# Analyzing a World in Chaos from an Island of Tranquility

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*This speech was given by* World Socialist Web Site *International Editorial Board chairman David North on the island of Büyükada (Prinkipo), Turkey, on Sunday, August 25. The event, titled, "Analyzing a World in Chaos from an Island of Tranquility," was the second international commemoration of the work of Leon Trotsky on Büyükada, during the first period of his exile from the Soviet Union between 1929 and 1933.*

*North was invited to speak by Büyükada Mayor Ali Ercan Akpolat, and joining him on the panel was Dr. R?dvan Ak?n of Galatasaray University. The event was moderated by Ula? Ate?çi, a leading member of the Sosyalist E?itlik (Socialist Equality Group) in Turkey. 160 people attended the event, with many purchasing literature and staying for a question and answer session afterwards.*

First, permit me to thank Mayor Ali Ercan Akpolat and his administration for organizing and inviting me to speak at this Second International Leon Trotsky Commemoration. The establishment of this commemoration as an annual intellectual event is of both historical and immense contemporary significance.

The four years that Trotsky spent on Büyükada were among the most consequential of his life and in the history of the twentieth century. 1929, the year he arrived here, was the year of the Wall Street crash and the beginning of the world depression. 1933 was the year of the accession to power of Hitler's Nazi regime, a historic catastrophe that led to World War II, the Holocaust and the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Humanity is still paying the price for the defeat of the German and European working class in the 1930s.

In 1938 Trotsky defined the historical epoch as that of capitalism's death agony. As a consequence of the defeat of the socialist revolution in the 1930s, as a consequence of Stalinist betrayals in France, in Spain, and of course in Germany itself, the death agony has been protracted. But current events are validating Trotsky's historical prognosis. Nearly 80 years after the collapse of Hitler's Third Reich and the end of World War II, we are witnessing the revival of fascism, the utilization of genocide as an instrument of state policy and the escalation of military conflicts toward a nuclear third world war.

If the descent into barbarism and the self-annihilation of civilization is to be prevented, it is necessary that we study the past and draw from it the appropriate lessons.

It is in the context of the central tragedy of the twentieth century—the victory of fascism in Germany—that Trotsky's years on this island retain such immense historical significance. It is well known that Trotsky wrote two of his greatest literary masterpieces during his Prinkipo exile: his autobiography, *My Life*, and his monumental *History of the Russian Revolution*.

But Trotsky's greatest achievement while he was on Büyükada was his analysis of the unfolding political crisis in Germany, his effort to alert the German working class to the danger posed by Nazism, and his exposure of the disastrous policies pursued by the German Communist Party under the direction of Stalin. Confined to an island 1,600 kilometers from Berlin, Trotsky understood with unequaled prescience both the inevitable consequences of Stalin's policies and what had to be done to prevent the victory of the Nazis.

As early as September 1930, more than two years before Hitler's victory, Trotsky wrote:

> *Fascism in Germany has become a real danger*, as an acute expression of the helpless position of the bourgeois regime, the conservative role of Social Democracy in this regime, and the accumulated powerlessness of the Communist Party to abolish it. Whoever denies this is either blind or a braggart.

Germany possessed the largest, most powerful and politically advanced working class in Europe. It was the birthplace of Marx and Engels, and the country whose industrial development had given rise, under the influence of Marxism, to the mass Social Democratic Party (SPD). But the SPD and virtually all the associated parties of the Second International betrayed the program of international socialism in August 1914 when they supported the entrance of their capitalist governments into what became the First World War.

The founding of the Third International under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, in the aftermath of the 1917 October Revolution, was aimed at the rebuilding of revolutionary parties based on socialist internationalism. The German Communist Party (KPD) emerged as the largest section, outside of the Soviet Union, of the new International. But its development was undermined by a crisis of political leadership. The murder of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht in January 1919, only two weeks after the founding of the KPD, deprived the party of its most experienced leaders. The problem of leadership was intensified by the growth of the bureaucracy led by Stalin within the Soviet Union, the repudiation of the program of world socialist revolution and the adoption of the nationalist program of "socialism in one country."

Trotsky, the leader of the Left Opposition within the Russian Communist Party, opposed this fundamental nationalist revision of the Marxist program, which disoriented the new Communist parties and led to the subordination of the sections of the Communist International to the national interests of the Soviet bureaucracy.

This disorientation found its most disastrous expression in the policies of the German Communist Party. Confronted with the rise of fascism, the essential task of the KPD was to unite all the forces of the working class in a common defensive struggle. Under conditions in which the loyalties of the working class were divided between two parties—the SPD and the KPD—the Communist Party was obligated to win the confidence of the millions of workers who still followed the lead of the Social Democrats.

Notwithstanding the reformist character of the SPD and its bitter

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hostility to the program of socialist revolution, the rise of fascism threatened its own existence. Trotsky therefore insisted that the KPD was obligated to exploit the objective conflict that existed between the SPD as a reformist workers organization and the Nazis. But the Stalinists, denying the existence of this conflict, rejected all collaboration—even for the purpose of organizational self-defense—with the Social Democrats.

Trotsky subjected the ultra-left policy of the Stalinists—which defined the Social Democratic Party as "social fascist" and, therefore, as the political twin of the Nazis—to devastating criticism. He called upon the Communist Party to abandon the self-destructive policy of "social fascism," and to issue a call to the Social Democratic Party for a "united front" against the Nazis. An agreement between the two mass parties of the working class, who held the loyalty of millions of workers in Germany, his call for united action, for combined defensive actions against the Nazis, Trotsky insisted, would create an impassable roadblock on Hitler's path to power. Moreover, it would clear the way for the working class to go on the offensive against the German capitalist regime and its Nazi underlings.

In December 1931, in an article titled "For a workers' united front against fascism," Trotsky warned: "Germany is now passing through one of those great historic hours upon which the fate of the German people, the fate of Europe, and in significant measure the fate of all humanity will depend for decades."

The Stalinists' stupid and reckless definition of the Social Democratic Party as fascist had the effect of drastically downplaying the danger posed by the genuine fascism of Hitler. With a clarity unequaled by any contemporary, Trotsky explained the specific political role of fascism in the counter-revolutionary arsenal of the ruling class. In his article "What Next?", published in January 1932, Trotsky wrote:

> At the moment that the "normal" police and military resources of the bourgeois dictatorship, together with their parliamentary screens, no longer suffice to hold society in a state of equilibrium—the turn of the fascist regime arrives. Through the fascist agency, capitalism sets into motion the masses of crazed petty bourgeoisie, and bands of the declassed and demoralized lumpenproletariat; all the countless human beings whom finance capital itself has brought to desperation and frenzy. From fascism the bourgeoisie demands a thorough job; once it has resorted to methods of civil war, it insists on having peace for a number of years … When a state turns fascist, it doesn't only mean that the forms and methods of government are changed in accordance with the patterns set by Mussolini—the changes in this sphere ultimately play a minor role—but it means, primarily and above all, that the workers' organizations are annihilated; that the proletariat is reduced to an amorphous state; and that a system of administration is created which penetrates deeply into the masses and which serves to frustrate the independent crystallization of the proletariat. Therein precisely is the gist of fascism.

One can say 90 years later, there is no greater and more precise definition of what fascism is, and if Trotsky had written nothing else in his life these words would have assured his political immortality.

In his critique of the policies of the Stalinists, Trotsky emphasized that the essential source of their errors was a nationalist orientation, which separated the fight against fascism in Germany from the perspective of international socialism. This led the leaders of the German Communist Party, influenced by the Soviet bureaucracy's nationalist program of "socialism in one country", to advance the call for a German "national people's revolution"—which blurred the explicitly proletarian orientation of the party and adapted to the chauvinist agitation of the Nazis—in place of the program of world socialist revolution. Exposing this false perspective, Trotsky wrote:

> The slogan of the proletarian unification of Europe is simultaneously a very important weapon in the struggle against the abomination of fascist chauvinism, the baiting of France, and so forth. The most incorrect, the most dangerous policy is the passive adaptation to the enemy by painting oneself to look like him. The slogans of national despair and national frenzy must be opposed by slogans of international liberation. For this, the party must be purged of national socialism, the principal element of which is the theory of socialism in one country.

Even as the strength of the Nazis grew steadily, the Stalinists refused to change their policies. Trotsky issued an impassioned warning to the German working class:

> Worker-Communists, you are hundreds of thousands, millions; you cannot leave for any place; there are not enough passports for you. Should fascism come to power, it will ride over your skulls and spines like a terrific tank. Your salvation lies in merciless struggle. And only a fighting unity with the Social Democratic workers can bring victory. Make haste, worker-Communists, you have very little time left!

Trotsky's warnings were not heeded. On January 30, 1933, Hitler was brought to power by cabal of ruling class conspirators without a shot being fired. Within days, as Trotsky had predicted, the Nazis launched their reign of terror against the working class and its political and trade union organizations. But far from acknowledging the massive scale of the defeat suffered by the German working class, the Stalinist regime in Moscow—which had dictated the policies pursued by its German satellite—declared that the policies responsible for the victory of the Nazis had been correct.

The cynical and deceitful evasion by the Kremlin bureaucracy led by Stalin of all responsibility for the German catastrophe signified the effective collapse of the Third Communist International. On July 15, 1933, on the very eve of his departure from Büyükada, Trotsky issued his call for the building of the Fourth International. He wrote:

> An organization that is not roused by the thunder of fascism and which submits docilely to such outrageous acts of the bureaucracy demonstrates that it is dead and that nothing can ever revive it. To say this openly and publicly is our direct duty toward the proletariat and its future. In all our subsequent work it is necessary to take as our point of departure the historical collapse of the official Communist International.

All subsequent events were to vindicate Trotsky's call for a new International. The policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy acquired a consciously counter-revolutionary character. The interests of the international working class and the struggle for socialism were subordinated by the Kremlin regime to the pragmatic calculations of its reactionary diplomatic maneuvers with the leaders of world imperialism. The mass murder of Old Bolsheviks and an entire generation of fighters

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for socialism during the Terror of 1936-39 was intended by Stalin to demonstrate to the imperialist powers that the Soviet regime had broken irrevocably with the perspective of world socialist revolution. The transformation of the Stalinist regime and its associated parties into instruments of counter-revolution found its culmination in the signing of the Stalin-Hitler Pact exactly 85 years ago, on August 23, 1939. One year later, on August 20, 1940, Trotsky was fatally wounded by an agent of the Soviet secret police, the GPU.

It is appropriate that this history should be recalled as we meet today. As stated in the title of today's event, it was from this island of tranquility that Trotsky analyzed a world in chaos. We are commemorating Trotsky's years in Büyükada at a time when the world is once again descending into chaos. This imparts to the present event an exceptional significance.

We are not only paying tribute to the man who stands alongside Lenin as the greatest Marxist theoretician and revolutionary of the twentieth century. We are acknowledging the unique place occupied by Trotsky's political legacy in contemporary world politics.

To describe Trotsky's political conceptions as merely "relevant" is a vast understatement. One cannot understand the political contradictions of the present-day world—which is among other things manifested in a worldwide resurgence of fascism—without a systematic study of Trotsky's writings. His theory of permanent revolution is as essential to the strategy and practice of international socialism—that is, the struggle to secure the future of humanity—as the theories of Einstein and Heisenberg are to the comprehension of the physical universe.

The objection is invariably raised—especially from academics and practitioners of the pseudo-left politics of the affluent middle class—that to assign an enduring contemporary significance to Trotsky's political legacy is wrong. They argue that Trotsky remains a figure of the first half of the last century. Eighty-four years have passed since his assassination. The Soviet Union itself no longer exists. We live in a very different world. The Marxist emphasis, they claim, on the centrality of the working class and class struggle—so-called "class essentialism"—has been superseded by identity politics that prioritize ethnicity, race and gender. The defense of the ideas and perspectives associated with Trotsky—that is, the program of world socialist revolution—is "idolatry." Trotsky and Trotskyism, they proclaim, are "irrelevant."

This is the gist of the argument advanced by a British academic, Professor emeritus John Kelly of Birkbeck College, University of London. The professor has written during the last six years two books devoted to proving the irrelevance of Trotskyism. The first volume, titled *Contemporary Trotskyism*, was published in 2018. The second volume, titled *The Twilight of World Trotskyism*, was published in 2023. One might ask why the professor has devoted so much time and effort to the study of a movement and a man that he considers to be "irrelevant?" What is it about Trotsky and the Trotskyist movement that has led Professor Kelly to expend so much energy denouncing it?

And why have the two volumes of Kelly been published by Routledge, among the largest publishers in the world with annual revenues of between $50 and $100 million. Why does this powerful capitalist publishing house expend its resources on publishing books about an irrelevant organization? It should be recalled that in 2003 Routledge also published a biography of Leon Trotsky. I had the high honor of exposing its author, Professor Ian Thatcher, as an intellectually unprincipled slanderer. Evidently, Routledge's preoccupation with Trotsky indicates that it is by no means convinced of his "irrelevance."

What Kelly and those like him cannot abide is the fidelity of the Trotskyist movement to a revolutionary perspective. He singles out the International Committee of the Fourth International, with which I am associated, for the most bitter criticism. Though Professor Kelly and I have never met, he describes me as "an immodest and arrogant individual"; and objects strenuously to the International Committee's definition of Trotskyism as "the Marxism of the 21st Century."

Professor Kelly denounces the headline of the New Year's statement posted on the *World Socialist Web Site* in January 2020: "The decade of socialist revolution begins." In response, Kelly wrote:

> Hermetically sealed in their doctrinairism and inimical to genuine empirical inquiry or theoretical innovation, the organizations of Orthodox Trotskyism are condemned to repeat forever the slogans and policies of the first quarter of the twentieth century, convinced that these ideas and these ideas alone, hold the key to their imminent transformation into mass revolutionary parties that will lead Leninist-style assaults on capitalist power around the world. [*The Twilight of Trotskyism*, p. 97]

In fact, the program advanced by Professor Kelly dates back to the last decade of the nineteenth century, to the work of Eduard Bernstein who set about—in the Germany of the 1890s—to transform the SPD into a party of social reforms. In words almost identical to those used by Kelly today, Bernstein argued that the revolutionary program of Marx and Engels was out of date, that the contradictions of capitalism were amenable to reforms, that conflicts between capitalist states could be resolved without resort to war, and that the living standards of the working class would steadily improve. Socialism would not be achieved through revolution, but through the gradual reform of capitalist society. But the events of the twentieth century—the two world wars, the use of atomic weapons, and the barbarism of fascism and related forms of mass repression—refuted the Utopian conceptions of Bernstein.

Professor Kelly fails to identify the new slogans, policies and ideas—superior to those advanced by Trotsky and Lenin—that will show the working class the way forward amid the escalating crisis of world capitalism.

Professor Kelly accuses the Trotskyists of being indifferent to empirical research. But it is the professor emeritus—shuffling about in comfortable retirement with cozy slippers on his feet and a woolen nightcap pulled over his eyes—who seems not to notice the increasingly obvious signs of the descent of world capitalism into chaos and barbarism. He writes: "The idea that the reformist era is at an end and that world politics is reduced to a simple binary choice—socialism or barbarism—is conceptually naïve and empirically flawed." [78]

Now that we are approaching the midpoint of the 2020s, have events tended to vindicate Kelly's ridicule of the prognosis of the International Committee five years ago? What has been the predominant tendency in the economic, social and political structures of world capitalism since the start of the new decade? If Professor Kelly's criticisms of Trotskyist "doctrinairism," blind to the realities of the contemporary world, are correct, he would have to demonstrate, with appropriate empirical documentation, that the past four to five years have witnessed an organic strengthening of the world economy, a diminution of social instability—that is, a lessening of class conflict—and both a decline in global geopolitical tensions and growing vitality of bourgeois democratic institutions.

In fact, an examination of the state of the economic, social, and political structures of contemporary capitalism vindicates the analysis of the Trotskyist movement. In every sphere, crisis predominates over stability. The decade began with the outbreak of a pandemic that swept across the world and led to at least 27 million "excess deaths," and has still not been brought under control. Its global rampage continues. I just read today a report which reveals that within the United States alone, since 2020 there have been 1.1 billion cases of COVID. The number of deaths this year so far is up 20 percent over last year. But the policy of the ruling elites is to

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ignore the pandemic, and to pretend that it is no longer an issue of concern. The same indifference characterizes their response to global warming. All the problems of modern mass society, which require a global solution, are subordinated to the socially irrational and destructive pursuit of corporate profits and the accumulation of gluttonous levels of personal wealth.

Notwithstanding the immense development of technology, the global financial system teeters on the brink of collapse. In the course of the last decade and a half in the United States, massive and unprecedented levels of state intervention were required twice—in 2008 and 2020—to stave off economic disasters. The result has been the rise of national debt to unsustainable levels.

In 2007, the public debt of the United States stood at $9 trillion dollars, a staggering figure. At of the end of 2023, the debt had risen to $34 trillion. Divided among the population of 330 million people, every American is indebted to the tune of $104,000. This inflationary spiral is unsustainable. The debts must be repaid. This requires a massive intensification of the exploitation of the working class. But this cannot be achieved democratically or peacefully. As in the twentieth century, the ruling elites are compelled to seek a way out of the crisis through war and fascism.

When I spoke last year at the first Trotsky commemoration on August 20, 2023, I stated:

> We confront today precisely the situation described by Trotsky in the founding document of the Fourth International, which he wrote in 1938 just one year before the outbreak of World War II: 'Without a socialist revolution, in the next historical period at that, a catastrophe threatens the whole culture of mankind.'

Have events of the past year substantiated that warning? Six weeks after we met last year in Büyükada, the uprising of Gazans against the oppression of the Israeli state occurred on October 7. The Israeli state exploited the uprising—which was itself the inevitable consequence of its unrelenting denial of the basic democratic rights of the Palestinian people—to launch a genocidal war. After 10 months of war, Gaza lies in ruins.

The total death toll, according to a study conducted by the authoritative *Lancet* magazine, is approximately 180,000. It could even be higher. But even as the crimes of the fascistic Israeli regime have horrified the people of the world, its actions are defended by every imperialist government. The United States has provided and continues to provide Israel with the bombs and artillery used to kill Palestinian men, women and children by the thousands every week. Under the slogan, "Israel has a right to defend itself," imperialist regimes are sanctioning the use of genocide as a legitimate instrument of state policy. In the midst of its atrocities, Netanyahu, the Israeli Hitler, was invited to address a joint session of the US Congress, which is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a foreign leader.

The descent of Israel into barbarism vindicates the prognosis made by Trotsky in 1940. Opposing the Zionist project, he warned, "The attempt to solve the Jewish question through the migration of Jews to Palestine can now be seen for what it is, a tragic mockery of the Jewish people." This reactionary chauvinist project has now morally implicated the Israeli population in a crime of historic magnitude. The descendants of the victims of genocide have become the perpetrators of genocide. The Israeli working class and youth must tear itself free from the reactionary ideology and politics of Zionism. The words written by Trotsky 84 years ago have acquired a searing immediacy: "Never was it so clear as it is today that the salvation of the Jewish people is bound up inseparably with the overthrow of the capitalist system."

When we met last year, NATO's proxy war in Ukraine against Russia had already been in progress for 18 months. The war has not only continued for another year; it is escalating to the point that threatens the eruption of full scale nuclear war. The United States and NATO have made clear that there are no "red lines" that they are not prepared to cross. During the past three weeks, Ukraine—utilizing weapons and other resources provided by the US and NATO—has invaded Russian territory. Not since 1944 have imperialist forces occupied Russia. At what point, one is compelled to ask, will the Putin regime conclude that it has no choice but to retaliate not only against Ukraine but also against its US and NATO sponsors? That would be a global catastrophe.

The Gaza genocide and the NATO-Russia conflict are the present focal points of a global struggle that places at risk the survival of humanity. The source of this conflict is rooted in the incompatibility of the existing nation-state system with the reality of a globally interconnected world economic system. Within the framework of capitalism, there is no solution, other than war, to this basic contradiction. The only viable alternative to world war is world socialist revolution.

If, as Professor Kelly claims, the ills of capitalism can be solved with reformist massages and foot baths, why are we witnessing the resurgence of fascism throughout the world. Meloni's Brothers of Italy, Le Pen's National Rally in France, the AfD in Germany, Vox in Spain, and Trumpism in the United States exemplify this tendency. However, the growth of these organizations and movements does not stem at this point from mass support for the creation of a Nazi-like regime. Rather, the fascists are exploiting the frustration arising from the indifference of the traditional parties to deteriorating social conditions. The fascists, promoted in the media and funded by sections of the billionaire oligarchs, direct this frustration toward attacks on immigrants, who serve today, as the Jews did in the 1930s and 1940s, as scapegoats for the ills of capitalism.

In the bastion of capitalism and world imperialism, American democracy is staggering beneath the weight of a crisis for which the existing political system has no progressive answer. The attempted coup of January 6, 2021, led by President Trump, marked a critical turning point in American history. The claim that "It can't happen here"—i.e., that America could never go fascist—was shattered by the events of that day. The organizer of the coup did not only escape punishment. He is again the presidential candidate of the Republican Party. During the past week, President Biden, in a moment of lucidity, made the following statement:

> Donald Trump says he will refuse to accept the election result if he loses again. Think about that. He's promising a bloodbath if he loses, in his words. And that he'll be a dictator on day one, in his own words. By the way, the sucker means it. No, I'm not joking. Anyone else said that in the past, you'd think he was crazy, you'd think it was an exaggeration, but he means it.

This warning was made by the incumbent president. Biden explicitly stated that the United States is on the very brink of becoming a police state. No less remarkable than the statement itself was, first, that Biden did not state what he would do to defend democracy if Trump attempted another coup; and, second, that Biden's warning was barely reported in the media. The silence expressed the indifference of the American ruling class to the preservation of democracy. In fact, there is a growing consensus within the ruling oligarchs, in the United States but not only there, in fact in countries throughout the world, that their interests, domestically and internationally, are incompatible with democracy. The ruling elites are fully aware that the staggering level of social inequality is

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provoking growing popular anger, and that the attacks on living conditions required by imperialist militarism will lead to a tremendous escalation of class conflict. The turn of the ruling class to fascism is an attempt to preempt and suppress, with violence, the political radicalization of the working class and its turn to socialism.

The theory of permanent revolution establishes that in the imperialist epoch, the struggle for democracy, and the defense of essential democratic rights, are inextricably linked to the struggle for socialism. The defeat of fascism requires the establishment of workers' power and the overthrow of capitalist ownership and control of the means of production. While there can be no socialism without democracy, the preservation of democracy is impossible without socialism.

Finally, Professor Kelly concludes *The Twilight of World Trotskyism* with the following indictment: "After more than eighty years of Trotskyist activity, with no revolutions, mass parties or election victories to its name … the Trotskyist movement has become a dead end for socialists." Of all the criticisms leveled against the Fourth International, this is the stupidest and most vulgar.

The criticism removes the revolutionary process from any objective historical and political context, and implies that the Trotskyist movement has operated in a political vacuum. It confronted neither adverse objective conditions nor class enemies with vast resources at their disposal.

Kelly makes no mention of the forces that were deployed by the capitalist state and its agents in the workers movement—trade union bureaucrats, social democratic reformists, Stalinists, anarchists, bourgeois nationalists—to counteract the influence of the Trotskyist movement. To be blunt, Kelly himself, with his reformist banalities and cynicism, is one of the instruments employed by the capitalist class to undermine the growth of revolutionary politics among workers.

The test of a revolutionary party is not whether it is able, at all times and regardless of objective conditions, to lead a successful revolution. Rather, the decisive criterion is whether the party fought for policies that were based on a correct analysis of the objective situation and advanced the interests of the working class.

Since Trotskyism first emerged as a distinct political tendency in 1923, in opposition to the bureaucratic degeneration of the Bolshevik Party and the Soviet state, it has acquired immense political experience. It was compelled to work "against the stream"—in unfavorable conditions during which the working class was led and misled by mass Stalinist and social democratic parties. But the correctness of the perspective and program of the Fourth International has been vindicated by history.

In 1938, in a speech celebrating the founding of the Fourth International, Trotsky predicted that the test of historical events would not leave of the counter-revolutionary agencies "one stone upon another." That was proven true.

The mass Stalinist parties of "real existing socialism" have been shattered and discredited. The Soviet bureaucracy dissolved the USSR. The social democratic parties, indistinguishable from the traditional bourgeois parties, no longer advance an agenda for the reform of capitalism, let alone the establishment of socialism. One after another, the organizations that claim to have discovered a new road—such as Podemos in Spain or Syriza in Greece, the Pink Tide in Latin America—are discredited by events. One after another, the champions of a "third way" to peace and prosperity that requires neither class struggle or social revolution are exposed as either impotent fraudsters like Corbyn or sinister political criminals like the former Prime Minister of Britain Tony Blair.

The Fourth International is a party of history. It was founded to carry through to the end the essential task of the epoch of capitalism's death agony: the ending of capitalist oppression through the world socialist revolution. It is true that the struggle for socialism has proven more complicated and protracted than was originally foreseen by Marx and Engels. But the laws of social development uncovered by the materialist conception of history and the contradictions of the capitalist mode of production analyzed in *Das Kapital* have not been superseded. The epoch of world socialist revolution that began in October 1917 has not ended.

Objective events are driving the international working class, which remains the principal revolutionary force in society, into ever more conscious struggle against capitalism, and, therefore, toward Trotskyism, the Marxism of the 21st century.

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