

SEP presidential candidate Jerry White speaks at MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts

By Kate Randall
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Socialist Equality Party candidate Jerry White addressed a meeting at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, Massachusetts on Tuesday. White spoke on the topic: “The Great Unmentionable: War and the 2016 US Elections.”

The Cambridge meeting was part of a weeklong trip by White and his supporters to the East Coast, with stops in Pennsylvania, New York and Massachusetts, where the SEP candidate spoke with Verizon workers on the picket line about the political issues in their ongoing strike.

The meeting Tuesday, hosted by the MIT International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), attracted students from MIT, Harvard, Northeastern University and Bunker Hill Community College.

Opening the meeting, White said: “When the Socialist Equality Party announced last week that my running mate Niles Niemuth and I were entering the 2016 presidential elections, we said our central task would be to break the conspiracy of silence by all the official candidates and the media about the war plans of the United States and alert workers and youth to the grave dangers of a world war.”

He said the first task of the SEP election campaign is to fight to build an international antiwar movement based on the working class and directed against the capitalist system, “the source of militarism and war.”

White pointed to the two candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination: Hillary Clinton, an exponent of “regime change” and mouthpiece for the CIA and Pentagon, and “democratic socialist” Bernie Sanders, who refers to US foreign policy as little as possible, but supports the use of drone assassination and ruthless aspects of the Obama administration’s foreign policy.

“As for the Republican Party presidential contenders,” White said, “they joke about the use of nuclear weapons as if they were toys.”

White reviewed developments over just the last several weeks that underscore the danger of world war. On Monday, Obama announced a significant escalation of the US intervention in the Middle East, with the dispatch of 250 more Special Operations troops to Syria. On April 11, Russian jet fighter planes buzzed the USS Donald Cook in the Baltic Sea as it engaged in provocative military exercises near the Russian naval base in Kaliningrad.

He said that Barack Obama had been elected in 2008 because of the deep antiwar sentiment in the US population. “However, far from bringing peace,” he said, “the supposed ‘president of change’ has only escalated the geographic scope of militarism, while developing his own doctrine to justify these crimes.”

The SEP candidate warned that the danger of a third imperialist world war, fought with nuclear weapons, is greater than at any time since 1945. “Workers and young people can wage an effective struggle against war only to the extent that they organize their strength independently of and in opposition to the Democratic Party and the capitalist two-party system,” he said.

White stressed that this struggle must be international, uniting the working class across national boundaries in a common struggle against imperialism and for socialism. “The anger and opposition of billions of people around the world requires a new strategy,” he said. “The ICFI insists that the fight against war must mobilize the international working class on the basis of an anti-capitalist and socialist program.”

He urged those in attendance to register for the International May Day 2016 Online Rally being held

this Sunday, May 1, to support the SEP presidential campaign, and to join and build the SEP and the IYSSE.

The floor was opened for questions and comments, and the first question was: “Looking at the hawkish nature of Hillary Clinton, is there any reason to believe that she is less dangerous than Donald Trump?”

White referred to a recent *New York Times* article that said that Clinton’s willingness to go to war would inevitably set her apart from the Republican candidates she is likely to meet in the general election.

A student in the audience commented: “Students are concerned about the threat of war, and nuclear war in particular,” adding, “What you are proposing is a deep, systemic solution, which will require an enormous cultural and political advance. This is a monumental problem. How do you propose going about this?”

White responded that objective conditions, including the crisis of the capitalist system, would propel workers and youth into struggle, but that the role of socialists was to fight to raise the intellectual atmosphere and to build a political leadership.

“Society is divided into two hostile camps,” he said. The most important task is to clarify the political and historical questions, stressing the importance of “turning to the only revolutionary force in society: the international working class.”

The meeting broke up into informal discussion, with many people remaining behind to speak with White about the SEP presidential campaign and the issues raised in his report.

Matt from Bunker Hill Community College told the WSWS: “I think the meeting was really informative. I think the emphasis on antiwar is one of the most important parts of the fight for socialism. In other words, the fight for socialism is the fight against war. Capitalism leads to war, so obviously to fight against war means to fight against capitalism.”

Arjuna, 30, a graduate student, said he had been reading the *World Socialist Web Site* for years. “There is no other site that speaks so clearly for the working class and poor of all countries,” he said.

“The WSWS’s exposures of the war danger are alarming. The capitalist rulers are toying with this planet as if they were playing a video game. The movement of naval forces throughout the Pacific and Indian Ocean is clearly part of a worked-out strategy by

the US to control all of Asia.”

He added, “Without the efforts of your party and the WSWS, the working class would be blinded and left at the mercy of imperialism.”

Rosa, a 28-year-old graduate student, said, “I thought the presentation was very effective, direct and down-to-earth. I agreed with the point about students and youth becoming drawn into political life. I’m a student, but I think of myself as a worker. I also agreed with the points about Hillary Clinton. She does not speak for women workers, and the presentation made clear that she is a first-rate hawk and warmonger.”

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