

This Saturday: Public meeting in London, UK to mark the Centenary of Trotskyism

The centenary of Trotskyism: Leon Trotsky and the Struggle for Socialism in the Twenty-First Century

Socialist Equality Party (UK)
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The centenary of Trotskyism: Leon Trotsky and the Struggle for Socialism in the Twenty-First Century

Saturday November 18, 1.30pm

The Socialist Equality Party is proud to announce a major public meeting in London to mark the centenary of Trotskyism.

The meeting will be addressed by David North, chairman of the International Editorial Board of the *World Socialist Web Site* and national chairman of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States.

The founding of the Left Opposition against Stalinism 100 years ago, in October 1923, was a turning point in world history. The struggle initiated under the leadership of Leon Trotsky proved that there was a socialist alternative to Stalinism and that there is a socialist alternative to capitalism today.

The centenary acquires immense significance in the present world situation. In this period of capitalist breakdown, imperialist war and mounting struggles of the international working class, the ideas and principles fought for by Trotsky remain vital for the building of a socialist movement today.

David North's presentation will centre on his recently published book, *Leon Trotsky and the Struggle for Socialism in the Twenty-First Century*.

In the preface to his volume of essays, written over a span of 40 years, North states:

“Despite the many years that separate the first and last document, they are connected by a central argument: that Leon Trotsky was the most significant figure in the history of socialism during the first four

decades of the twentieth century, and that his legacy remains the critical and indispensable theoretical and political foundation of the ongoing contemporary struggle for the victory of world socialism.”

North identifies the essential theoretical and political conquests made by Trotsky as the co-leader with Lenin of the October 1917 Russian Revolution, beginning with Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution in 1905 and his condemnation of Stalinism as a counterrevolutionary force in the fight to defend the perspective of world socialist revolution.

Trotsky's description of Stalinism as “the gravedigger of the revolution” was vindicated by the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union in 1991, under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin—a process Trotsky predicted in his classic work *The Revolution Betrayed*. As North stressed in his 2014 book *The Russian Revolution and the Unfinished Twentieth Century*, the dissolution of the Soviet Union did not result, as Francis Fukuyama had predicted, in the “End of History”. Instead, “Rather than nourishing the blossoming of democracy, the new Russian state rapidly assumed the form of an oligarchic regime,” while the imperialist powers, led by the United States, have waged economic and social warfare against the working class at home as they seek a redivision of the world through military conquest. War has been deliberately provoked against Russia in Ukraine, along with the constant ratcheting up of tensions against China. The US, Britain and the European imperialist powers have now lined up behind Israel's genocidal war against the Palestinians in Gaza.

North explains that Trotsky's understanding of the world situation was derived from his analysis of the root cause of the crisis of capitalism:

“The policy of invasion, annexations, and conquests was, and still is, rooted not in the madness of individual leaders, even in the case of a psychopath like Hitler, but in the desperate necessity to overcome the limits imposed by state borders on access to global resources and the world market. The relentless growth of imperialist militarism, leading inevitably toward world war, signified the historical bankruptcy of the nation-state system...

“The contradictions discerned by Trotsky in the late 1920s and 1930s are now at a far more advanced, even terminal, stage of development. In the aftermath of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the drive to ‘organize the world’ in the interests of the global hegemony of the United States has assumed the form of a global rampage. The ‘volcanic eruption’ of American imperialism, predicted by Trotsky almost ninety years ago, is well underway.”

Trotsky dedicated his life to resolving the crisis of revolutionary leadership of the working class through the founding of the Fourth International in 1938, just two years before his murder in 1940 by a Stalinist assassin. North stresses that the historical problems Trotsky dealt with, “imperialist war, the breakdown of democracy and resurgence of fascism, spiralling inflation, mass unemployment, poverty, the treachery of the existing mass labour organisations and their integration into the structures of the capitalist state” are still the central questions facing the working class.

He writes:

“The historical experiences of the past century thoroughly tested all political movements, parties, and tendencies that claimed to be leading the struggle against capitalism. But the upheavals of the twentieth century have exposed the counterrevolutionary role of the Stalinists, Social Democrats, Maoists, bourgeois nationalists, anarchists, and Pabloites. Only the Fourth International, led by the International Committee, has met the test of history. The international revolutionary socialist movement of the working class on every continent will develop on the theoretical and political foundations of Trotskyism, the Marxism of the twenty-first century.”

The SEP warmly invites workers, students and

intellectuals to make plans to attend the November 18 meeting and take part in an essential discussion of these life and death questions.



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