

Public meetings in Australia discuss the US drive to war

Our reporter
1 November 2002

In a comprehensive lecture entitled “The political economy of American militarism in the 21st century”, WSWs Editorial Board member and Socialist Equality Party national secretary Nick Beams warned audiences of students, workers and youth in Melbourne and Sydney that, notwithstanding the current flurry of diplomatic manoeuvring in the United Nations, the United States was preparing to invade Iraq by next February at the latest, and set up a colonial-style government.

While the Bush administration was intent on seizing Iraq’s huge oil reserves, this was not its sole motivation. “The war against Iraq is only one part of what is a much wider agenda—the drive by American imperialism for domination of the entire globe.”

Beams asked: “What consequences will follow from the dawning of a new age of imperialism at the beginning of the 21st century?” and emphasised that one could only answer the question by reviewing the historical experiences of the 20th century. “To understand what the future has in store, one has to delve more deeply into the past.”

After examining the economic and political driving forces behind the renewed drive to global war, Beams demonstrated that the struggle against it had to be based on the mobilisation of the international working class against the global capitalist system itself, requiring the building of the world party of socialist revolution.

Nearly 200 people heard the lecture, which was delivered to public meetings at Sydney University, the University of Western Sydney and in the inner-city suburb of Richmond, Melbourne. The majority were tertiary students from a wide variety of family backgrounds—from the Middle East, South-East Asia, China, the Indian subcontinent, the United States and Europe—along with several workers and high school

students. Many were attending their first political meeting. Some came after reading leaflets or posters, while others had discussed with SEP members campaigning on the campuses. Several were already regular readers of the *World Socialist Web Site*, but few had heard WSWs speakers before.

The hour-long address received a very warm and appreciative response at all three meetings. In the wide-ranging question and answer sessions that followed, the most significant feature was the lack of any opposition or challenge to the historical analysis presented by Beams. What dominated was a deep-going concern about the impending war and a thirst for a more profound understanding of its causes. The questions were serious and thoughtful, seeking further clarification on critical issues such as the origins and character of terrorist groups in Asia, the historical role of the working class, the nature of the Soviet Union and the impact of Stalinism, the motivation behind the war in Afghanistan, the history and role of Saddam Hussein, the significance of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the role of the US government in the September 11 terror attacks, and how to stop imperialist war.

One question came up repeatedly: is it possible to rely on other governments, which oppose the US agenda, to prevent the war against Iraq? In his reply, Beams explained that the deepening conflicts between the US, Germany, France and other capitalist powers contained the seeds for another world war. The working class could not place its confidence in the European Union, the Schroeder government in Germany, the Australian government or any other. It had to develop its own independent and global political movement against the very socio-economic system that gives rise, inevitably, to war.

Beams emphasised that once again, a period had opened up in which the world would be reorganised. “This will be done either by the great powers or by the international working class,” he said.

After the lecture, many students stayed behind to continue the discussion. Dozens responded directly to the call made by Beams to consider joining the Socialist Equality Party by giving their details and indicating their interest in further contact. Several people bought literature, including copies of the *World Socialist Web Site Review*, and collections for the SEP’s regular Monthly Fund raised \$890.



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