

Vadim Rogovin and the significance of his historical work

Memorial meetings to be held in Berlin and London

27 November 1998

The International Committee of the Fourth International is holding memorial meetings in Berlin and London to commemorate the life and work of the Russian historian Vadim Z. Rogovin who died on September 18 this year.

The main speaker will be David North, chairman of the *World Socialist Web Site* editorial board and national secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (USA). As the author of many writings on the Russian revolution and the history of Stalinism, North collaborated with Vadim Rogovin for a number of years and shared a close political and personal friendship with him.

He said of Vadim earlier this year, 'In sharp contrast to virtually all his academic colleagues, Rogovin did not renounce his Marxist and socialist convictions during the years of Perestroika and in the aftermath of the collapse of the USSR. Instead, Rogovin declared openly that he was an adherent of Trotskyism, and embarked upon the intellectual project that was to occupy him during the last decade of his life: the writing of the history of the Marxist opposition to Stalinism within the Soviet Union between 1923 and 1940.'

'Rogovin's activities were not confined to research and writing. In 1993 he made contact with the International Committee of the Fourth International with which he developed a close political and intellectual relationship, and with whose program he publicly declared his solidarity. Between 1995 and 1998, he delivered lectures organised by the International Committee in the United States, Britain, Germany and Australia.'

Humboldt University

Audimax, Unter den Linden, Berlin

December 5, 16.00

Two relatives of leading Bolsheviks and opponents of Stalin will be making the long journey from Moscow to speak in the German capital.

Zoya Serebriakova was born in 1923. She is the daughter of Leonid Petrovich Serebriakov (1890-1937), a metalworker, who joined the Bolsheviks in 1905 and was one of the leaders of the 1917 Revolution in Moscow. He held high office in both the party and government. Serebriakov joined the Left Opposition in 1923, and remained a member until 1929. In 1937 he was one of the chief accused in the Piatakov-Radek trial against the 'anti-Soviet Trotskyist Centre'. He was condemned to death and executed. Zoya Serebriakova, who herself spent many years in Soviet prison camps, is a Doctor of History.

Yuri Vitalievich Primakov was born 1927. He is the son of General Vitali Markovich Primakov (1897-1937), who joined the Bolshevik party three years before the October Revolution and was banished to Siberia under the tsarist regime. After 1918 he held leading positions in the Red Army. In 1926, because of his support for the anti-Stalinist opposition, he was disciplined. Arrested in 1936, he was sentenced to death in the 1937 trial of leading Red Army personnel and executed.

Professor Nathan Steinberger, who spent 20 years in Stalinist prison camps and exile, will also address the Berlin meeting. He has recently written a letter to the Student Union at Humboldt University, protesting their barely veiled threats made in a letter refusing support for the event. The Student Union letter provocatively ended with the words: 'I still have an ice-pick in the fridge'.

Vladimir Volkov, director of the Chelyabinsk Bureau

of the Fourth International and editor of the Russian magazine *Social Equality*, and Ulrich Rippert, the National Secretary of the Partei für Soziale Gleichheit, will also address the Berlin meeting.

Portland Room, International Students House

229, Great Portland Street, London W1

December 12, 13.00

As well as David North, Socialist Equality Party national secretary Chris Marsden and Barbara Slaughter, a veteran member of the Fourth International, will address the memorial meeting in Britain.

The SEP has invited students and lecturers from universities in Glasgow, Sheffield and London, where Rogovin held successful public lectures in 1996, to attend. Jonathan Smele, a lecturer at the Queen Mary and Westfield University, London, along with his students, heard Rogovin speak in 1996. He recalled that the lecture was memorable, not only because of the information it brought to light, but because 'it gave a new perspective on events in Russia'. Plans are being made for a delegation from the University to attend the memorial meeting.

SEP members discussed the meeting with those attending a seminar at the Britain-Russia Centre. Rogovin's work is known to many at the Centre, whose British East-West Journal recently published a favourable review of his book 1937--Stalin's Year of Terror. 'We have here a very full, thoroughly researched account of the purges and show trials which reached their nadir in 1937, from the point of view of those purged from the most influential circles of government, which meant--as far as Stalin was concerned--Trotsky and his followers (or alleged followers)', the review stated.

Socialist Equality student societies have held meetings to discuss the social and economic catastrophe that capitalist restoration has wrought in Russia. Just one week ago, the Moscow office of the International Red Cross issued a warning that the country faced 'mass starvation'. As a speaker remarked at the student societies meetings: 'Assertions and assumptions that were once presented as 'fact' can now be re-examined in the cold light of day. It is now possible to appreciate the contemporary significance of the struggle conducted by the ICFI, supported by Rogovin, to show that there was a socialist alternative

to Stalinism.'

More information about the meetings may be obtained from:

Partei für Soziale Gleichheit

Postfach 100 105 D-45001 Essen

Tel. +49 201 87 01 30

Fax +49 201 87 01 333

Email: info@gleichheit.de

Web: gleichheit.de

Socialist Equality Party

PO Box 1306 Sheffield S9 3UW

Tel: +44 114 244 3545

Fax: +44 114 244 0224

Email: sep@socialequality.org.uk

Web: www.socialequality.org.uk

See Also:

Victim of Stalinism protests at threats

Professor Nathan Steinberger writes to the Student Union at Humboldt University, Berlin

[28 November 1998]

Vadim Rogovin: 1937-1998

Russian Marxist Historian Dies in Moscow

[18 September 1998]

International tributes for Russian Marxist historian:

Vadim Rogovin buried in Moscow

[6 October 1998]

1937 - Stalin's Year of Terror

[WSWS Exhibit]



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact