

An appeal to WSWS readers: Attend the ISSE/SEP Emergency Conference Against War

20 March 2007

Dear readers,

On March 31 and April 1, the International Students for Social Equality and the Socialist Equality Party will be hosting an Emergency Conference Against War.

The aim of this conference is to lay the foundations for a political movement that will take power internationally and place the world's productive forces under the democratic control of the world's population, so that these resources can be used to address pressing social problems rather than perpetuate war and inequality.

Tuesday, March 20, marks the fourth anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq. It is necessary to draw definite conclusions from this experience.

Those who have followed the WSWS will know that our analysis and our warnings have been confirmed again and again. On September 14, 2001, we wrote that the attacks of 9/11 were viewed by sections of the US ruling elite "as a welcome opportunity to implement a militaristic agenda that has been in the works for more than a decade." Over the past five and a half years, the Bush administration has launched two wars—against Afghanistan and Iraq—and is planning a third, against Iran.

In the run-up to the Iraq war, we denounced as lies the pretexts given by the Bush administration for the invasion. In the WSWS Editorial Board statement of February 12, 2003, issued for distribution at antiwar demonstrations prior to the invasion, we wrote:

"Rarely has a war crime been set out as openly before the eyes of the entire world as the imminent war against Iraq. For several months the US government has been demonstrating its determination to invade this impoverished nation, place it under American military rule and seize its oilfields. Military preparations are

proceeding strictly according to schedule. Everything else—Saddam Hussein's supposed weapons of mass destruction, for which there is no credible evidence, the resolutions and debates in the United Nations Security Council, the UN inspections—is just propaganda for the purpose of manipulating and deceiving public opinion.

"The war against Iraq is threatening all of humanity with a catastrophe. With its ruthless course of action, American imperialism is aggravating tensions between different nationalities and religions. The conquest of Iraq will not satisfy Washington's appetites. It will further whet them."

In our statement of March 21, we wrote that the invasion "is a terrible and unequal contest that will claim tens, if not hundreds of thousands, of innocent lives." In the most tragic and brutal manner, this evaluation has been proven correct. According to the most scientific study of Iraqi casualties as a result of the war, 655,000 have been killed and many more seriously injured. Iraqi society as a whole has been decimated. In addition, more than 3,400 US and coalition soldiers have died.

The invasion of Iraq produced mass revulsion all around the world, including in the US. This opposition to American militarism has only grown over the past four years. In the November 2006 elections, the American people clearly voiced their desire for an end to the war. What has been missing, however, is a political perspective that is capable of giving expression to the interests and views of hundreds of millions of people internationally.

Writing in response to the elections, we noted on November 14, 2006, that "in the wake of the popular repudiation of the Iraq war" in the elections, members of the political establishment in the US, "both

Democratic and Republican, are seeking to work out a new policy that will avert outright defeat and maintain American domination of the oil-rich country.”

Over the past four months, the Democrats have worked systematically to derail any genuine opposition to the war. The task of the Democrats is to defend the interests of American imperialism while calibrating their public image just enough to curtail the growth of opposition outside the two-party system. The working class in the US must unequivocally reject these machinations.

In an interview given to the *New York Times* last week, Hillary Clinton, one of the front-running Democratic candidates for president in 2008, made clear that the various Democratic war resolutions in the House and Senate have nothing to do with ending US military involvement in the region. Noting that Iraq is “right in the heart of the oil region,” Clinton said there were “remaining vital national security interests in Iraq” that would require a US presence in the country for an indefinite period.

Whatever criticisms the Democrats may have of administration policy, they share the basic aim of the Bush administration to secure control over the Middle East and Central Asia in the interests of American capitalism. The end product of the posturing on Capitol Hill will be the passage of a supplemental appropriations bill that will, with Democratic Party support, fully fund the occupation of Iraq, while giving Bush a free hand to continue the policy of escalation.

The Democratic Party leadership has been pushing for a new oil law in Iraq, and they have made this one of the “benchmarks” for determining “progress” in Iraq. An op-ed piece in the *New York Times* on Tuesday (“Whose Oil Is It, Anyway?” by Antonia Juhasz of Oil Change International) noted that the law will “take the majority of Iraq’s oil out of the exclusive hands of the Iraqi government and open it to international oil companies for a generation or more.” This, indeed, was the main aim of the invasion.

Underlying the analysis developed by the WSWs over the years has been an understanding that the war is a product of the interests of the American ruling class. Within this context, we have sought to explain the role of the Democratic Party in the US, and similar organizations internationally. We have made clear that the basis for a movement against war must be the

struggle for the political independence of the working class, armed with a socialist program.

A movement against war must be directed not only against the existing political institutions internationally, including the Democratic Party in the US, but also against all those tendencies—such as the organizers of the various antiwar protests in the US—that in one way or another serve to direct oppositional sentiment back into safe channels.

In facing the task of constructing an international socialist movement, the more far-sighted layers of workers and youth, those who have drawn conclusions about the bankruptcy of the political establishment and see the need for a socialist alternative, face a choice: either one can resign oneself to the domination of political reaction and all that this implies, or one can take up an active struggle for a new perspective.

As regular readers of the WSWs, we urge you to commit yourself to help build the Socialist Equality Party and the International Students for Social Equality in your city and country. Come to our conference against war and help make 2007 a year of political resurgence.

To find out more about our conference, and to register, go to www.socialequality.com/conference. There you can find information on meetings that we are having in other parts of the country, can download statements and flyers to distribute in your area, and can find out more about the ISSE and the SEP.

If you have any questions or would like to find out how to get involved, please do not hesitate to contact us through the form at <http://www3.wsws.org/dd-formmailer/dd-formmailer.php>.

Sincerely,

Joe Kay for the ISSE and the SEP



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

www3.wsws.org/contact