

ICFI supporters in India hold public meeting on “World War and the Russian Revolution”

Our correspondents
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Workers from several IT companies, the Integral Coach Factory and the railways as well as young people attended a public meeting held in Chennai last Sunday by Indian supporters of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI).

Entitled “World War and the Russian Revolution,” the event was part of the ICFI’s commemoration of the centenary of the October 1917 Revolution and promoted its international online lecture series. ICFI supporters campaigned for the meeting in several industrial areas in and around Chennai, including Sriperumbudur, and at various university colleges.

Sathish Simon, who chaired the public meeting on behalf of the ICFI supporters group, began by reading greetings from Wije Dias, general secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) in Sri Lanka. Translated simultaneously into Tamil, Dias’s greetings expressed the solidarity of the Sri Lankan SEP with the Chennai public meeting, which he said was about “an important and very relevant political topic—imperialist war and socialist revolution.”

Pointing to Washington’s growing military aggression, Dias said: “US intervention into the political establishments in India and Sri Lanka, as well as in other countries in the South and South-East Asian regions, is to further pressure the ruling classes in these countries to line-up behind the war strategy of US imperialism.”

Dias noted that “only the International Committee and its sections around the world... have opened up a discussion on this genocidal threat of imperialist war within the working class and the oppressed masses on a global scale.” The Chennai meeting, he said was an important step in the historic struggle to build a section of the ICFI in India.

Simon said the meeting was being held in the context

of the deepening crisis of world capitalism following the liquidation of the Soviet Union by the Stalinist bureaucracy in 1991. “The past quarter century has been a period of uninterrupted wars by the imperialist powers, led by the US, with Obama the only US president who was continuously involved in wars throughout his two terms in office.”

Drawing out the lessons of the 1917 Russian Revolution, Sathish pointed out that this historic event was prepared by a decades-long political and theoretical struggle waged by the Bolsheviks for the development of socialist consciousness in the working class against all forms of opportunism and centrism.

Arun Kumar from the ICFI supporters group delivered the main report to the meeting. “As Lenin analysed in 1916, the basic contradictions of imperialism are once again exploding across the globe, threatening mankind with the possibility of a catastrophic nuclear war. The predatory imperialist powers are once again preparing a world war for the re-division of the world,” he said.

Kumar explained that newly elected US President Trump, who headed the most reactionary administration in the history of that country, expressed the deep crisis and extreme decay of American democracy. “The historic decline of US economic supremacy,” he continued, “is driving its military aggression and its attempt to restore its global domination.”

The speaker explained how India, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had been transformed into a frontline state in Washington’s strategic offensive against China.

“India has become a major service and repair hub for the US Seventh Fleet, the naval armada at the centre of US war preparations against China. New Delhi has

increasingly adopted Washington's provocative stance on the South China Sea dispute, which paints China as an aggressor, and has enormously expanded bilateral and trilateral strategic ties with the US, Japan, and Australia."

Kumar explained that the Bolshevik Party based its struggle for power in 1917 on an international socialist perspective. "They strongly believed," he said, "that the fate of the Russian Revolution depended on the extension of workers' power beyond the borders of Soviet Russia."

Detailing the role of the Stalinist bureaucracy, which usurped power from the Soviet working class, Kumar said: "Stalin's anti-Marxist nationalist perspective of 'socialism in one country' paved the way for catastrophic international defeats of the working class. The decades of bureaucratic dictatorship and misrule ultimately led to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the restoration of capitalism."

Kumar exposed the treacherous record of the Indian Stalinists—the Communist Party of India (Marxist), or CPM, and the Communist Party of India (CPI)—which, he said, function as the main props of Indian capitalist rule.

"The reactionary policies of these organisations," he said, "flow from their Menshevik two-stage theory of revolution, i.e., politically subordinating the working class to the national bourgeoisie in the name of 'democratic revolution' as the 'first stage' and postponing socialism as a never to be realised 'second stage.'"

A lively political discussion followed the main report. The questions included: "How is it possible to unite workers internationally under conditions where the Trump administration has been carrying out an anti-immigrant campaign?" and "Is it possible to mobilise support against international capital rather than against world war?"

Speakers answered by pointing to the growing opposition within the working class in the US and internationally towards Trump's anti-immigrant policies and explained that it was necessary to politically arm this emerging movement with the program of socialist internationalism.

Replying to the second question, the speakers explained that the fight against imperialist war was inseparably linked to the battle against the world

capitalist system.

"In the struggle against world war the working class must be mobilised on a socialist internationalist program directed against all forms of divisive bourgeois politics," Kumar said. "Thus the struggle against capital demands the revolutionary political mobilisation of the working class against its own national political establishment."

Following the question and answer session the meeting watched the video featuring *World Socialist Web Site* chairman David North introducing the ICFI's lecture series on the 100th anniversary of the Russian Revolution.



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