

SEP presidential campaign comes to Virginia

By our correspondents
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Supporters of the Socialist Equality Party and the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) campaigned in northern Virginia for a meeting with presidential candidate Jerry White.

On Thursday, White and a campaign team spoke with students at the Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) Annandale campus in a suburban area of Washington, DC. One of the largest and most diverse educational institutions in the region, NOVA has tens of thousands of students, many coming from an international background.

One student, Brandon, spoke to IYSSE campaigners about his disappointment with the Obama administration. He was especially frustrated that Obama, despite the campaign promises made in 2008, has continued to operate the prison camp at Guantanamo Bay while expanding the use of illegal assassinations using drone aircraft. Brandon also said that working people needed an "independent mass party," as both the Democrats and the Republicans had failed.

David, another student at the Annandale campus, said that he had heard of socialism in high school, but had thought that it was "somewhat idealistic." However, he felt that something had to be done in response to the policies of the Democrats and Republicans. "I don't think that the big corporations will help us," David added.

After campaigning at NOVA, White gave an interview to student television at George Mason University. Also located in northern Virginia, George Mason is a large public university with many students from across America as well as a sizable international student body.

White was interviewed by third-year history student Nathan Moore, who started the interview by asking about the differences between the SEP campaign and those of other third party candidates, such as the Green

Party and the Libertarians. White replied that the SEP was a party of the working class, based on the struggle for socialist internationalism. While the Democrats and Republicans are the main parties of the financial elite, the Greens and Libertarians also defend capitalism and only seek some accommodation with the two main parties.

Asked if socialism was still relevant, White replied that only Trotsky and the Trotskyist movement provide an account of the historic betrayals of Stalinism and the fate of the Soviet Union. The recent deadly attacks on striking South African miners by the South African government provided tragic confirmation of the correctness of Trotsky's insistence that the interests of the working class could only be realized through an international fight for socialism.

At the public meeting at NOVA's Annandale campus Thursday evening, White addressed 26 students, workers and professionals. Some had travelled from the city of Baltimore in Maryland to hear the SEP candidate.

White explained that, regardless of which big business party won the 2012 elections, the US ruling elite was determined to carry on with and intensify its program of destroying the social conditions and democratic rights of the working class while expanding militarism abroad.

White's address was followed by a lively discussion, with audience members asking about the SEP's attitude to education reform, alternative energy sources, and the influence of big money on the electoral process. A full report of the public meeting will be posted on the WSWS tomorrow.

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