# Leader of 1983-86 Phelps Dodge miners' strike Jorge O'Leary denounces DSA's celebration of Trotsky's assassination

**Our reporters**
**19 May 2021**

On Tuesday, the World Socialist Web Site reported that numerous prominent leaders of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) engaged in a coordinated Twitter campaign celebrating the assassination of Leon Trotsky in Mexico City on August 20, 1940. The World Socialist Web Site spoke to Jorge O'Leary, world-renowned leader of the 1983-86 Phelps Dodge strike in eastern Arizona, about the DSA's praise for Trotsky's assassination.

O'Leary said, "To celebrate Trotsky's death at the hands of Stalinist treason, I'm disgusted with this. This is mean. Trotsky was a genius and he always worked for the working class for the benefit of the workers. And after 80 years, it's shocking to hear that there are those who are happy about that."

Many of the tweets by DSA leaders were illustrated with depictions of an alpenstock, the weapon used by Stalinist assassin Ramon Mercader to murder Trotsky. "This might come in handy one day," one DSA leader wrote. Another DSA member proposed erecting a memorial to Mercader, claiming "he showed us the way." DSA members and leaders posted dozens of similar tweets, which were "liked" by a substantial section of the DSA leadership.

O'Leary was born in Mexico in 1940, shortly before Trotsky's assassination. As a young socialist and anti-imperialist student leader he had profound respect for then-Mexican President Lazaro Cardenas' decision to grant Trotsky asylum. He later became a doctor, moved to the United States and practiced medicine in eastern Arizona at a hospital owned by the Phelps Dodge corporation. During the strike, the company fired him from the hospital for refusing to follow management demands that he deny medical attention to strikers and

their children.

O'Leary then set up a free medical clinic for strikers and was selected by the workers as the leader of the strike, which involved 3,000 workers and lasted three years. He presently lives in Tucson, Arizona. In April, the WSWS interviewed him at length about the strike and the leading role played by the Socialist Equality Party's predecessor, the Workers League, and its then-National Secretary David North.

O'Leary made the following statement about the DSA's coordinated effort to celebrate the assassination of Trotsky:

To celebrate Trotsky's death at the hands of Stalinist treason, I'm disgusted with this. This is mean. Trotsky was a genius and he always worked for the working class for the benefit of the workers. And after 80 years, it's shocking to hear that there are those who are happy about that. They don't analyze the situation, either then or in the present day.

I was an infant when Trotsky was assassinated. I was very young, but I remember my mother and father discussed the situation and talked about how proud they were that the Mexican president, Lazaro Cardenas, had welcomed Trotsky to Mexico because every other country was afraid of Stalin. Mexico welcomed Trotsky and helped him stay alive.

But the Mexican people were very upset about the assassination. To the Mexican people, when someone is welcomed, you cannot kill them. My mother met Trotsky a couple of times in the

house of the Secretary of Education, Gonzalo Vasquez Vela. They had dinner together. My mother was not involved in the discussions that they had but she did meet him, she was happy to have met Mr. Trotsky. She said he was extremely intelligent, she was surprised he could speak Spanish, that he was nice to the people surrounding him, in spite of being such an important person. We are very proud that a world leader who fought in the Russian Revolution lived in our country.

Stalin got the upper hand and they got Trotsky. Stalin was very stupid in a way. He was an assassin, he was uneducated. To compare him with Trotsky is like comparing a lion with a chicken, and Trotsky was the lion. To be happy about his death is disgusting.

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