

WSWS/SEP international conference

# Eruption of US militarism forces all states to redefine their relationship with America

22 July 2003

*Below we are publishing greetings sent by Keith Jones, national secretary of the SEP of Canada, to the World Socialist Web Site and Socialist Equality Party international conference. The conference, entitled “Political Lessons of the War on Iraq: the way forward for the international working class”, was held on July 5-6 in Sydney, Australia.*

*On July 9, the WSWS published a summary account of the conference [See: World Socialist Web Site holds conference on the political lessons of the war on Iraq/ and, on July 10-11, the opening report by Nick Beams, member of the WSWS International Editorial Board and national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party in Australia [See The political economy of American militarism Part 1, Part 2]*

*The conference resolutions—“End the US-led occupation of Iraq!”, “Australian troops out of Iraq and the Solomon Islands!”, “For the international unity of the working class”, “For the Political Independence of the Working Class”, “War, the social crisis and the assault on democratic rights” and “Support and develop the World Socialist Web Site”—were published on July 14-16.*

*Later this week we will publish reports on the contributions and discussion on resolutions passed at the conference.*

The Socialist Equality Party of Canada sends its warmest fraternal greetings to your historic conference. The unprovoked US war on Iraq marks a watershed in world politics. Using the technique of the big lie—including trumped up charges of weapons of mass destruction, scare-mongering and Orwellian doublespeak about liberation and peace—the American ruling plutocracy has embarked on the bloody project of plundering the oil resources of the Middle East and establishing its world domination through the use of naked military force. In so doing, it is overturning all

existing relations between states and class.

This barbaric project of the US ruling elite—driven by historical forces of which the Bush administration is utterly oblivious—is opposed by the vast majority of the world’s population. Last winter and spring saw the largest antiwar demonstrations in history.

Their profound objective significance notwithstanding, these worldwide protests did not and could not stop the war. Once again it has been demonstrated that the struggle against imperialist war requires the arming of the working class with a political perspective based on an understanding of the objective roots of war in the capitalist system itself and the most thorough assimilation of the strategic lessons of the titanic class struggles of the last century. We are confident that your conference will mark a major advance along that road.

The turn of the US ruling class to outright militarism and colonialism has forced all states to redefine their relationship with America. Indeed this has come to dominate official political life in all the world’s capitals.

The European establishment has been profoundly split. France and Germany (joined to some extent by Russia) initially took their distance from the US, the better to assert their own predatory interests through a stronger European Union. Spain, Italy, the countries of the former Eastern bloc, and above all Britain, gave Washington enthusiastic support in the rape of Iraq in the hope of taking part in the division of the bounty.

The Australian ruling elite has also been divided. The Howard government is pursuing an aggressive course of unabashed support for Washington’s gangsterism on the world arena. In return, it hopes to win US support for its own interventions in the Asia-Pacific region, as exemplified by its intervention in East Timor and its current preparations to lead an occupation of the Solomon Islands. Another faction of the bourgeoisie is fearful that

such an unabashed pro-US policy may backfire, undercutting Australia's ambitions to be a regional power by inciting popular resistance among Australian working people and the region's oppressed masses and drawing the ire of bigger Pacific rivals like Japan.

In Canada, the issue has been posed even more sharply due to its geographical proximity and growing economic integration with the far more powerful United States. After much equivocation, the Chrétien Liberal government officially declined to join the US-led war on Iraq. But the Canadian military maintained behind the scenes collaboration with the US Navy and Air Force in the Persian Gulf region, even as US and British missiles were raining down on Baghdad. US Ambassador Paul Cellucci conceded that Canada provided far more significant military assistance to the US conquest of Iraq than most of the countries Washington had bribed and bullied into joining the "coalition of the willing".

Nevertheless, Washington considers the support given by Canada as totally inadequate. It demands nothing less from its northern neighbour than the complete subordination of its economic, social and military policies to the ultra-reactionary goals of the Bush administration, that is, of the wealthiest and most predatory sections of the US ruling class.

Much of Canada's political and corporate elite has trumpeted the Bush administration's repeated criticisms of the Chrétien government and angrily complained that faraway Australia has supplanted Canada as a US ally. Behind these attacks, lie not only the Canadian bourgeoisie's anxiety to have a share of the booty from this and future US military adventures. But their hope that through closer political and economic integration with the US they will be able to intensify the assault against the working class.

Other sections of the establishment, including to some extent the present prime minister, have responded by stoking Canadian nationalism and anti-Americanism. They fear closer integration with the US will threaten their own economic and geo-political interests. They view Washington's open disregard for international law as an incendiary factor in world politics, exacerbating all class tensions and reducing their room to assert the Canadian bourgeoisie's independent predatory interests. Open identification with the right-wing extremists of the White House would also, they fear, undermine their ideological grip on the popular masses as it would give the lie to the fiction of a "kinder", "gentler", if not "pacific" Canadian capitalism.

Anti-Americanism—in Canada, Europe or for that matter Australia—is emerging as a mechanism through which sections of the native ruling classes and the petty-bourgeoisie seek to give a popular veneer to the pursuit of their own selfish interests. The French and German governments, not only quickly abandoned their opposition to the US assault on Iraq, but have since launched massive attacks on the remaining social benefits of the working class. The Chrétien Liberal government has been the most socially reactionary government since the Great Depression, lining the pockets of the well-to-do with tax cuts while gutting public and social services.

Anti-Americanism has nothing to do with a genuine struggle against imperialism—a struggle that requires the rejection of the capitalism and the nation-state system in which it is historically rooted.

Workers in Australia and the Pacific region, in Europe and in Canada will recognize that America is two countries: that of the wealthy few, and that of the great majority of working people whose living standards are being sacrificed and democratic rights trampled upon to maintain the obscene accumulation of wealth at the top of American society.

Their guiding principle in the fight against imperialist war will be socialist internationalism: the conscious turn to their greatest ally, the American proletariat, on the basis of a program that ties the struggle against war to opposition to the ongoing global offensive against the social position of the working class and for the independent political mobilization of the working class in the struggle for socialism.



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