

IYSSE, SEP (Australia) lectures: 100 years since the Zimmerwald conference

6 August 2015

One hundred years ago, in the first week of September 1915, as Europe was rent by the carnage unleashed by the outbreak of World War I, a conference was convened in the small Swiss village of Zimmerwald. It was to have world-historical significance.

The conference was a gathering of socialist opponents of the war, who came together in the wake of the betrayal of the working class by the parties of the Second International, which had supported the war policies of their respective ruling classes.

The struggle waged at that conference by Russian revolutionist Vladimir Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik Party, along with a handful of supporters, provided the foundation for the successful conquest of power by the working class in the Russian Revolution of October 1917. The revolution changed the course of world history.

Lenin defined the fundamental principles on which the socialist movement of the working class had to be based, in the new era of war and social revolution that announced its arrival with the breakdown of the capitalist system and the eruption of unprecedented imperialist violence in 1914.

A century later, the second great breakdown of capitalism, ushered in by the global financial crisis of 2008, is intensifying. The working class is once again confronted with far-reaching questions concerning the very future of humanity. The US and its allies are preparing war against Russia and China, the Middle East is aflame, and German imperialism, as its actions over Greece demonstrate, is again seeking to assert its dominance over Europe.

The experiences in Greece, where the pseudo-left Syriza government has carried out a monstrous betrayal by imposing brutal austerity measures, underscore the fact that the resolution of the crisis of working class

leadership is the burning question of the day.

The issues fought out at the Zimmerwald conference a century ago have the most decisive contemporary importance. They are essential in the political rearming of the working class and youth of every country and the development of a unified, international struggle against war, austerity and the imposition of ever-more authoritarian forms of rule.

These lectures, organised by the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) and the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), will be given by Nick Beams, a member of the international editorial board of the *World Socialist Web Site*.

The lectures will provide a unique opportunity to discuss these vital issues. We urge all students, *World Socialist Web Site* readers and SEP supporters to attend, and publicise these events as widely as possible.

University of Newcastle

Sunday, September 20, 2.30 p.m.

Room UNHG09, UoN City Precinct, Inner City Campus

Entry on Auckland Street, corner King Street



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