

IYSSE lecture series in Australia

Seventy years after the Chinese Revolution: How the struggle for socialism was betrayed

9 September 2019

Seventy years ago, on October 1, 1949, Mao Zedong, leader of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), stood in Beijing's Tiananmen Square and proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China. The momentous events of the 1949 Chinese Revolution put an end to more than a century of subordination of China to the imperialist powers, united the country after decades of civil war and warlord rivalry and improved living conditions.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), the youth organisation of the Socialist Equality Party (SEP), will hold a series of lectures at Australian universities to consider the implications of the Chinese Revolution for today. China, now the world's second largest economy, is a major factor in world politics, and is at the centre of the war drive by US imperialism to maintain its global hegemony.

Is China socialist and communist? Has it become an imperialist power itself? The answers given in academic circles, in the corporate press and by pseudo-left organisations such as Socialist Alternative, as well as by the CCP regime in Beijing, are all loaded with the political agendas of the ruling classes amid a profound crisis of global capitalism.

An independent revolutionary perspective for the working class in China and internationally has to be rooted in a historic and scientific understanding of the Chinese Revolution. While the revolution vastly transformed international relations and class relations within China, the role of the CCP, which based itself on the reactionary Stalinist program of "Socialism in One Country," deformed the newly-created state from the outset. It was not the working class that seized power, as occurred in Russia in 1917, but a

bureaucratic apparatus, hoisted into power by its peasant armies and deeply hostile to any movement of the proletariat.

The international Trotskyist movement, which waged a protracted political struggle against Stalinism and Maoism, characterised the People's Republic of China as a deformed workers' state: it had belatedly nationalised property relations and instituted bureaucratic economic planning along Stalinist lines, but the working class had no political say. Moreover, the nationalist program of "Socialism in One Country" rapidly led to a political and economic dead-end. Just 23 years after the revolution, Mao Zedong and the CCP betrayed the socialist aspirations of workers, and made a far-reaching pact with US imperialism that opened the door for capitalist restoration.

Capitalist China today has achieved astonishing economic growth as the world's largest cheap labour platform. But it is now running up against the world order, dominated by US imperialism that is prepared to plunge the world into a catastrophic war rather than lose its global hegemony. Internally, China is riven by social tensions amid staggering levels of social inequality—a tiny clique of billionaire oligarchs at one pole and hundreds of millions of workers and peasants struggling to survive at the other. The CCP, which represents the capitalist elite, has no progressive answers either to the rising danger of war or the social crisis at home.

The lecture will review the 1949 Chinese Revolution and its consequences, and argue for the perspective of the Trotskyist movement—for a unified struggle of workers in China and around the world, to put an end to the exploitative profit system on the basis of socialist internationalism. The lecturer, Peter Symonds, is the

SEP's national *World Socialist Web Site* editor and has written extensively on China and Asia more broadly.

Details:

Griffith University (Brisbane)

Wednesday, 25 September, 1p.m.

Building N61 (Law) Lecture Theatre -2.06.

(Nathan campus)

University of Newcastle

Thursday, 26 September, 6p.m.

Hunter Building HB13

University of Melbourne

Thursday, 3 October, 6:30p.m.

Laby Theatre, Physics South building

(near corner Elgin & Swanston St)

Victoria University (Melbourne)

Friday, 4 October, 1:30p.m.

Room 209, Building C

(Footscray Park campus)

Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand)

Monday, 7 October, 6:30p.m.

Kirk Building, room KK204

Western Sydney University (Sydney)

Wednesday, 9 October, 1p.m.

Building EB, Room 3.33

(Parramatta South campus)

University of New South Wales (Sydney)

Wednesday, 16 October, 7p.m.

1 Day Lane, Kensington (Off campus), Hall 2

(Adjacent to Kensington Park Oval)

Macquarie University (Sydney)

Thursday, 17 October, 6:30p.m.

17 Wally's Walk, room 209

To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>