

Public meeting in Leipzig: Leon Trotsky and the defense of historical truth

On the controversy concerning the biography of Trotsky by Robert Service

13 March 2012

The biography of Leon Trotsky by the British historian Robert Service has unleashed an international controversy. In his own words, Service's intention in writing the book was "to finish off" the greatest theoretician and spokesman of socialist revolution of the 20th century and the most significant socialist opponent of Stalin. Service's book fails to meet the basic standards of historical research, drawing upon Stalinist falsifications of history and making use of anti-Semitic prejudices. The book is, in the words of the noted historian Herman Weber, "a diatribe, not a scientific polemic."

Fourteen renowned German-speaking historians have opposed publication of a German edition in an open letter addressed to the Suhrkamp publishing house. The publisher, however, is intent on publishing the book. Also supporting publication are the ultra-right newspaper *Junge Freiheit* and the conservative daily *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*.

Leon Trotsky (1879-1940), was the co-leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution, socialist opponent of Joseph Stalin, founder of the Fourth International, and strategist of world socialist revolution.

David North, whose book *In Defense of Leon Trotsky* initiated the controversy, will discuss his criticism of Service at this year's Leipzig Book Fair. North is the chairman of the international editorial board of the *World Socialist Web Site*.

Given the deep crisis of capitalism, the life and work of Leon Trotsky assume increasing significance. Also

at stake are critical issues related to the treatment of history. The younger generation, in particular, has a right to unadulterated historical truth.

Friday, March 16, 6:30 p.m.
University of Leipzig, Room HS 2
Universitätsstraße 3



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