

SEP Australia holds Third National Congress

The Socialist Equality Party Australia
27 July 2016

The Third National Congress of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), the Australian section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), was held in Sydney from April 24 to 26, 2016. The discussion and resolutions adopted at the Congress provided the political grounding for the intensive campaign conducted by the SEP over the following weeks in the July 2 Australian federal election.

David North, chairman of the international editorial board of the *World Socialist Web Site* and national chairman of the SEP (US), participated in the Congress, delivering greetings on behalf of the ICFI. The ICFI was also represented by Niles Niemuth, who is standing in the US elections as the vice-presidential candidate of the SEP (US), and K. Ratnayake, a longstanding leader of the SEP (Sri Lanka).

Niemuth and Ratnayake delivered the greetings of their sections, while greetings and political analyses of the deepening political crisis in Europe were presented to the Congress via Skype by Chris Marsden, national secretary of the SEP (UK), and Peter Schwarz, the secretary of the ICFI and a central leader of the Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (PSG) in Germany.

An important delegation attended from the Socialist Equality Group in New Zealand, which is working toward the establishment of a section of the ICFI.

The central task of the Congress was discussion of the statement issued by the ICFI on February 18, 2016, “Socialism and the Fight Against War: Build an International Movement of the Working Class and Youth Against Imperialism!”

Opening the Congress and political discussion, James Cogan, the national secretary of the SEP, said:

“The ICFI statement was issued because all the processes that have led to a new period of wars and revolutions have reached an advanced stage. The great historical question in the period in which we live is how the crisis of the world capitalist system will be

resolved—because it will be resolved. This is not a crisis that can or will continue indefinitely....

“The axis of the ICFI statement is summed up in its simple declaration that ‘the drive to World War III must be stopped.’ It elaborates the principles upon which an international anti-war movement must be built. Our aim is to lead social revolution, before imperialism plunges humanity into disaster.

“Those alternatives are what provide to the work of our party, in every field—political, theoretical and practical—its great urgency. The strategic task is the building of the ICFI, both the current sections and new sections throughout the world. In the struggle for this perspective, the SEP in Australia has great responsibilities in the Asia-Pacific region.”

Following contributions by representatives from SEP branches in Sydney, the Newcastle/Central Coast region, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, and from the SEG in New Zealand, a resolution was unanimously adopted to place the analysis and perspective contained in the ICFI statement at the centre of the party’s work.

David North presented an extensive report reviewing the ICFI’s struggle against all forms of national opportunist and pseudo-left politics. He reviewed the significance of the ICFI’s exposure of Syriza in Greece and its betrayal of the Greek working class, and underscored the historic importance of the ICFI’s defence of the fundamental theoretical conceptions of Marxism against tendencies and individuals that base themselves on post-modernist philosophical conceptions and identity politics.

The Congress also discussed a supplementary resolution to the ICFI statement, which assessed the critical political issues involved in the fight to build an international anti-war movement in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. The resolution reviewed the party’s analysis of Australia’s role in the US preparations for war against China, the economic and

political crisis of Australian imperialism and the tasks of the SEP, including in the federal election.

Incorporating amendments adopted at the Congress, the SEP's resolution, "The Socialist Equality Party and the fight to build an international anti-war movement," has now been published here.

The Congress concluded with the election of a new National Committee, which re-elected James Cogan as the SEP's national secretary, Cheryl Crisp as assistant national secretary, and Peter Symonds as the national editor of the *World Socialist Web Site*.



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