

## SEP 2023 Summer School Opening Report

# Leon Trotsky and the Struggle for Socialism in the Epoch of Imperialist War and Socialist Revolution

David North  
7 August 2023

*The following report was delivered by David North, the National Chairman of the Socialist Equality Party (US) and International Editorial Board Chairman of the World Socialist Web Site, to introduce the SEP Summer School, held between July 30 and August 4, 2023. The WSWS will be publishing all the lectures at the school in the coming weeks.*

1. In opening the 2023 International Summer School of the Socialist Equality Party, I wish first of all, on behalf of the SEP in the United States and the International Committee of the Fourth International, to pay tribute to the life of Comrade Wije Dias. He died just over one year ago, on July 27, 2022, at the age of 80. More than 60 of those years were dedicated to the building of the Trotskyist movement in Sri Lanka and internationally. For the last 35 years of his life, more than a third of a century, Comrade Wije held the post of general secretary of the Sri Lankan section of the ICFI. Up until the last day of his life, he remained deeply involved in the work of the Sri Lankan section and the struggles of the working class.

2. A full review of Comrade Wije's life would be more than the biography of an individual. It would necessarily encompass the modern history of the Sri Lankan working class and that of the world Trotskyist movement. He became a Trotskyist as a member of the youth movement of the Lanka Sama Samaja Party (LSSP), which had on the basis of its decades-long struggle for Trotskyism developed as a mass revolutionary party of the Ceylonese working class. But in June 1964, as a consequence of the malign influence of Pabloism, and its own decade-long and evermore apparent adaptation to parliamentary opportunism, the LSSP repudiated the revolutionary socialist program of Trotskyism and formed a coalition government with the bourgeois SLFP led by Prime Minister Bandaranaike.

3. Comrade Wije was in the forefront of a remarkable generation of principled and courageous young revolutionaries who opposed this betrayal and set out to rebuild, in unrelenting struggle against the LSSP opportunists, the Trotskyist movement in Sri Lanka. As a result of the trip by Gerry Healy to Colombo in June 1964, Wije and other opponents of the coalition established contact with the International Committee of the Fourth International. The discussions with Healy and the ICFI statements denouncing the coalition placed the betrayal of the LSSP in the broader and essential international context of the struggle against Pabloite revisionism dating back to 1953.

4. The historic events in Sri Lanka had a profound impact on the development of Trotskyism in the United States. It has always been a point of pride in the Socialist Equality Party in the United States that it was the principled response of the American supporters of the International Committee to the betrayal of the LSSP in Sri Lanka that precipitated their expulsion from the Socialist Workers Party in September

1964 and the founding of the American Committee for the Fourth International. Two years later, in November 1966, the Workers League was established as a sympathizing section of the ICFI. In 1968, following an extended period of political clarification, the Revolutionary Communist League was founded in Sri Lanka. Comrade Keerthi Balasuriya was elected its first general secretary, a position that he held until his untimely death at the age of 39 on December 18, 1987. I would like to add parenthetically that Comrade Keerthi did not only assist me in the writing of *How the WRP Betrayed Trotskyism*. He was in every sense of the word a full co-author of that document.

5. Comrade Wije had played a central role in the leadership of the RCL since its founding. In the extraordinarily difficult situation that confronted the RCL upon the sudden and totally unexpected loss of its brilliant and still very young leader, Wije assumed the post of general secretary. He accepted this responsibility in the midst of civil war and terrorist attacks on the RCL, the murder of its membership, by the reactionary Sinhala chauvinists of the JVP. Wije's firm and decisive leadership rallied the membership of the Revolutionary Communist League.

6. The outstanding characteristics of Wije were limitless and unaffected personal courage and unyielding commitment to political principles. This was recognized even by his political opponents, who, when in his presence, could not help but feel somewhat ashamed of their own opportunism.

7. Wije was not only respected. He was also beloved. On one occasion, which I had the great fortune to observe, Comrade Wije, from a Sinhala background, was invited to attend, as the guest of honor, a social event in a Tamil neighborhood in Colombo. The civil war was still raging. But the Tamil community was aware of the SEP's intransigent opposition to the racist war. When Comrade Wije entered the hall, there was an immense ovation. He was seen as the leader of the only party in Sri Lanka which represented the working class of all ethnic and religious communities.

8. Comrade Wije Dias possessed great authority within the ICFI. In all the discussions in which he participated, we could rely upon his vast experience, objectivity and knowledge, and also take solace from his remarkable sense of humor. Wije has entered into the history of the International Committee and his example will remain forever a source of inspiration for the cadre of the World Party of Socialist Revolution. In honor of his great contribution to the struggle for socialism and the victory of the international working class, we are dedicating this school to the life and memory of Comrade Wije Dias. We will now observe a minute of silence.

9. I too would like to extend special greetings to our comrades from all over the world. Holding a summer school on an international scale

requires that there are many comrades attending this school in the middle of the night, and who will be participating, despite the physical strains that this creates, because they wish to participate in this important review of the history of our movement. We greatly value and appreciate their participation. As I will explain, in the course of this lecture, one of the great achievements that arose from the split of 1985-86 was the reestablishment of genuine revolutionary internationalism in our movement.

10. Two further observations. First of all, in relationship to the translation process. When comrade Andrea was warning against over-long, complicated sentences with many clauses, I had the feeling that she had perhaps reviewed the draft of my speech. I apologize in advance.

11. As for the history of translations in meetings such as this, I recall a story that I was told many many years ago, in 1975 to be precise, by a revolutionist who had attended the Second Congress—excuse me, the Fourth Congress—of the Comintern in 1922. He was Arne Swabeck, who was both a founder of the American Communist Party in 1919, and later a founder of the Trotskyist movement, the Communist League of America as it was then known, in 1928. He was 85 at the time, in perfect health, still possessing an astonishing memory that went all the way back to 1907. He related to me how he attended one of his first mass meetings in Germany, as he passed through Germany from Denmark. It was a May Day meeting at which Rosa Luxemburg spoke. He commented, in a Danish-English accent, “She was quite a speaker.”

12. But then he told me about his experience in 1922. There were two particular anecdotes which I recall very well. The first was his description of a speech by Lenin. They all were aware that Lenin had previously suffered a stroke, and there was tremendous anxiety about the state of Lenin’s health. But he ascended the platform and gave a brilliant speech. All the foreign delegates were very much encouraged, and Swabeck himself turned to a Russian delegate sitting next to him, and said to him, “That was a fabulous speech.” And the Russian delegate said, “Yes, but you should have heard Ilyich before his stroke.”

13. There was a second anecdote which relates directly to the question of translation, and that was the appearance of Trotsky. When he was to speak, there was an enormous excitement, an extended ovation. But when Trotsky began to speak, he started with an apology, explaining that he had prepared all his notes in German. German was, so-to-speak, the semi-official language of the Communist International. And he said that because of this, he will speak in German. At that point, there was a protest from the French delegates, who said, “Comrade Trotsky, this is not fair. The translation is not very good. It will be difficult to follow your report.” Trotsky then said in French, “Comrades, I understand this problem. When I’ve completed my presentation in German, we’ll go to another room, and I will repeat my report in French.” At this point, the Russian delegates began to shout. “Tovarisch Trotsky, Lev Davidovich, this is not right. If you’re going to speak in German and then in French, you must give your lecture in Russian.” He said, “Yes comrades, when I’m finished my lecture to the French delegates, we will meet separately and I will give my report in Russian.” Trotsky spoke for three hours in German. He then gave his report in French, and later his report in Russian, and Swabeck recalled that it was late in the day, he was leaving the building at which the sessions of the Comintern were being held, and he saw Trotsky coming out of the meeting with the Russian delegates. He had spoken for a total of nine hours. And he remembered that event as if it had happened the day before.

14. Trotsky was truly an extraordinary figure in the history of the movement, and it is difficult, it was difficult to grasp, that at that point, only months would transpire before the struggle erupted in the Bolshevik Party that was to result in his loss of power. At any rate, now we are using the facilities of Artificial Intelligence and we can take advantage of this opportunity to give lectures which hopefully will be followed with some

facility by all of the comrades from throughout the world who are participating in this school.

15. Now the last in-person summer school of the Socialist Equality Party was held from July 21 until July 28, 2019, just months before the outbreak of the Sars-CoV-2 pandemic. The school was devoted to an examination of the development of the perspective and program of the International Committee of the Fourth International in the aftermath of the split with the Workers Revolutionary Party in February 1986. That split was the outcome of a protracted conflict within the ICFI that unfolded over a period of three years.

16. In October 1982 the leadership of the Workers League had informed Gerry Healy, Cliff Slaughter, Michael Banda and the WRP Political Committee of substantial differences with the British section’s distortion of the philosophical foundations of Marxism and its retreat from the program of permanent revolution.

17. The British leaders reneged on their initial pledge to organize a comprehensive discussion of the differences raised by the Workers League, resorting instead in December 1982 to threats of an immediate split unless the American section withdrew its criticisms. Under conditions in which the International Committee was entirely unaware of the existence of the differences that had been raised, the criticisms were withdrawn.

18. However, the failure of the WRP to correct its errors and its ever-more open embrace of Pabloite politics—exemplified by Cliff Slaughter’s criticism in November 1983 of our “too heavy emphasis” on the political independence of the working class and the WRP’s unrestrained glorification of the reactionary bourgeois governments in the Middle East—this compelled the Workers League to renew its demand, in January 1984, for a discussion of the political orientation of the British section and the world perspective of the International Committee.

19. Once again, the WRP set out to sabotage the organization of a proper discussion of political issues. Remember, this was a time when there was no internet, no email, no easy and instantaneous transmission of documents. Thus, when leading members of the Workers League arrived in London in February 1984, they discovered that neither the Sri Lankan nor Australian sections had been informed of the ICFI meeting. They did not have delegates. The comprehensive analysis prepared by the Workers League of the WRP’s capitulation to Pabloism was once again met with threats of an immediate split. Determined to avoid a premature organizational break with the International Committee under conditions in which the substance, and even the existence, of its criticisms would remain unknown to several sections of the world movement, the Workers League again withdrew its criticisms of the WRP.

20. The crisis that erupted inside the WRP in July 1985, however, could not be concealed from the International Committee. The extensive and documented criticisms made by the Workers League between 1982 and 1984, which finally circulated throughout the WRP and the ICFI, provided an analysis of the opportunist policies and retreat from Trotskyism that underlay the devastating organizational crisis in the British section.

21. Between October and December 1985, the orthodox Trotskyists reestablished firm control over the International Committee. The British section was suspended from the ICFI, with its readmission dependent upon its renewed and explicit commitment to the foundational principles of Leninism and Trotskyism, as they had been developed and defended since the first four congresses of the Communist International and the founding of the Left Opposition in October 1923.

22. The WRP could not abide by these conditions and split from the International Committee on February 8, 1986 at a fraudulent rump congress at which WRP members who supported the International Committee—and who actually constituted a majority of legitimate party members—were barred by police, summoned by Slaughter, from entering the hall. This split was conducted by Cliff Slaughter and Michael Banda

on the basis of a document, written by Banda, titled “27 Reasons why the International Committee should be buried forthwith and the Fourth International built.” The title of the document was at once ironic, inasmuch as not a single reason was given by Banda for the building of the Fourth International.

23. As predicted by the ICFI, virtually all those who adhered to this infamous document were soon to repudiate Trotskyism and all political association with the program of socialist revolution. Many of them returned to Stalinism and others became accomplices of NATO military operations in Bosnia during the civil war that followed the destruction of Yugoslavia. They became out-and-out anticommunists and agents of imperialism.

24. This struggle, which will be reviewed in greater detail in three lectures later this week, is among the most consequential events in the history of the Fourth International. It prevented the destruction of the Trotskyist movement and created the conditions for a renaissance of Marxism and an immense development in the theoretical, political and organizational work of the International Committee.

25. After the 2019 school, the split was placed in the broader context of the history of the Fourth International. The opening report identified five distinct phases, or stages, in the history of the Trotskyist movement.

26. The first phase spanned a period of 15 years, from the founding of the Left Opposition in 1923 to the founding of the Fourth International in 1938. This period encompassed the critical historical events and strategic experiences which determined the entire course of the struggle of Trotskyism against Stalinism and which formed the basis of the program and perspective of the Fourth International. The essential lessons of this tragic period, which witnessed the greatest defeats of the international working class and the physical destruction of a vast portion of the cadre of Marxism, were summed up in the sentence with which Trotsky opened the founding document of the Fourth International: “The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat.”

27. The second phase spanned another period of 15 years, from the founding of the Fourth International to the split with the Pabloite leadership of the International Secretariat and the formation of the International Committee 70 years ago in November 1953. This phase, as we explained in 2019, “encompasses the assassination of Trotsky, the entirety of World War II, the establishment of Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe, the re-stabilization of capitalism in Western Europe and Japan, the outbreak of the Cold War, the victory of the Chinese Revolution, the outbreak of the Korean War, and finally the death of Stalin.”

28. The third phase of the Fourth International encompassed 33 years of struggle within the International Committee—there is no Fourth International outside the International Committee—which began with the issuing of James P. Cannon’s Open Letter to the World Trotskyist Movement and concluded with the suspension of the WRP in December 1985 and the final break with the national opportunist renegades in February 1986. It was a period that we have characterized as one of protracted civil war within the International Committee, which was marked by a series of intense political conflicts with Pabloite tendencies both outside and within the ICFI. The report explained:

Throughout this explosive period, during which powerful mass movements of the working class posed objectively the possibility of socialist revolution, the International Committee had to contend not only with the relentless pressure of the Stalinist and social democratic parties, trade unions and related organizations. The Pabloite organizations, allied with the aforementioned bureaucracies, as well as a broad stratum of petty-bourgeois radicals and anti-Trotskyist intellectuals, sought to isolate the

International Committee, combining relentless falsifications of Marxist theory and the principles of the Fourth International with an unending series of political and organizational provocations.

29. Parenthetically, the reports that will be given this week will focus on this third phase in the history of the Fourth International, which will include crucial experiences of the Workers League—in particular, the break with Wohlforth, the initiation of the Security and the Fourth International investigation, and the interventions of the party in the class struggle—that led to a significant development of the Trotskyist cadre in the United States and its opposition to the opportunist course of the WRP. As we stressed in 2019:

The political history of the WL and the theoretical-political work of the section had sensitized the WL leadership, imbued with the history and principles of the Trotskyist movement, to objective economic processes and political events. This generated political dissatisfaction and disagreement with the course pursued by the WRP.

30. The fourth phase of the history of the Fourth International began with the break with the WRP in February 1986—that is, with the decisive defeat of the opportunists and the establishment of the political authority of the Trotskyists within the International Committee. This was verified, as I have already stressed, in the extraordinary development of the ICFI, finally liberated from the destructive influence and machinations of Pabloism. The most critical achievement of this period was the development of a world perspective that enabled the International Committee to align a politically unified international practice with the objective globalization of economic life and its implications for the development of the international class struggle.

31. In explaining the intense interaction of the ICFI sections that developed in the aftermath of the 1985-86 split, I referenced the report that I gave to a meeting of the Detroit membership on June 25, 1989:

The scope of this international collaboration, its direct impact on virtually every aspect of the practical work of each section, has profoundly and positively altered the character of the ICFI and its sections. The latter are ceasing to exist in any politically and practically meaningful way as independent entities. Upon the foundation of a common political program, a complex network of relationships has emerged within the ICFI which binds together every section. That is, the sections of the ICFI comprise interconnected and interdependent components of a single political organism. Any breaking of that relationship would have devastating effects within the section involved. Every section has now become dependent for its very existence upon this international cooperation and collaboration, both ideological and practical.

32. The advances of the International Committee were not—and could not have been—merely the product of the subjective will and political sincerity of its cadre. Underlying its development were profound changes in socioeconomic conditions on a world scale and their reflection in political structures and relations. We have often noted that major developments within the Trotskyist movement—and especially the intense periods of inner-party struggle—have occurred either as an anticipation of

or as a result of critical inflection points in world politics.

33. The 1939-40 faction fight within the Socialist Workers Party developed as an almost immediate response to the outbreak of World War II. The November 1953 split was precipitated by the death of Stalin eight months earlier, which set into motion an unending series of crises within the Kremlin and world Stalinist movement. It also reflected the growth of a form of middle class radicalism that developed in opposition to the movement of the working class as a politically independent and revolutionary social force.

34. As was soon to become clear, the struggle within the International Committee between 1982 and 1986 anticipated the final terminal stage in the degeneration of the Stalinist bureaucracy, culminating in the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991. It might have seemed highly unlikely to superficial observers—especially those within the WRP leadership—that the apparently isolated opposition of the Workers League would become, within a period of just three years, the focal point of a new Trotskyist realignment and majority within the International Committee.

35. In the most profound sense, the strength of the Trotskyist opposition was derived from the fact that it not only correctly analyzed objective processes, but that these processes—in contrast to the situation that existed in 1939-40, 1953, or even during the SLL's struggle against the SWP's unprincipled reunification with the Pabloites in 1961-63—were favorable to the revolutionary tendency. The processes of economic globalization were shattering the social foundations of every form of national labor program, social democratic, Stalinist, and trade unionist. All the old nationally rooted labor parties and trade unions were incapable of devising a viable response to the new economic realities. The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the disintegration of the mass Stalinist parties and organizations were the most significant part of a broader process of the breakdown of nationally grounded reformism.

36. The major initiatives of the sections of the ICFI—especially the transition from leagues to parties and the launching of the *World Socialist Web Site*—were based on a correct assessment of objective forces that were providing a new and powerful impulse for the development of the International Committee as the World Party of Socialist Revolution.

37. Summing up 33 years between 1986 and 2019, the report stated:

The critical preparatory work of removing the Pabloites, rebuilding the world party on an internationalist foundation, elaborating the international strategy of the International Committee of the Fourth International, defending the historical heritage of the Fourth International, converting the leagues of the International Committee into parties, and establishing the *World Socialist Web Site* were the main achievements of the fourth stage. These achievements made possible a vast expansion in the political influence of the International Committee and a significant growth of its membership. This stage is concluded.

38. The 2019 report then asserted that the fifth phase of the history of the Trotskyist movement had begun:

This is the stage that will witness, we said, a vast growth of the ICFI as the World Party of Socialist Revolution. The objective processes of economic globalization, identified by the International Committee more than 30 years ago, have undergone a further colossal development. Combined with the emergence of new technologies that have revolutionized communications, these processes have internationalized the class struggle to a degree that would have been hard to imagine even 25 years ago. The

revolutionary struggle of the working class will develop as an interconnected and unified world movement. The International Committee of the Fourth International will be built as the conscious political leadership of this objective socio-economic process. It will counterpose to the capitalist politics of imperialist war the class-based strategy of world socialist revolution. This is the essential historical task of the new stage in the history of the Fourth International.

39. Four years have passed since we identified the beginning of the fifth phase in the history of the Fourth International. Now we must pose the question: Have subsequent events substantiated this assessment, both in terms of the development of the objective economic and political crisis of capitalism, the intensification of the class struggle, and, finally, the activity of the party?

40. Looking back over the last four years, it is an unarguable fact that the 2019 school took place on the very eve of a massive escalation of the economic, political and social crisis of world capitalism. Moreover, within weeks of the conclusion of the school, what might have appeared an incidental development provided a significant indication of a qualitative development in the political and intellectual influence of the party.

41. On August 19, 2019, the *New York Times* published in its Sunday magazine a series of essays, of which the most prominent was the article by Nikole Hannah-Jones, that announced the launching of the “1619 Project.” Committing enormous resources to this project, the most influential bourgeois corporate newspaper in the United States—the media flagship of the American state, the intelligence agencies, and the academic establishment—announced that it was initiating a fundamental revision of the narrative of American history. Neither the American Revolution nor the American Civil War were to be seen any longer as progressive historical events. The 1619 Project would decisively expose the Revolution as a desperate and cynical rebellion of slave owners, determined to thwart the efforts of the British Empire and the heroic Lord Dunmore to advance the cause of emancipation.

42. As for the Civil War, they claimed, it had little to do with the destruction of slavery. The Union army was, at most, a minor actor in the far greater drama of the slaves' self-emancipation. As for Lincoln, he was a petty and vile racist, who wanted nothing so much as the removal of blacks from the North American continent and their return to Africa.

43. This mendacious and intellectually bankrupt revision of history—based largely on the recycling of the reactionary racist mythology of black nationalist propagandists like Lerone Bennett Jr.—was immediately hailed by the media and a chorus of academics as a long overdue revelation. It would have gone largely unchallenged had it not been for the intervention of the *World Socialist Web Site*. On September 3, 2019, just two weeks after the start of the 1619 Project, the WSWS posted its first major reply, titled: “The *New York Times*' 1619 Project: A Racialist Falsification of American and World History.”

44. This comprehensive exposure of the crude and glaring errors in the essay of Hannah-Jones was followed not only by essays that developed the critique of the 1619 Project. Comrade Tom Mackaman interviewed major historians—including Gordon Wood, James McPherson, James Oakes, Richard Carwardine, Victoria Bynum and Clayborne Carson—who provided detailed refutations of key claims of the 1619 Project.

45. The essays and interviews posted on the *World Socialist Web Site* attracted national and international attention and threw the *New York Times* onto the defensive. The clumsy attempt of its editors to salvage the credibility of the Project with unannounced and/or unexplained corrections in the original text of Hannah-Jones' essay served only to further discredit their pathetic propaganda campaign.

46. The role played by the WSWS in the exposure of the 1619 Project

was of immense intellectual and political significance. The Trotskyist movement, since its inception, has been compelled to expose the grotesque lies about the October Revolution and Soviet history by Stalinist and bourgeois historians. In the aftermath of the dissolution of the USSR, the International Committee published an immense amount of literature exposing the lies of the post-Soviet School of Historical Falsification, which included the works of Vadim Rogovin—which were written in close collaboration with the International Committee—as well as the exposure of the essays written in response to the anti-Trotsky slanders of Professors Ian Thatcher, Geoffrey Swain and Robert Service, answers which are published in the volume, *In Defense of Leon Trotsky*.

47. It is to be expected that the Trotskyist movement will take the lead in exposing the falsification of the history of the socialist movement. But the fact that the defense of the American Revolution and Civil War required, and was totally dependent upon, the intervention of the Trotskyist movement has far-reaching political significance. It is a substantiation in the sphere of the intellectual life of the United States of a fundamental premise of the theory of permanent revolution. In the epoch of imperialist decay, the systematic and unwavering defense of the critical and enduring conquests of the democratic revolutions—which includes the intellectual defense of their historical legitimacy—can be sustained only through the struggle of the socialist movement and the mobilization of the working class.

48. The first edition of the *World Socialist Web Site* in 2020 posted a Perspective headlined, “The decade of socialist revolution begins.” It stated:

The arrival of the New Year marks the beginning of a decade of intensifying class struggle and world socialist revolution.

In the future, when learned historians write about the upheavals of the twenty-first century, they will enumerate all the “obvious” signs that existed, as the 2020s began, of the revolutionary storm that was soon to sweep across the globe. The scholars—with a vast array of facts, documents, charts, web site and social media postings, and other forms of valuable digitalized information at their disposal—will describe the 2010s as a period characterized by an intractable economic, social, and political crisis of the world capitalist system.

They will note that by the beginning of the third decade of the century, history had arrived at precisely the situation foreseen theoretically by Karl Marx: “At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with the existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed.”

49. It is likely that many readers of the site, including those who generally agree with the perspective of the International Committee, and perhaps members of our party, were inclined to view the perspective as an exercise in rhetorical exaggeration, occasioned by the celebration of a new decade, rather than a serious assessment of the historical situation.

50. But the prescience of this statement was to be verified by events. Before the first month of 2020 had concluded, the first reports of a potential pandemic were being posted in the media. The WSWWS published its first article on the outbreak of the novel coronavirus on January 24, 2020. It quickly recognized the immense global danger posed by the

rapidly developing pandemic. On February 28, 2020, the ICFI issued a statement titled: “For a globally coordinated emergency response to the coronavirus pandemic.” With a level of clarity unequaled by any other publication, the ICFI grasped the vast economic, social and political implications of the pandemic, which it defined as a “trigger event” which would intensify all the inherent contradictions of capitalist society on a global scale.

51. In a further manifestation of the essential role of the party’s intervention in major political and social developments, the International Committee assumed the leadership of the global struggle against the pandemic, providing a perspective and policy direction for healthcare professionals, scientists and the broadest sections of the working class. In an earlier era, major public health crises led to broad-based public initiatives to educate the public and eradicate infectious diseases. Nothing of the sort occurred in response to the outbreak of the Sars-CoV-2 pandemic. Organized and effective opposition to the policy of “malign neglect”—as the WSWWS described the response of the bourgeois governments as early as March 2020—came only from the International Committee.

52. On March 6, 2020, the SEP issued a statement titled, “What must be done to fight the coronavirus pandemic.” On March 14, 2020, the SEP issued a statement calling for “an immediate shutdown of all auto and non-essential production throughout the country in response to the coronavirus pandemic, with full pay for all workers affected.” This was followed on March 17 with a statement of the SEP National Committee, “How to fight the COVID-19 pandemic: a program of action for the working class.” These statements played a significant role in triggering wildcat strikes in Michigan, which forced corporations to temporarily shut down plants throughout North America. I think it should be stressed that at this point, the total number of deaths in the United States still amounted to only a few dozen. And throughout the world, to only a few thousand. We have a right to ask, how many lives would have been spared had the policy advanced by our party been adopted. Well we know the answer: it would have saved the lives of millions.

53. The WSWWS defined the three major policy responses to the pandemic: 1) the capitalist state response of “herd immunity”; 2) the liberal reformist response of “mitigation”; and 3) the scientifically grounded and necessarily socialist program of elimination and eradication of the virus. The WSWWS held two international webinars, bringing together outstanding scientists and experts in public health, to educate the working class and build mass support for the implementation of the elimination/eradication policy.

54. On April 24, 2021, the International Committee issued its call for the formation of the International Workers’ Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees as a necessary response to the pandemic and the need to coordinate the struggles of the working class on a global scale.

55. In November 2021, just before the outbreak of the devastating Omicron variant, the WSWWS initiated an international inquest into the pandemic. This initiative, which is ongoing, has been the most advanced and comprehensive investigation into the global social impact of the pandemic and the criminal response of capitalist governments.

56. The response of the ICFI to the pandemic has not been restricted to commentary. Or, to put it more precisely, its analysis of the pandemic has been inseparably bound up with the organization of mass working class opposition to the murderous policies of all governments.

57. On January 6, 2021, Donald Trump organized a mob assault on the Capitol to prevent the ratification of Biden’s victory in the November 2020 election, perpetuate his control of the White House and establish, in effect, a presidential dictatorship. The attempted coup—which had been foreseen by the *World Socialist Web Site*—was an unprecedented event in US history and substantiated the SEP’s analysis of the terminal crisis of US democracy. The failure of the coup—attributable far more to the

tactical inexperience of the mob than to organized resistance by the forces of the state—has not stabilized the political situation. The upcoming presidential election unfolds beneath the lingering shadow of the 2021 coup.

58. Finally, when we survey the experiences since the school of 2019 and its identification of the start of the fifth phase: On February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. Far from being the sudden and unexpected start of what the Biden administration and its counterparts in Europe, along with the media, denounced as an “unprovoked war,” it was the outcome of well-prepared NATO provocations, dating back to the Maidan coup of 2014 and even earlier, aimed at drawing Russia into a disastrous war which would destabilize the regime and lead to the breakup of the Russian federation.

59. As we have noted on previous occasions, the statements posted on the WSWS during the past 10 years are the most crushing refutations of the “unprovoked war” narrative. There are hundreds of articles and statements in which the WSWS explicitly warned of the relentless preparations of the United States for war against Russia and China. Since February 24, 2022, the total number of articles related to the war in Ukraine is close to 1,000. Even if we had decided to devote an entire week to a review of the WSWS’s coverage of the war, this limited amount of time would have required a careful selection of documents.

60. The war is the most critical verification of both the International Committee’s recognition that the Trotskyist movement has entered into the fifth phase of its history and of the 2020s being a decade of revolutionary struggles. As the most extreme manifestation of the contradictions of American capitalism and the world capitalist system as a whole, the relentless escalation of the war poses before the working class the alternatives of socialism or barbarism.

61. The understanding of the fundamentally existential character of the crisis requires the recognition that the deliberate provocation of this war and the reckless determination to escalate the confrontation with both Russia and China—two nuclear-armed powers—is not the product merely of irrational aggression. As in the 1930s, the ruling classes see no way out of their crisis except through war. In 1938, Trotsky wrote in the opening of the Transitional Program that the imperialist powers were even less capable of averting World War II than they had been on the eve of World War I. It can now be said, with no less urgency, that the capitalist elites of North America and Europe are less capable of preventing World War III than they were in stopping the outbreak of World War II.

62. One must assume that the Biden administration is not entirely unaware of the high probability that a nuclear war would result in the deaths of tens of millions of people and the destruction of the United States—we should say hundreds of millions of people in the United States alone. But this can only mean that nuclear war is viewed by the ruling elites as a risk that must be taken to achieve objectives even more critical for the survival of American capitalism. Moreover, from the standpoint of the ruling class, an America without capitalism is a country not worth saving.

63. In the analysis of American imperialism developed over many decades by the International Committee, we have stressed that the United States has systematically sought to offset its protracted economic decline vis-a-vis its major capitalist rivals through the utilization of military force.

64. This relationship between economic deterioration and the resort to military solutions has acquired something of the character of a law of contemporary geopolitics. The preservation of the central role of the United States in global geopolitics, let alone its striving to achieve hegemony, is entirely bound up with maintaining the US dollar as the indisputable world reserve currency. This is the central foundation for not only America’s dominance in world affairs, but, and no less critically, the staving off of domestic financial bankruptcy.

65. It is important to recall that the foundation of the Bretton Woods system, which existed from 1944 until 1971, was the convertibility of the dollar into gold at the rate of \$35 per ounce. The viability of this system depended upon the industrial and financial dominance of the United States, which would guarantee trade and balance of payments surpluses. The deterioration of those essential indices during the 1960s finally compelled the United States to repudiate the link between dollar and gold in August 1971.

66. Stated simply, as debt accumulated overseas—and I recall there was what they called an overhang of 80 billion euro-dollars in 1971, which made impossible the continued guarantee that the repatriation of these dollars from Europe to the United States could be repaid in gold—it was this that compelled the United States to abandon the dollar’s official link to gold and shift to a system of floating exchange rates. Fifty years ago! That is, the daily exchange rate of currencies would be determined in the market, influenced by such factors as a country’s balance of trade, current accounts balances, and the state of the national budget.

67. In the decades that followed the breakdown of Bretton Woods, the United States accumulated ever greater levels of debt and deficits. Nevertheless, the dollar’s role as the world reserve currency has been maintained, if for no other reason than the absence of any other national currency to supplant the dollar. This has given the United States immense privileges. As the supplier of the world’s central currency, it has been allowed to run up huge budget, trade and payments deficits.

68. However, events during the last 15 years have raised serious question marks over the continuation of the dollar’s unique global role. First, the scale of the US national debt has grown exponentially. It was not until 1982 that the national debt passed the \$1 trillion mark. It is now over \$32 trillion. The national debt is more than 100 percent of the gross domestic product of the United States.

69. The explosion in the scale of government debt during the past 15 years is directly connected to two massive Wall Street bailouts: the first in 2008 and the second, even larger bailout, in response to the 2020 Wall Street crash triggered by the pandemic.

70. Another factor affecting the status of the dollar has been its increasing use by the United States as a weapon, through the medium of financial sanctions, against foreign rivals that run afoul of its interests. As the influential US foreign policy pundit Fareed Zakaria wrote in the *Washington Post* on March 24, 2023:

The dollar is America’s superpower. It gives Washington unrivaled economic and political muscle. The United States can slap sanctions on countries unilaterally, freezing them out of large parts of the world economy. And when Washington spends freely, it can be certain that its debt, usually in the form of T-bills, will be bought up by the rest of the world.

71. But Zakaria expressed concern that the aggressive actions of the United States are generating a dangerous reaction. He said:

Washington’s weaponizing of the dollar over the past decade has led many important countries to search for ways to make sure that they do not become the next Russia. The share of dollars in global central bank reserves has dropped from roughly 70 percent 20 years ago to less than 60 percent today, and falling steadily. The Europeans and the Chinese are trying to build international payments systems outside the dollar-denominated SWIFT system. Saudi Arabia has flirted with the idea of pricing its oil in yuan. India is settling most of its oil purchases from Russia in nondollar

currencies. Digital currencies, which are being explored by most nations, might be another alternative; in fact, China's central bank has created one. All of these alternatives add costs, but the past few years should have taught us that nations are increasingly willing to pay a price for achieving political goals.

72. The American ruling class has become increasingly concerned that China's emergence as a major economic rival may accelerate a movement away from the dollar; that another system for financing global trade transactions—possibly based on a basket of currencies, or, even more threatening, on the increased use of gold—which would deprive the dollar of its unique status.

73. A recent hearing, held in June, of the Subcommittee on Financial Institutions and Monetary Policy of the House Committee on Financial Services, was titled: "Dollar Dominance: Preserving the U.S. Dollar's Status as the Global Reserve Currency." In her opening statement, Congresswoman Joyce Beatty, a black Democrat from Ohio, stated:

The US dollar is considered the global reserve currency because roughly 60 percent of central bank reserves around the world are held in US dollars. The dollar is the preferred currency for international trade. Oil is priced and settled in US dollars, and nearly 90 percent of transactions in foreign exchange markets involve, yes, the dollar. The market for US treasuries is also the deepest and most liquid market in the world, and the reliability and stability of US capital markets makes the dollar the preferred currency for investors.

The dominance and supremacy of the currency affords the United States numerous benefits from reduced borrowing costs to increased financial stability to influence over global financial markets. It also allows us to leverage economic measures against those that seek to threaten our national security and foreign policy. Given the undeniable value of the US dollar as dominance, it is critical that we address the currency and present threats to it.

As we speak, foreign adversaries like Russia and China are actively working to undermine the US dollar and cripple our global power and influence. We see this in Russia's rapid accumulation of gold reserves over the last decade, as well as China's development of non-SWIFT systems to settle and clear transactions.

74. At the same hearing, Marshall Billingslea, who helped design "enhanced interrogation techniques" during the War on Terror and who has held many high-level state positions, expressed his concern that the dollar might suffer the fate of the Spanish silver dollar of the 16th century, the Dutch florin of the 17th century, and, finally, the British pound sterling. He stated that the "link between a nation's currency being the favored unit of trade account and that nation's relative dominance on the global stage is clear." He continued:

And that is why leaders such as Lula, Putin and Xi all aspire to undercut the role of the dollar as the global reserve currency, just as much as they aspire to erode the international security framework that we so painstakingly constructed after the Second World War. Ultimately, they see it as a way of displacing the United States as the leader of the free world. In the nearer term, they see it as a way of eroding our ability to use finance as a tool for safeguarding our national security.

75. Significantly, Billingslea expressed great concern about the accumulation of gold by Russia and China. He said:

In March of 2018, Russia began dumping ownership in US Treasury bonds, from \$96 billion down to \$15 billion. Russia also began buying large amounts of gold, becoming the fifth largest owner in the world (with 2,300 tons). ...

China is now embarking on its own gold buying spree. I have not yet seen the data for May, but April marked the sixth straight month of Chinese expansion in its gold reserves, with the stockpile reaching over 2,000 tons. At least, those are the official figures. I suspect the number is in fact far higher, and that they are concealing amounts generated by Chinese gold mining around the world; China is the world's largest gold producer and half of that is state-owned. China is also the world's largest gold importer, much of it not declared. At a minimum, the PRC is building up a war chest with assets that will be harder to touch through financial sanctions. But if China begins to back yuan contracts with gold, it also may remove a major impediment to the yuan being able to challenge the dollar by resolving concerns about convertibility.

76. Jeffrey A. Frankel of the Harvard Kennedy School presented a paper on March 24, 2023, at a conference hosted by the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington D.C. The session at which he spoke was titled: "Can the Dollar-Based System Be Improved or Replaced?"

He called attention to the renewed significance of gold. National currencies are not necessarily the only sort of international reserves, nor, for that matter, the only sort of international unit of account or means of payment. One alternative asset, though until recently considered by most economists "a relic of the barbarous past," is now regaining an active role as a component of international reserves. That is gold. The other alternative is a new one: cryptocurrency (a sign of a barbarous future?)

We long thought that central bank holdings of gold were an anachronism. Monetary authorities in many countries still held some gold, but did not treat it as an active part of their international reserves. That is, they did not buy or sell it. In recent years, however, central banks, especially in Asia, have been actively buying (and selling) gold.

77. The war in Ukraine is well into its second year. The scale of death and destruction is beyond anything that has been witnessed in Europe since the end of World War II. The number of Ukrainian and Russian soldiers who have died or have been wounded is not known. Neither the Ukrainian nor Russian regimes are providing accurate numbers. But there is sufficient information to plausibly estimate that the number of Ukrainian deaths is at least 200,000 and possibly substantially higher. The number of Russian deaths may well be approaching 100,000. Virtually all those who have been killed bear no responsibility for this war. The Ukrainian and Russian dead are the innocent victims of the decisions made by the imperialist powers of NATO, their stooges in Kiev, and the politically bankrupt regime in Moscow.

78. It is true that the United States and NATO instigated the war. But the Putin regime's reactionary decision to invade is the end product of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the restoration of capitalism, and the transfer of political power to a gang of corrupt oligarchs. All of the

disastrous miscalculations of the Putin government have their origins in the delusory conception that the restoration of capitalism would result in prosperity and the benign integration of Russia into the brotherhood of capitalist nations. Putin believed that it would be sufficient for him to denounce Marxism and the October Revolution to gain the trust and friendship of his so-called “Western partners.” But American and European imperialism do not want Putin’s friendship. It wants unrestricted access to the Russian gold, platinum, lithium, molybdenum, titanium, cobalt and other essential strategic metals and minerals that are to be found in the soil of that vast country.

79. This war is not a passing episode. Whatever the short-term outcome of the fighting, the conflict is a milestone in the normalization of war and the acceptance of mass killing in the pursuit of geopolitical objectives. The American ruling class hardly attempts to conceal its plans for global warfare. War with Russia and China is not a matter of “if it will happen,” but how and when it will be waged. In a blunt statement of geopolitical objectives, *The National Interest*, an influential magazine, argued that the main purpose of American diplomacy should not be focused on preventing war with Russia and China, but on finding “a way to stagger its contests with these two powers to ensure that it does not face both at the same time in a war.”

80. The war in Ukraine is the most powerful confirmation of the International Committee’s identification of the revolutionary character of the present decade. But how is this related to its appraisal of the fifth phase of the history of the Fourth International? The answer to this question requires a Marxist understanding of the relation, within the context of a revolutionary epoch, between the objective development of the capitalist crisis and the inevitable intensification of class conflict and the subjective practice of the revolutionary party.

81. In all his major statements on the question of war, Trotsky repeatedly stressed two fundamental points. The first point is that the drive toward imperialist war can only be stopped through the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism by the working class. The second point is that the achievement of this overthrow requires the building of the Fourth International as the revolutionary leadership of the working class. The development of the spontaneous movement of the working class, without revolutionary leadership, will not stop either war or the imposition by the ruling class of the dictatorial-fascistic regime that is required to wage total war.

82. In his concluding four hour speech before the Dewey Commission in April 1937, Trotsky answered the Stalinist lie that he welcomed war as a means of hastening the outbreak of revolution. This statement was a concise exposition of the relation between war and revolution.

War has in fact often expedited revolution. But precisely for this reason it has often led to abortive results. War sharpens social contradictions and mass discontent. But that is insufficient for the *triumph* of the proletarian revolution. Without a revolutionary party rooted in the masses, the revolutionary situation leads to the most cruel defeats. The task is not to “expedite” war—for this, unfortunately, the imperialists of all countries are working, not unsuccessfully. The task is to utilize the time which the imperialists will leave to the working masses for the building of a revolutionary party and revolutionary trade unions.

It is in the vital interest of the proletarian revolution that the outbreak of war be delayed as long as possible, that the maximum possible time be gained for preparation. The more firm, the more courageous, the more revolutionary the conduct of the toilers, the more the imperialists will hesitate, the more surely will it be possible to postpone war, the greater will be the chances that the revolution will occur *prior to* war and perhaps make war

itself *impossible*. ...

War and revolution are the gravest and most tragic phenomena in human history. You cannot joke with them. They do not tolerate dilettantism. We must understand no less clearly the interrelationship of the *objective* revolutionary factors, which cannot be induced at will, and the *subjective* factor of the revolution—the conscious vanguard of the proletariat, its party. It is necessary to prepare this party with the utmost energy.

83. This is the perspective upon which the party must base its work. It is the only realistic perspective. Our work proceeds from the fundamental and historically verified premise that the working class is the basic revolutionary force in society, capable—by virtue of its objective role in the process of production—of overthrowing the capitalist system and creating an alternative, socialism, to that system. Whether or not the working class can achieve the level of political self-consciousness and understanding of its historic tasks is not a matter for idle speculation. What can or cannot be achieved will be determined in practice. As Trotsky would have said, struggle will decide. It is no doubt true that revolutions have suffered defeats. But it has been shown—above all in the experience of 1917—that the working class, given the necessary leadership, can overthrow the ruling class.

84. We will not waste time speculating over whether or not the working class will fight, or whether the American working class will accept the socialist solution to the crisis. Our efforts must be concentrated on raising the work of the party to the highest possible level. But if the skeptics still demand a more definite answer, I will reply that we have sufficient examples of mass social struggles within the United States and internationally to justify confidence in the potential of the working class. The world is seething with revolutionary anger. A mood of rebellion is sweeping the globe. The streets of Paris have been filled repeatedly with hundreds of thousands of protesters. The main obstacle to the development of revolution is not the unwillingness of workers to fight, but the sabotage carried out by the trade unions and reactionary political organizations, in many cases dominated by the affluent middle-class pseudoleft.

85. Moreover, the intervention of the party in the UAW election this past year provided an insight into the consciousness of the working class. The candidacy of comrade Will Lehman, who openly stated his socialist convictions and called for the abolition of the apparatus, won the support of 5,000 autoworkers. And thousands more would have voted for him had they even known of the election. But the bureaucracy, which recognizes and fears the growth of political radicalism and the movement toward socialism, did everything in its power to block participation of workers in the election.

86. The Lehman campaign is one significant demonstration of the SEP’s leadership of militant opposition within the working class to the bureaucratic apparatuses of the reactionary trade unions. The International Workers’ Alliance of Rank and File Committees, initiated by the party, is developing within the United States and internationally as a genuine movement of militant workers in factories and work places throughout the country.

87. But the growth of the mass movement of the working class imposes ever greater demands on members of the party. Meeting these challenges requires greater attention to the education of the party membership. The most important element of this education is raising the cadres’ knowledge and understanding of the history of the Trotskyist movement.

88. For the Marxist movement, historical knowledge has always been the foundation of revolutionary practice. The assimilation of historical experience is the basis for a theoretically guided practice, which must transcend a pragmatic approach to politics which generally takes



individual experience and personal impressions as the starting point of political activity. In an important essay on the philosophical tendencies of bureaucratism, Trotsky wrote:

...[A]re the empiricists not right—they who guide themselves by “direct” practice as the highest court of authority? Are they not, then, the most consistent materialists? No, they represent a caricature of materialism. To be guided by theory is to be guided by generalizations based on all the preceding practical experience of humanity in order to cope as successfully as possible with one or another practical problem of the day. Thus, through theory we discover precisely the primacy of practice-as-a-whole over particular aspects of practice.

89. The generalizations that are utilized by the revolutionary party to guide its response to the problems posed by the present-day crisis and the development of the class struggle are derived from the assimilation of a vast body of historical experience. In seeking to explain the degeneration of the Bolshevik Party, Trotsky, who was once described as a man of history, even drew upon the events of the French Revolution, employing the term Thermidor—the period of political reaction that began in July 1794 with the execution of Robespierre—to explain the processes underway within the ruling party of the Soviet workers state.

Lenin, in the months that immediately preceded the October Revolution, devoted himself to a renewed study of the writings of Marx and Engels on the experience of the Paris Commune of 1871. From that study emerged not only Lenin’s brilliant contribution to Marxist scholarship, *State and Revolution*, but also the conquest of political power by the Bolshevik Party.

90. Marxists are not mere bookworms. Trotsky once commented sarcastically on the academic who reads and ponders the state of humanity while exploring his nose with his finger. Party members, engaged in daily work, do not have the luxury of unlimited time to devote to reading. But the time that is available should be used, first and foremost, to thoroughly assimilate the history of the party they are fighting to build, to learn the lessons of the essential historical experiences through which it has passed during the preceding years and decades.

91. Of course, the political education of the younger generation poses specific problems. First, the general political environment, under the influence of the Frankfurt School and postmodernism, is hostile to the study of history. The postmodernists have proclaimed the need to abandon the concept of objective truth and the study of so-called “Grand Narratives,” by which they meant, in general, the materialist conception of history and, more specifically, works such as the *Communist Manifesto*, *Capital*, and, of course, Trotsky’s *History of the Russian Revolution* and *The Revolution Betrayed*. To state the matter bluntly, this is an age of lies, which are sanctioned by academics. As the war in Ukraine has exposed, and the career of scoundrels such as Timothy Snyder exemplifies, the distinction between writing history and manufacturing propaganda is ignored by a substantial section of the academic community.

92. This reactionary environment has contributed to a general decline in the level of historical knowledge. For many members, their historical education begins when they join the International Committee of the Fourth International.

93. But having joined a section of the International Committee, how are new members to assimilate the vast experience of the Trotskyist movement? When my generation joined the Workers League, little more than a half century separated us from the October Revolution. The founding of the Left Opposition in 1923 was separated from the world of

1970 or 1971 by only 47 or 48 years—that is, the same amount of time that separates us today from 1976! Our education was concentrated on the study of the origins of the Trotskyist movement, the founding of the Fourth International, the historic faction fight of 1939–40 against the petty-bourgeois minority of Shachtman, Burnham and Abern, the development of Pabloite revisionism leading to the issuing of the Open Letter and the 1953 split, and the subsequent struggle led by the British Trotskyists against reunification. There were of course many gaps in our knowledge. But what we studied—the available writings of Trotsky and the major documents of the International Committee of the Fourth International—enabled us to conduct a struggle in defense of the theoretical and programmatic heritage of Trotskyism against the betrayal of the Workers Revolutionary Party.

94. We derived and took whatever we could from the experience of the revolutionary Marxist movement. I recall one episode. In late October 1985, recognizing that many members of the WRP had been brought into the movement without any knowledge of the history of the International Committee or even any awareness that they were part of an international movement, and could not function as Trotskyist cadre. We had no idea where their political sympathies lay. And so the International Committee proposed—at a meeting I believe it was on October 25, 1985—that all members, those who wished to be members of the Workers Revolutionary Party, should be reregistered on the basis of an explicit declaration that they accepted the political authority of the International Committee. Banda and Slaughter felt compelled to accept that proposal, which, by the way, they later repudiated. Banda came up to me after the meeting and asked, “Where did you come up with that?” And I said, “Mike, that was a basic condition for membership in the Communist International.” The basis of admission was acceptance of the 21 points of the Communist International. It was on that basis that they sought to fight the reformism and centrism of the Second International. Banda was surprised. He had probably, by that point in his political degeneration, forgotten all the lessons of the Communist International.

95. For us, the experiences of the revolutionary Marxist movement were the substance, the foundation of our practice. There was a great deal to learn when we joined the movement in the 1970s. But we were intensely devoted to that vast experience. I recently came across a document that was drafted by the central committee of the Workers League in November 1979, to honor the centenary of the birth of Leon Trotsky, some 44 years ago. That document stated at one point, the following:

The Soviet Union was a transitional regime, where capitalism had been overthrown but socialism had not yet been built, and where the bureaucracy was undermining the struggle for socialism every single day. The degenerated workers’ state faced the alternative of the advance towards socialism through the overthrow of the bureaucracy and the extension of the revolution, or the restoration of capitalism through the counterrevolution assisted by Stalinism. Trotsky predicted and called for the political revolution to smash Stalinism, defend the planned economy and place the Soviet Union once again on the road to socialism. Of this fundamental perspective, nothing—not even a comma—is subject to revision.

That’s how we felt about the history of the Trotskyist movement and its program. Nothing was subject to revision, not even a comma. You could develop the program of the Trotskyist movement. You could expand upon it. But we would not tolerate any attempt to change, alter and destroy it. And that spirit, which expressed, I believe, the sentiment and spirit of the Workers League in the 1970s, was not a small factor in the determination

with which the struggle against the WRP renegades was pursued in the 1980s.

96. Nearly four decades have passed since the split with the WRP. The origins and development of that struggle are now a critical element of the historical experience that must be studied and assimilated by the cadre of the International Committee. Yes, comrades, younger comrades, we have added a great deal to the syllabus that must form the basis of your reading list. What may help you is the fact that the conflicts of the period between 1982 and today continuously reference the antecedent historical experience of the Trotskyist movement. In reading those documents, you are at the same time reviewing and learning from the experience of the entire history of Trotskyism. For that reason, the study of the history of the International Committee is the essential foundation of the education of the cadre of the World Party of Socialist Revolution, and we are convinced that the work that we will conduct this week will play an important role in advancing the theoretical level of every member of our party, in the United States and internationally.



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