

# Seventy years since World War II

## Its causes and its lessons for today

22 September 2009

World War II was the bloodiest and most tragic event in world history. Up to 70 million people lost their lives during the six year conflict. It witnessed unimaginable barbarism, including above all the mass murder of 6 million European Jews by the Nazis. The war ended with the dropping of the atomic bomb on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Countless articles and programmes have been made commemorating these events, yet few offer even an attempted explanation of how and why the world was dragged into such a bloody catastrophe, just two decades after the so-called “war to end all wars”.

The International Students for Social Equality will explain that this was not a war of democracy versus fascism, but an imperialist war waged by the capitalist great powers—“democratic” and fascist alike—for the division of the world and its resources in the interests of profit.

We will explain how and why Hitler was able to come to power, due to the political betrayals of the German Social Democrats and the Stalinist Communist Parties internationally—and how this, along with the beheading of the Spanish revolution in 1936-37, paved the way to war. We will explain why Hitler won the support of big business as a bulwark against the threat of a workers’ revolution.

Crucially, the ISSE will address the lessons of the war for today, amidst the eruption of the deepest economic and financial crisis since the Great Depression that is once again fueling a drive towards colonial-style conquest by all the major powers. We will explain why the independent political mobilization of the working class remains the only means of

opposing the renewed dangers of an economic and military catastrophe for the peoples of the world.

### **Dundee**

Tuesday September 29, 6.30pm  
University of Dundee,  
Tower Building, Room T9,  
Perth Road, DD1

### **Sheffield**

Wednesday September 30, 6.30pm  
St Matthews Meeting Rooms  
Carver Street, S1

### **Manchester**

Wednesday October 7, 7.30pm  
University of Manchester Students’ Union  
Meeting Room 1, Oxford Road, M13

### **Glasgow**

Thursday 8 October, 7pm  
University of Glasgow,  
Boyd Orr Building, Room 407,  
University Avenue, G12

## **Brighton**

Thursday 8 October, 5pm  
University of Sussex,  
Arts A Building, Lecture Theatre A103  
Sussex, BN1



To contact the WSWs and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**