

Meeting in Sydney on December 17

100 years on: The significance of the 1917 Russian Revolution for today

28 October 2017

The Socialist Equality Party in Australia and Socialist Equality Group in New Zealand are holding a series of public meetings in November and December to mark the centenary of the 1917 Russian Revolution. The meetings are part of the world-wide commemorations of the historic events of 100 years ago by the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), the world Trotskyist movement and publisher of the *World Socialist Web Site*.

In 1917, in answer to the horrors of World War I and capitalist oppression, the working class in Russia took political power and established the first workers' state, as part of a conscious struggle for world socialism. The revolution was victorious due to the Marxist strategy and tactics provided by the Bolshevik Party, under the leadership of Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky.

The Russian Revolution was, as David North, the chairman of the WSWS international editorial board, stated in a lecture earlier this year, "the most important, consequential and progressive political event of the twentieth century."

To this day, it stands as irrefutable proof that the working class—providing it is guided by a genuine Marxist perspective and leadership—can overthrow the outmoded social relations of capitalism, ending the private ownership of the means of production by a tiny minority and abolishing reactionary national-state divisions.

For that reason, the defenders of capitalism are waging a concerted campaign to denigrate the Russian Revolution and insist it has no relevance in the 21st century. Universally, they resort to the historical lie that the betrayal of the working class and international socialism by a bureaucratic apparatus headed by Joseph Stalin was the inevitable outcome of Bolshevism and

the revolution itself.

Sheila Fitzpatrick, a professor of Russian history at the University of Sydney, is just one example. She wrote in March: "Socialism is so much of a mirage that it seems kinder not to mention it. If there is a lesson to be drawn from the Russian Revolution, it is the depressing one that revolutions usually make things worse, all the more so in Russia, where it led to Stalinism."

Even the upper house of the Australian parliament has felt it necessary to condemn the Russian Revolution. In October, the Senate passed a motion, moved by extreme right-wing senator Cory Bernardi, which declared that it "rejects any assertion that the teachings of Lenin or Marx should be celebrated in a liberal democracy."

Such statements have an air of desperation about them, reflecting the fear of the capitalist ruling elite at the immense interest in the Russian Revolution. Far from socialism being viewed as a "mirage," masses of workers and youth aspire to its goals of international unity and social equality.

The reason why they are attracted to socialism is obvious. Capitalism, as a world system, has manifestly failed. The international working class today confronts all the conditions that motivated revolutionary struggles by millions of workers in 1917 and the years that followed: imperialist violence and war, staggering inequality and deprivation, state repression and far-right political reaction. The so-called "liberal democracy" to which the resolution of the Australian Senate referred is openly degenerating into an authoritarian police-state to defend the wealth of a parasitic financial oligarchy.

A new era of social revolution has opened. The

working class cannot and will not accept the barbaric future it is being offered by capitalism.

The essential task for all those coming forward to fight for socialism is to study and assimilate the immense lessons that have been derived by the Marxist movement from the experiences of Bolshevism and the Russian Revolution.

The SEP/SEG meetings are a contribution to that process. We urge you to promote them as widely as possible to your workmates, and your friends and family. Donate as generously as you can to assist our efforts to advertise them through social media, posters and other media. Play your part in making these meetings not only a celebration of the Russian Revolution, but the launching pad for an intensified struggle to build the ICFI as the revolutionary leadership of the international working class.

Sydney

Sunday, December 17, 2.00 p.m.

Petersham Town Hall

107 Crystal St

Petersham

\$7/\$5



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact