting:** A Compulsory tender briefing will be held on Friday, 01 October 2010 at 14h00 in the Committee Room, Customer Care Centre, Rev. Michael Scott Street, Windhoek

**Closing Date:** Friday, 08 October 2010 at 11h00

**Tender Documents:** Available as from Monday, 27 September 2010 at 14h00, at the Customer Care Centre, Rev. Michael Scott Street, Windhoek.

**Levy:** N\$ 150.00 (Non-refundable)

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**DELIVERY ADDRESS:** Tender Box, Customer Care Centre, City of Windhoek

Rev Michael Scott Street

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