

Sri Lankan IYSSE to hold public lecture on “Leon Trotsky and his place in history” at Peradeniya University

International Youth and Students for Social Equality
26 April 2024

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) in Sri Lanka will hold a public lecture titled “Leon Trotsky and his place in history” at Peradeniya University on Wednesday, May 15. It is the third lecture in a series held at the university by the IYSSE with the sponsorship of the Political Science Association. The first lecture was on historical materialism and the second on *The Communist Manifesto*.

Leon Trotsky (1879–1940) was co-leader with V. I. Lenin of the 1917 October Revolution in Russia and a Marxist genius in the struggle for socialist internationalism in the 20th century.

The Theory of Permanent Revolution, which Trotsky first elaborated in 1905, shows that the bourgeoisie in historically oppressed capitalist countries is utterly incapable of fulfilling the tasks of the democratic revolution. Those tasks can only be realised by the working class fighting for socialism with the support of the poor peasantry. That theory guided the seizure of political power by the Russian working class in October 1917, which was the first stage in the world socialist revolution.

Trotsky led the crucial political struggle against the anti-Marxist and nationalist theory of “socialism in one country” that was promoted by the Stalinist bureaucracy inside the first workers state in the aftermath of the failure of revolutions in Germany and other European countries in the early 1920s.

Trotsky founded the Left Opposition in 1923 to arm the workers in Russia and internationally with the perspective of international socialism and deepen the political struggle against the Soviet Stalinist bureaucracy.

Trotsky warned in the 1930s that unless the Soviet working class overthrew the bureaucracy in a political revolution, the Stalinists would restore capitalism. This was vindicated in the negative in 1991 when the Stalinist bureaucracy liquidated the Soviet Union.

Trotsky’s statement in the founding document of the Fourth International in 1938 that capitalism was in a “death agony” is reflected in imperialism’s support for Israel’s mass genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine and the American-led war preparations against China, which pose the danger of a nuclear world war.

In a statement highly relevant to today, Trotsky wrote: “Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind. The turn is now to the proletariat, i.e., chiefly to its revolutionary vanguard. The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership.”

All of the political issues analysed by Trotsky in the first four decades of the 20th century—world war, fascism, the global crisis of capitalism and social revolution—are those that confront the working class today. Trotsky’s vast Marxist analysis, continued and developed by the International Committee of the Fourth International, must be studied and assimilated, to guide the developing struggles of the working class against imperialist war, inequality and capitalism.

We urge students, academics, workers and youth to attend this important lecture on Trotsky’s struggle and his place in history.

Date: Wednesday, May 15 at 5 p.m.

Venue: Room No. 86, Department of Political Science, University of Peradeniya, Kandy.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact