

# The Legacy of 1905 and the Strategy of the Russian Revolution

## Second online lecture on centenary of the Russian Revolution to be held this Saturday

18 March 2017

The second in the International Committee of the Fourth International's series of online lectures marking the centenary of the Russian Revolution will take place this Saturday, on March 25.

Fred Williams, translator of many Russian-language works, longtime member of the Socialist Equality Party and expert on Russian history, will deliver the lecture, "The Legacy of 1905 and the Strategy of the Russian Revolution."

The lecture will be broadcast live at 5:00 pm Eastern Daylight Time. To register for the lecture series, and for information on time zone conversions, visit [wsws.org/1917](http://wsws.org/1917).

A large audience of well over 1,000 listeners from more than 60 countries participated in the first lecture in the series, "Why Study the Russian Revolution?", delivered by WSWS International Editorial Board Chairperson David North.

Called the "dress rehearsal" or "magnificent prelude" to 1917, the 1905 revolution in Russia contained all of the fundamental elements marking a new era in history—the epoch of proletarian revolution. The classes involved—the despotic aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the working class—fought out the unresolved issues of 1905 twelve years later, leading to the world's first successful socialist revolution.

The tsarist autocracy was not overthrown in 1905, but its days were clearly numbered. The nascent capitalist class and its "liberal" allies proved incapable of overthrowing the tsar to clear the way for a parliamentary republic. When the working class began to advance its own demands, the liberal bourgeoisie showed that it feared the proletariat more than it resented the despotism of the tsar.

The revolutionary events of 1905 are dramatic:

Bloody Sunday; spreading strikes in the industrial centers; a general strike in the fall; mutiny in the fleet; formation of the first Council of Workers' Deputies in the capital; the tsar's deceptive October manifesto, promising limited reform; armed uprising in Moscow and its bloody suppression; brutal revenge of the tsarist punitive expeditions, particularly against the workers.

All the political parties were tested in these events. Divisions between the two main wings of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party—the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks—began to emerge more clearly. Within the wide-ranging debates over all aspects of the revolution, a new voice was heard: the young Leon Trotsky, who briefly headed the Petersburg Soviet and then elaborated the Theory of Permanent Revolution as he drew the essential lessons of 1905.

Twelve years later, only the Bolshevik Party, led by Lenin and Trotsky, was able to re-arm itself and organize the broad masses of the working class for the seizure of power in October. The victory of 1917 would not have been assured without the immense revolutionary experiences of 1905.

Among the works translated by Williams are a series of essays by Trotsky from March 1917 currently being published on the WSWS, many appearing for the first time in English.

*The WSWS urges all of its readers who have not already registered for the lecture series to do so today at [wsws.org/1917](http://wsws.org/1917).*



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