

The Russian Revolution and the Unfinished Twentieth Century published in German

Peter Schwarz
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The Russian Revolution and the Unfinished Twentieth Century by David North has been published in German and is available for immediate purchase through Mehring Verlag.

North's book is essential in providing a political orientation and formulating a socialist response to the global crisis of capitalism. It argues that the battles of the last century in the spheres of politics, economics, philosophy and art have not been decided, and continue to rage on.

British historian Eric Hobsbawm wrote of the "short twentieth century." For Hobsbawm, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 signified the end of the revolutionary epoch that began with the outbreak of the First World War. While between 1914 and 1991 socialism was considered in one way or another to be an alternative to capitalism, this period was over, never to return, according to Hobsbawm.

The conception of the "unfinished twentieth century" "rejects the ahistorical pessimism of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia," North writes. It "locates humanity in the midst of a continuing and unresolved conflict." The outcome of the global crisis that began in August 1914 has yet to be decided. The historical alternatives confronting mankind are those identified by Rosa Luxemburg, in the midst of World War I, nearly a century ago: "Either the triumph of imperialism and the destruction of all culture, and, as in ancient Rome, depopulation, desolation, degeneration, a vast cemetery; or, the victory of Socialism, that is, the conscious struggle of the international proletariat against imperialism."

By characterising the twentieth century as "unfinished," the key issue that then arises is the need to study and assimilate the lessons of its history. "The upheavals and struggles of the past are seen as vital

strategic experiences whose lessons must be thoroughly assimilated by the international socialist movement," North writes.

The volume offer a wealth of material to assist in understanding these strategic experiences. It studies a variety of historical, political and theoretical topics that are essential for any understanding of the twentieth century. These include the Russian Revolution of October 1917, the fate of the Soviet Union, Trotsky's struggle against Stalinism, the Theory of Permanent Revolution, the rise of National Socialism and the origins of World War II. Some of the contributions defend Marxism against modern forms of subjectivism and irrationalism.

David North has been active in leading positions within the international socialist movement for over 40 years. Currently, he is the chairman of the International Editorial Board of the *World Socialist Web Site* and the national chairman of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States.

The book is based on the political and intellectual history of the international socialist movement. Yet North never repeats what has been previously written, but rather develops the historical and theoretical issues with reference to contemporary problems. Several contributions take the form of polemics, giving them additional contemporary relevance.

The author, David North, will speak and present his book at Germany's second largest book fair in Leipzig at a meeting entitled, "The return of history: imperialism, war and revolution in the 20th and 21st centuries." Further details can be found [here](#).



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