

SEP presidential candidate Jerry White addresses meeting at University of Michigan

Our correspondent
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Socialist Equality Party presidential candidate Jerry White spoke February 21 at a public meeting hosted by the International Students for Social Equality at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

At the meeting, the first in a national tour organized by the SEP campaign, White outlined the socialist perspective in the 2012 elections. He placed particular emphasis on the growing danger of war. David North, the national chairman of the SEP, also addressed the meeting, reviewing the reasons behind the party's decision to run in the elections.

The meeting was attended by college and high school students and workers from the Ann Arbor area.

Discussing the experience of the Obama administration, White explained, "The 2008 elections marked not the beginning of the fundamental 'change' that tens of millions were looking for, but a demonstration of the impossibility of any such change through a political system thoroughly dominated by the corporate-financial and military establishment."

While Wall Street celebrated the Dow breaking 13,000 points Tuesday, the conditions for working people continue to worsen. In nearby Detroit, White said, real unemployment stands at 50 percent and more than half of all schools have been shuttered. Hundreds of thousands suffer the cold winter without utilities.

In Flint, 86-year-old retired autoworker John Morgan was found by neighbors Monday, frozen to death in his truck after utility giant Consumers Energy shut off electricity to his home over a \$291 bill. While bailing out the banks and ensuring record profits for the auto companies, White explained, the Obama administration has ruthlessly slashed assistance for home heating.

White stressed the growth of militarism under Obama, including the extensive use of drones and assassinations, the war against Libya, and the mounting threats against Syria and Iran.

"The Democrats, no less than the Republicans, are waging a class war at home while gearing up for far bloodier military ventures for the global dominance of American imperialism," he said.

"The ongoing saber rattling against Syria and Iran must be taken with the utmost seriousness," White warned. A war against the two countries "threatens mankind with far bloodier consequences, including a direct clash with Russia and China, the real target of American imperialism."

White stressed the role played by the upper middle class liberal establishment, which, on the basis of identity politics, had fully accommodated itself to the pro-war policies of the Obama administration.

The initial report produced questions and discussions on a number of topics, including how to get involved in the SEP campaign, and the party's position on health care and public education.

In the course of discussion, David North, the national chairman of the SEP, addressed the audience.

North drew a historical comparison between the present period and the years leading up to World War I and World War II. "What can we expect in the next five to ten years?" he asked. "What did the world look like to youth entering it on the eve of 1914? According to historians, the summer of that year was particularly beautiful. Tens of thousands of youth who enjoyed the vacation months were dead by October.

"You always wonder when looking at history—what was it like in the 1930s? Why didn't people do more to stop the rise of Hitler? When you look at preparations of war against Iran," North asked, "how will people

look back on that?”

“We’re entering a period of colossal global instability,” North warned. “The purpose of this election campaign is to fight for the development of consciousness among workers and youth, who will have to work out what their place in the world will be coming into crisis and turmoil. We need people who will devote themselves to fighting for this campaign and fight to build this party, and begin to align their political life and activity to reality.”

To become involved in the SEP campaign, visit the campaign web site: socialequality.com



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