

Sydney and Melbourne meetings to commemorate...

The 70th anniversary of the founding of the Fourth International

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24 September 2008

The Socialist Equality Party (Australia) will mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Fourth International with public meetings in Sydney and Melbourne this week. SEP national secretary Nick Beams, a member of the *World Socialist Web Site* international editorial board and an authority on Marxist political economy, is the keynote speaker.

Seven decades after the FI's founding in September 1938, the history, principles and program of the Trotskyist movement are assuming burning relevance. The financial meltdown underway in the United States represents the greatest economic crisis since the Wall Street crash of 1929. It confirms, yet again, the fundamental scientific conceptions of Marxism.

The founding program of the Fourth International *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, written by Leon Trotsky exactly one year before the outbreak of WWII, explained that capitalism had reached an historical impasse. It characterised the epoch as one of capitalist breakdown, a process produced by the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist mode of production—between world economy and the nation-state system and between socialised production and private ownership—posing the necessity for socialist revolution:

“All talk to the effect that historical conditions have not yet ‘ripened’ for socialism is the product of ignorance or conscious deception. The objective prerequisites for the proletarian revolution have not only ‘ripened’; they have begun to get somewhat rotten. Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind.”

During the 1920s and 30s the counter-revolutionary

betrayals of Stalinism and social-democracy were responsible for the preservation of capitalist rule. “The multimillioned masses again and again enter the road of revolution,” wrote Trotsky, “But each time they are blocked by their own conservative bureaucratic machines.” The price paid by mankind was indeed catastrophic: fascism, global depression and World War. It confirmed Trotsky's insistence that: “The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.”

In the aftermath of World War II, the greatest mass slaughter in human history, all manner of opportunists claimed that the struggle to build the FI as the revolutionary leadership of the international working class had been rendered obsolete by the post-war expansion of world capitalism, under the auspices of the United States, and the apparent consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. But today, seven decades after 1938, all their claims lie in tatters. In every part of the world, millions of ordinary people confront the consequences of the breakdown of US and world capitalism in a new eruption of militarism and war, along with a ferocious assault on their social conditions and democratic rights.

The political demands posed by a new period of revolutionary struggles can be met only on the basis of the most advanced political theory and program, which itself can only be developed through an assimilation of the lessons of the past. The FI alone embodies the lessons derived from the strategic experiences of the working class throughout the course of the twentieth century. It offers, as Trotsky declared, a spotless banner. In 1938 he wrote: “Outside of the Fourth International there does not exist a single revolutionary

current on this planet really meriting the name”. We invite all readers of the *World Socialist Web Site* and supporters of the Socialist Equality Party to attend our commemorative meetings in Melbourne and Sydney.

Sydney

Sunday September 28

2 p.m.

Redfern Town Hall

73 Pitt Street

Redfern

Melbourne

Wednesday October 1

7.30 p.m.

Northcote Town Hall

189 High Street

Northcote

Roof Top Meeting Room

Tickets: \$3 or \$2 concession



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact