

Vincent Emanuele in Australia

Vincent is an ex-US marine who, following something of a tradition amongst some veterans, has become a peace activist since leaving the military. He has visited Australia twice before his recent visit and has always impressed all those he has met with his extraordinary skill as a public speaker. He has a great depth of knowledge about all matters related to the prevalence of militarism, particularly US militarism, in the present-day world.

On this, his third visit, from mid-April until mid-May, Vince's first engagement was to speak at the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network's inaugural national conference in Canberra on April 22, 2014. In his address he stressed just how bad things are for ordinary people in the US. He dwelt briefly on some likely developments in weaponry in the future (focusing on robotics) and he pointed out the features that connect militarism and the destruction of the environment by 'civilisation' itself (rather than just capitalism). He argued that the collapse of civilization is beginning – and that this is the first time such a collapse has occurred on a global scale, the great danger being that people will seek 'solutions' to the coming collapse in the traditional way, i.e. through militarism.

Notes from some of the other speakers at the conference can be viewed here:-
<http://www.ipan.org.au/#/conferencenotes>

IPAN's Canberra conference was just one in a whole week of events leading up to ANZAC Day and dubbed the 'Peace Convergence'. See:-
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1386527404933393/?fref=ts> .

The climax of the week formed part of the ANZAC Day commemoration. A large group of activists, Vince among them, marched up Anzac Avenue at the very end of the military parade under the banner 'Lest We Forget The Frontier Wars'. The group was actively prevented from entering the War Memorial by Federal Police, at which point an indigenous man (also, co-incidentally, called 'Vince') gave a very moving speech – pointing out that his people had died defending Australia from invasion but have never been recognized for this service to the country.

After Canberra, Vince travelled to Melbourne. Here he had numerous engagements. He addressed the Victorian Trades Hall, which decided to endorse the Statement adopted at the end of the IPAN conference. (Clearly, peace is Union business.) He took part in the 'Perfect Storm' forum:-
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cx0TkssHsWQ&feature=youtu.be>

He also had a conversation with ex-PM Malcolm Fraser on the occasion of the launch of his new book *'Dangerous Allies'* (which is extremely outspoken on the question of the Australia/US alliance).

Whilst in Melbourne, Vince was also interviewed by Philip Adams:
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/latenightlive/iraq-veterans-against-the-war/5431788>

Back in Sydney Vince took questions from the audience following an (interrupted) screening of the film 'On The Bridge', a documentary focussing on PTSD amongst US citizens involved in the conflict in Iraq. (Vince himself suffers PTSD.) Despite the shortcomings of the screening, Vince kept the audience engaged for nearly two hours, giving his views on what is happening in the world and patiently answering the many questions put to him. Vince was interviewed on radio and visited the CFMEU and Unions NSW before departing for his home in Chicago.

Vince is an inspiration. Everyone who had the good fortune to interact with him agrees on this point. His is a refreshing new voice, asking us not to flinch from closely examining what is happening in the world (including in Australia). In the confident expectation that we will find that what is happening is unacceptable, Vince urges us to commit ourselves to finding ways of bringing about some meaningful changes in society. He does not shy away from explaining that such activity may bring 'activists' face to face with very ruthless parties – particularly those parties that have a vested interest in militarism and perpetual warfare...

Vince has become very fond of Australia and it is highly likely that he will return one day. When he does, be sure that you are one of the lucky ones who get to hear him.

Nick Deane
21st May 2014