

SEP presidential candidate speaks in Toronto on struggle against war

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Jerry White, the Socialist Equality Party's (SEP) candidate for president in the 2016 US elections, continued his campaign last week with two meetings in Toronto. The city is Canada's largest and its most important economic, cultural and political hub, with a millions-strong working class that hails from every corner of the globe.

During his visit, White and SEP supporters also campaigned among autoworkers at the Ford assembly plant in nearby Oakville. White spoke to them about last year's rebellion among US autoworkers against the pro-company UAW and urged Canadian autoworkers to mount a joint struggle with their US and Mexican counterparts in defence of the jobs and rights of *all* workers.

White first addressed students at York University in the city's north end in a Thursday afternoon meeting hosted by the International Youth and Students for Social Equality at York. The school is significant for its predominantly working class student population, and for its status as a hotbed of pseudo-left and identity politics. This past Saturday, White concluded his visit with a meeting held downtown at the University of Toronto (U of T), with introductory remarks given by Keith Jones, the national secretary of the SEP (Canada.) The second meeting was live streamed on the Socialist Equality Party's Facebook page and can be viewed [here](#).

In introducing White, Jones established the candidate's credentials as the labour editor of the *World Socialist Web Site* and a lifelong fighter for the program of international socialism in the working class, against the corporatist and virulently American nationalist and anti-communist labor bureaucracy. Jones went on to situate White's election campaign and that of his running mate, Niles Niemuth, within a

broader political context.

The SEP's election campaign, explained Jones, is aimed at developing a mass socialist movement of the working class by exposing the worsening crisis of the capitalist system and proposing a progressive alternative. Along with deepening attacks on workers' jobs and living standards, and the escalation of police killings and other police state measures, this crisis finds sharp expression in the emergence of Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump—one the candidate of the billionaires and the military-security apparatus and the other a fascist demagogue—as the American ruling elite's choices for president.

Most importantly, stressed Jones, White and Niemuth's campaign is bound up with the SEP's struggle against imperialist war and the capitalist system that produces it. He briefly described Canada's role in bolstering American imperialism's war drive as well as in pursuing its own imperialist interests, with the ostensibly "progressive" Trudeau Liberal government participating in all of Washington's major military-strategic initiatives. These include Canada's intervention in the war in Syria and Iraq, its coming deployment of troops to Africa, and its full support for the NATO military build-up against Russia and Washington's anti-China "pivot to Asia."

White then began his address by pointing out that the US presidential election is being closely followed in Canada. He noted that Canadian autoworkers were very vocal in expressing their disgust with both big-business candidates. He also observed advertisements and small shop displays across the city that lamented or lampooned the degeneration of official politics in the United States.

Clinton and Trump are, White declared, representatives of a crisis-ridden elite that has grown

fantastically wealthy while presiding over a quarter-century of unending war and ever-greater economic insecurity and poverty for working people.

He continued by explaining that Trump's limited support from sections of the working class and poor is due primarily to the wholesale repudiation by the Democratic Party and its trade union allies of any program of even limited social reforms, their participation in the decades-long assault on workers' jobs and living standards and their promotion of identity politics.

Clinton is rightly scorned by millions as a tried and tested political operative of the status quo, a warmonger, and a wealthy oligarch in her own right.

To the extent that Clinton has opposed Trump, continued White, she has done so from the right, calling him, in McCarthyite fashion, an agent of Russian President Vladimir Putin and accusing the Russian regime of "making an effort to influence the US election." Clinton's charges are aimed at preparing the political ground for an escalation of the US war drive against Russia, as well as at deflecting criticism away from recently released emails from WikiLeaks, including transcripts of secret speeches she gave to big banks such as Goldman Sachs.

In these speeches, Clinton claimed that the banks were "maligned" for their role in the 2008 financial crash. She also revealed that she has a "public" and a "private" position on policy questions—a euphemism for the lies she tells the public to conceal her defence of moneyed interests.

White warned that against the backdrop of the elections, the American ruling class is making frenzied preparations for an escalation of their current wars and the ones to come, including against Russia and China. Virtually every strategic think tank associated with ruling circles has published studies advancing blueprints for future wars against these nuclear-armed powers.

The millions of lives lost in the wars of the past quarter-century, as well as the millions more threatened in combat zones like the Iraqi city of Mosul, where the US military is currently laying siege to a city of hundreds of thousands to supposedly drive the Islamic State (ISIS) out, are in the final analysis caused by the profit drive of the largest banks and corporations and the need for the American ruling class to re-subjugate

and re-divide the world in their interests.

White concluded by urging those in attendance to take up the fight against war by joining the Socialist Equality Party and building a mass socialist movement of the working class. He explained that the middle class liberal elements that opposed the Iraq war quickly reconciled themselves to war and mass spying with the election of Barack Obama in 2008, while pseudo-left groups like the International Socialist Organization have, in the name of "human rights," become apologists and advocates for imperialist war. These so-called "left-wing" organizations now form an important social constituency in support of imperialist war.

The presentations at York and U of T were followed by engaging discussions.

One student at York pointed out that massive energy corporations played a critical role in taking the US and its allies to war in Iraq and other countries in the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia. White responded by adding that Washington's turn to war is rooted in the growing crisis of US imperialism, which is seeking to use its military might to offset its protracted economic decline.

At U of T, a student in the audience asked whether the working class of the developing countries, by virtue of its lower living standards, is more revolutionary than its counterparts in the advanced capitalist countries. White dispelled this notion by pointing to the massive social struggles that have erupted in countries like Greece, France and the United States, in opposition to war, austerity and state violence. The reason for the ultimate defeat of these struggles is to be found in the treachery of the pseudo-left, the unions and the social-democratic parties. These bitter experiences, he noted, pose the urgent need to build a revolutionary leadership in the working class to prosecute the struggle for socialism.

Several attendees pledged to attend the emergency conference to be held on November 5 in Detroit, "Socialism vs. Capitalism and War."



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