

Campaign builds for ISSE/SEP Emergency Conference Against War

Our reporter
2 March 2007

The International Students for Social Equality and the Socialist Equality Party have launched a web page to build for the ISSE/SEP Emergency Conference Against War. The conference will be held on March 31 and April 1 at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. The web page address is www.socialequality.com/conference.

The web page includes a preliminary agenda, links to statements that can be downloaded, and information on housing, transportation, and registration.

“We have received an enthusiastic response to the conference from all around the world,” said Joe Kay, who is helping to organize the conference. “Individuals from Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe, South America, Canada and many states in the US have written in, expressing interest and support.”

Kay said the international response was very important. “At the heart of this conference is the perspective of internationalism. A socialist movement against war must be based on the unity of working people all over the world. There is no national solution to any of the problems facing workers and student youth. The explosion of American militarism threatens the entire world population.” He added that the conference was open to individuals from all countries and of all ages.

In its initial statement announcing the conference, the ISSE and SEP wrote, “The purpose of this conference is to develop and implement a program for the mass mobilization of student youth and the working class within the United States and internationally against imperialist war and colonialism.”

To concretize this program, the web page gives a list of topics to be discussed at the conference. These include:

* **Iraq, Iran and the global strategy of US**

imperialism. The American invasion and occupation of Iraq, justified on the basis of lies, are driven by the global financial and corporate interests of the American ruling elite. We will examine the historical and economic roots of the eruption of American militarism.

* **Vietnam to Iraq: Lessons of the antiwar protest movement.** A new movement against war must draw the necessary lessons from historical experience—above all, the bankruptcy of a perspective that aims to pressure the Democratic Party, one of the two parties of American imperialism. We will review the lessons of the Vietnam War protest movement and the global anti-war demonstrations that took place in February of 2003, and examine their political implications for today.

* **War and the attack on democratic rights.** The imperial ambitions of the American ruling elite are inextricably bound up with the repudiation of international law and the unprecedented assault on democratic rights in the US—government spying, torture, the attack on habeas corpus.

* **Social inequality and militarism.** The United States is the most unequal of all major industrialized countries. The determination of a narrow oligarchy to maintain its social position lies at the heart of the attempt by the US government to use military force to seize control of the natural resources of the Middle East.

* **Socialism and internationalism.** A struggle against war must be based on an international movement of the working class. Capitalism is a global system, and the working class of every country confronts the same problems—war, repression, attacks on jobs and social conditions, growing social inequality. Only a global movement directed against the capitalist system can provide a way forward for the

world's population.

The conference will be addressed by representatives of the Socialist Equality Party and International Students for Social Equality, including several regular writers for the *World Socialist Web Site*. These include David North, chairman of the editorial board of the WSWS and national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (US); Bill van Auken, SEP 2006 candidate for US Senate in New York; David Walsh, arts editor of the WSWS; Patrick Martin of the WSWS; and Joe Kay of the International Students for Social Equality. SEP and ISSE delegates from other countries—including Germany, Australia and Canada—will also deliver reports.

Tom Mackaman, SEP candidate for Illinois state representative in 2004 and president of the ISSE at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, spoke of the importance of the conference. He said, “Opposition to the war in Iraq among students and workers is overwhelming. To cite one local example, the Republican congressman from this district, Tim Johnson, recently confessed that those calling his office opposed to the war outnumbered those who supported it by a margin of anywhere from 20 or 30 to one.

“The life-and-death question is not *whether* the war is opposed, but *how* the war and the eruption of American imperialism will be stopped. Those who have politically dominated the antiwar movement have led workers and students into a blind alley through their perspective of pressuring the Democratic Party and by their promotion of illusions in pro-war capitalist politicians such as Barack Obama. Enough! To end the war requires a final break with the Democrats and the building of a mass political movement of the international working class that aims to end the root causes of war, social inequality, and police-state repression: capitalism and the nation-state system.”

Joe Kay said the conference would consist of two days of intensive political discussion, based on a series of reports. “Our conception is that the conference will be an opportunity for very concentrated political discussion on the major issues confronting the working class today. Looming over everything is the danger of catastrophic war.”

He pointed to a front-page article in the February 28 *Wall Street Journal* discussing the growing conflict between Russia and the US over energy resources in

the Middle East. “The occupation of Iraq and the threat of a broader war will not be ended through protests or pressure on the political establishment. The working class needs its own party to fight for its own interests against the barbarism we confront today.”

The WSWS encourages all readers who are interested in helping build a movement against war and for international socialism to attend the conference. For information on registering, go to www.socialequality.com/conference.



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