

Resolution of the Socialist Equality Party Congress

On the Seventieth Anniversary of the Assassination of Leon Trotsky

20 August 2010

On August 11-15, 2010, the Socialist Equality Party (US) held its first regular National Congress in Ann Arbor, Michigan. The World Socialist Web Site will be publishing resolutions and reports from the Congress over the coming weeks. We begin with a resolution adopted unanimously on the first day of the Congress, "On the Seventieth Anniversary of the Assassination of Leon Trotsky."

On August 21, 1940 Leon Trotsky, the co-leader of the October Revolution and founder of the Fourth International, died of wounds inflicted by an agent of the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union. His assassination marked the climax of the Stalinist bureaucracy's campaign of political genocide directed against an entire generation of socialist workers and intellectuals who prepared and led the 1917 October Revolution and created the foundations of the first workers' state. Stalin's terror ranks among the worst crimes of the twentieth century.

Seventy years after his death, Trotsky remains the object of an unrelenting campaign of falsification and slander. Major publishing houses produce volume after volume devoted to discrediting Trotsky. Unrestrained by either intellectual or moral scruples, the charlatans of the academy compete with one another to see who can produce the worst hack work. But all their lies and distortions cannot diminish the extraordinary place occupied by Trotsky in world history. He remains a towering figure. The whole course of historical development since 1940 has vindicated the ideas and principles to which Trotsky dedicated, and for which he ultimately sacrificed, his life.

In 1923, with the founding of the Left Opposition,

Trotsky initiated the struggle against the growing Soviet bureaucracy and its usurpation of political power. He defended the principles and strategy of Marxist internationalism against the reactionary Stalinist program of socialism in one country. Trotsky foresaw the disastrous consequences of Stalinist policies, both for the Soviet and international working class. Between 1923 and 1933, the Left Opposition sought to return the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Third International to the program of genuine Bolshevism upon which the 1917 October Revolution had been based. But following the victory of fascism in Germany, which had been facilitated by the disastrous policies of the Stalinists, Trotsky called for the building of the Fourth International. He warned that only the overthrow of the Stalinist regime by the working class, in a political revolution, could save the USSR from destruction. The Soviet bureaucracy, he insisted, would sponsor the restoration of capitalism. Trotsky was proven correct.

The struggle that Trotsky waged against Stalinism developed on the basis of the strategy of world socialist revolution. The most historically significant expression of this strategy was the founding of the Fourth International in September 1938. In the programmatic statement that he wrote for the founding congress, Trotsky declared that outside of the cadre of the Fourth International, "there does not exist a single revolutionary current on this planet really meriting the name." This claim outraged the innumerable centrist and opportunist tendencies, who saw in Trotsky's statement a refusal to acknowledge the revolutionary credentials of political organizations and movements that, at one point or another, held sway among the masses. But, again, it is Trotsky who has been

vindicated. What has become of those tendencies and movements that the opportunists appraised so highly?

In the aftermath of Stalin's death in 1953, Pablo, Mandel and their supporters saw great potential for the emergence of a renewal of Marxism within the walls of the Kremlin. They built an entire theory around the conception that Stalin's successors would provide the impulse for a new wave of socialist revolutions. Up until the very end of the USSR, the Pabloites awaited the arrival of a Kremlin-sanctioned political messiah. Finally, they found him in the persons of Gorbachev (for Ernest Mandel) and Boris Yeltsin (for Tariq Ali). But these "messiahs" brought not socialism, but the catastrophe of capitalist restoration.

Other replacements for Trotskyism were found by the Pabloites and other left intellectuals in the movements led by Mao, Tito, Nasser, Ben Bella, Castro, the Sandinistas, the African National Congress, and countless other nationalist formations that occupied, for a greater or lesser period of time, a prominent place on the world stage. They have all gone to the political graveyard. In every case they proved to be not merely inadequate, but actual accomplices of the world bourgeoisie in the suppression of the revolutionary struggles of the masses.

The Socialist Equality Party is justly proud of the role that it played in the 1970s and 1980s, in its investigation into Security and the Fourth International, in exposing crucial and long-concealed aspects of the Stalinist conspiracy to assassinate Leon Trotsky. Of particular importance was its exposure of the role played by Stalinist agents working inside the Socialist Workers Party in the US in the plot against Trotsky's life. This investigation was carried out in the face of furious opposition from the Pabloite organizations, who were politically aligned with the Stalinist organizations. However, the discovery of documents in the course of the Security and the Fourth International investigation and, subsequently, following the dissolution of the Stalinist regime in the USSR, vindicated the work of the International Committee.

The SEP also takes pride in its longstanding defense, alongside our comrades in the International Committee of the Fourth International, of the theoretical conceptions and programmatic principles for which Trotsky fought. We consider it particularly appropriate that our party is publishing, on this seventieth

anniversary, *In Defense of Leon Trotsky*, a collection of lectures and essays by Comrade David North, which exposes and refutes the lies of the falsifiers of history.

As the deepening crisis of capitalism leads to a resurgence of class struggle, the SEP pledges to intensify its efforts to introduce workers and youth to the ideas of the greatest strategist of world socialist revolution, L. D. Trotsky.



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