

Stalinist leader of Communist Party Marxist – Kenya (CPM-K) slanders Trotskyism following WSWS exposure

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On March 12, Booker Omole, General Secretary of the Stalinist Communist Party Marxist – Kenya (CPM-K), published a statement on the party’s website titled “Combatting Trotskyism: The Time is Now, Not Later.”

Omole launches a slanderous attack on Trotskyism, celebrating the Stalinist bureaucracy’s counterrevolutionary role in destroying the Bolshevik Party, orchestrating the Great Purges of 1936–1939—during which hundreds of thousands of socialists, including the finest representatives of generations of Marxist workers and intellectuals, were physically exterminated—and betraying revolutionary movements around the world.

The statement is a panicked reaction to the three-part article, “Stalinist Communist Party Marxist-Kenya seeks new political trap for rising discontent among workers, youth”, published on March 4, 5, and 6 by the WSWS—the online platform of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI). Omole’s reply makes clear that the WSWS critique has stirred debate among workers, student and youth around and within the party:

In recent days, we have observed Trotskyist tendencies rearing their ugly head within the Party. [...] It is imperative to address these issues, particularly for our young cadres. The Party must have the ability to identify Trotskyist deviations and advance the correct policy to combat them effectively.

The WSWS exposed the CPM-K as a pro-capitalist, nationalist party serving sections of the bourgeoisie and middle class. Its November 2024 Congress was a rebranding exercise that reaffirmed support for state-led capitalism. During last year’s Gen-Z protests and mass strikes against IMF austerity, the CPM-K posed as a supporter while working to contain the movement. This betrayal reflects its long-standing Stalinist orientation towards the Kenyan ruling class and imperialism, rooted in the counterrevolutionary “National Democratic Revolution” that subordinates workers’ struggles to capitalist alliances.

Omole avoids mentioning the WSWS or engaging with its arguments—a silence that underscores their accuracy. He makes clear fundamental issues of programme and perspective will not be discussed. The CPM-K, he declares, “is not a debating society.”

Unable to answer the political and historical arguments made, Omole resorts instead to slander and repression. Dissent, he declares, must be met with violence: “These tendencies must be recognised and destroyed.”

As the CPM-K prepares to host an international conference of fellow Stalinist organisations in Nairobi in May, it intends to suppress opposition

through the familiar Stalinist methods of bureaucratic manoeuvres, intimidation, and expulsions. Trotskyism, Omole proclaims, is a “threat” that must be confronted with “absolute clarity and iron discipline,” insisting that “the fight against Trotskyism is not a matter of theoretical debate but a question of revolutionary survival.”

How can there be “absolute clarity” in an organisation that forbids “theoretical debate”? The “iron discipline” demanded by Mr. Omole, in true Stalinist style, requires that party members keep their mouths shut, turn off their brains, and do whatever this petty-bourgeois dictator tells them to do. What Omole means by “revolutionary survival” is the preservation of his personal control over the organisation and its resources.

The intellectual content of Omole’s diatribe against Trotskyism amounts to zero. He cannot reply to the historical and programmatic issues raised by the WSWS. He offers no accounting of the split that defined the fate of the Soviet Union in the 1920s—between Trotsky’s Left Opposition and the Stalinist bureaucracy—nor does he deal honestly and factually with the catastrophic impact of Stalinism on the international workers’ movement. His only response is to recycle long-discredited Stalinist slanders. He says:

Trotskyism is a petty-bourgeois deviation that rejects the hard, disciplined work of building socialism. Trotsky himself stood against Lenin at every critical moment, wavering in 1903, opposing the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917, and later waging a factional war against Stalin and the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. His so-called “Permanent Revolution” was not a theory of revolution but a recipe for disaster; a reckless demand for immediate world upheaval without regard for material conditions. Trotsky rejected Lenin’s strategic approach, dismissing national liberation and the necessity of consolidating proletarian power in one state.

Imagining that he is still living in the 1930s, when Stalin’s secret police could murder his opponents with impunity, Omole hopes that discussion of history and politics can be shut down before it begins.

Like all bureaucrats, Omole’s attitude to the rank-and-file of his organisation is a combination of contempt and fear. He despises those who would dare challenge his demagogic proclamations, and nothing frightens him more than the development of an interest in revolutionary theory and Marxist history.

But Omole’s shouting against Trotskyism is a clear indication that there are members and supporters of the CPM-K who are beginning to ask hard

questions. The WSWWS encourages them to study the history of the struggle of the Fourth International against Stalinism. These are not academic disputes. They involve the decisive questions that shaped the 20th century and continue to shape the future of the working class today—in Kenya, across Africa, and internationally.

Trotskyism versus Stalinism

At its core, the conflict between Trotskyism and Stalinism represents a fundamental struggle between working-class socialist internationalism and petty bourgeois nationalism. Trotskyism, rooted in Marxist principles, insists that socialism can only be achieved through the international unity and mobilisation of the working class. It views the world revolution as a single, interconnected process, where the success or failure of the socialist revolution in one country depends on the broader victory of the proletariat worldwide.

Contrary to Omole's crude falsifications—repeating the Stalinist Big Lie that Leon Trotsky was a traitor to the revolution—Trotsky stood alongside Lenin as a principal leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution and the co-founder of the Red Army that defeated the imperialist armies in the Russian Civil War (1917-1921). His theory of Permanent Revolution was not a "reckless demand", but a scientific perspective grounded in the world-historical development of capitalism and the international working class upon which Lenin's April Thesis and the October 1917 Revolution was based.

First formulated in 1906, Trotsky's theory foresaw that the democratic revolution in Russia would necessarily assume the form of a socialist revolution. It explained that in countries of belated capitalist development like Russia then and Kenya today, the democratic tasks associated with the revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries could no longer be realized under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, which was both subordinate to the imperialist world order and motivated in its actions above all by fear of the threat posed by the working class. It fell to the working class, leading behind it the oppressed agrarian masses, to realise the democratic tasks formerly associated with the bourgeois revolution through the seizure of power in a socialist revolution that must be consciously linked to the international struggle for the overthrow of imperialism.

In the epoch of world economy and world politics, the struggle of the working class, in both the advanced and less developed countries, must be based on an international, rather than a national strategy. Trotsky wrote in 1930:

The completion of the socialist revolution within national limits is unthinkable. One of the basic reasons for the crisis in bourgeois society is the fact that the productive forces created by it can no longer be reconciled with the framework of the national state. From this follows on the one hand, imperialist wars, on the other, the utopia of a bourgeois United States of Europe. The socialist revolution begins on the national arena, it unfolds on the international arena, and is completed on the world arena. Thus, the socialist revolution becomes a permanent revolution in a newer and broader sense of the word; it attains completion only in the final victory of the new society on our entire planet

After Lenin's death Stalinism codified the reactionary theory of "Socialism in one country", abandoning the perspective of international revolution in favour of the false and reactionary utopia of building

socialism within national borders. This nationalist turn marked a historic break with Marxism and led to the degeneration of the world's first workers' state. The state and party bureaucracy, to preserve its own privileges, suppressed the working class, physically exterminated its Marxist leadership through the purges, and betrayed revolutionary struggles across the globe. The Soviet bureaucracy played a decisive role in the defeat of the Chinese Revolution in 1927, the crushing of the Spanish Revolution between 1936 and 1939, and the disorientation and paralysis of the German working class between 1931 and 1933—paving the way for Hitler to come to power without facing any organised resistance from the workers' movement.

This process culminated in the liquidation of the Soviet Union in 1991—a collapse long anticipated by Trotsky in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936)—and the restoration of capitalism in Maoist China beginning in the 1980s. In both cases, the ruling bureaucracies transformed themselves into a new capitalist elite: in Russia, into the oligarchs represented today by Vladimir Putin's authoritarian regime; in China, into a repressive capitalist police state under Xi Jinping.

Trotskyism defended workers' democracy and continues to uphold it as indispensable to the socialist project. It insists that a workers' state must be based on the active participation of the working class through free elections, open political debate, and democratic control over economic planning. Stalinism, by contrast, replaced workers' democracy with the dictatorship of a bureaucratic caste, enforcing its rule through repression, censorship, and the violent suppression of all opposition.

Today, the contrast remains just as sharp. Trotskyists fight to build rank-and-file committees of, by, and for the workers, independent of the pro-capitalist trade union bureaucracy. The remnants of the Stalinist parties support and are usually part of that very same bureaucracy, which serves to police the working class on behalf of the ruling elite, enforcing wage suppression, job cuts, and austerity under the banner of "social peace." The Stalinists assume positions within the apparatus of the capitalist state. The Trotskyists seek its revolutionary overthrow.

Trotskyism insists that socialism can only be realised as an international process led by the working class, independent of and in opposition to the national bourgeoisie. It rejects any strategy that suppresses class struggle in the name of "national liberation." Stalinism promotes a two-stage theory that postpones the fight for socialism in favour of an initial "democratic" or "national liberation" stage led by the supposedly "progressive" or "non-comprador" bourgeoisie. According to this schema, only once capitalism and bourgeois democracy is consolidated, an outcome that is endlessly deferred, can the struggle for socialism begin.

Stalinism's betrayals in Africa

Stalinism's subordination of the working class to the national bourgeoisie has had devastating consequences across Africa. Revolutionary struggles that erupted in the aftermath of World War II were systematically derailed by Stalinism, which handed the political initiative to bourgeois nationalist movements. These forces, hailed as liberators, used their authority to consolidate capitalist rule, violently repress popular movements, and preserve imperialist domination behind the façade of independence. As Trotsky insisted, the national bourgeoisie in colonial and semi-colonial countries was incapable of playing a progressive role. Bound by its economic dependence on imperialism and fear of the masses, its function was to stabilise capitalist rule, not overthrow it.

The CPM-K's doctrine of the "National Democratic Revolution" is a repackaged version of the two-stage theory. Kenya's own struggle for

independence and its aftermath, analysed in the WSWs article “Kenya’s Gen Z insurgency, the strike wave and the struggle for Permanent Revolution”, demonstrate the devastating consequences of this strategy.

In South Africa, Trotsky opposed the South Africa Communist Party’s (SACP) subordination of the working class to the African National Congress (ANC). Trotsky warned: “The Bolshevik-Leninists [Trotskyist forces] unmask before the native masses the inability of the Congress to achieve the realization of even its own demands, because of its superficial, conciliatory policy. In contradistinction to the Congress, the Bolshevik-Leninists develop a program of revolutionary class struggle”.

The warning was prescient. The Stalinist SACP drafted the ANC’s Freedom Charter in 1955, limiting its aims to establishing bourgeois democracy and black majority rule. Rather than expropriating the country’s powerful financial and mining interests, it cultivated a black capitalist class.

As Nelson Mandela, an SACP member, said in 1956: “For the first time in the history of this country, the non-European bourgeoisie will have the opportunity to own in their own name and right mills and factories, and trade and private enterprise will boom and flourish as never before”. Today, South Africa is one of the most unequal countries in the world, with the ANC safeguarding the interests of both South African and global capital.

In Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Somalia, Soviet-backed national bourgeois movements imposed repressive one-party rule and suppressed workers’ movements in the name of “socialist construction”. The false promise of the “national democratic stage” led to the suppression of revolutionary opposition and the consolidation of corrupt regimes that quickly turned to IMF austerity measures during the late 1980s and the 1990s, which continue to this day.

Stalinist parties also promoted Pan-Africanism, advanced by figures such as Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana and Julius Nyerere in Tanzania, which claimed that Africa’s liberation could be achieved through unity among African capitalist states and leaders, regardless of class interests and on the basis of colonial borders. Pan-Africanism served to conceal the class divisions within African societies and to promote alliances between the working class and sections of the native bourgeoisie. In practice, it was used to suppress independent working-class politics under the banner of African unity and “non-alignment.” While offering rhetorical opposition to imperialism, Pan-Africanist leaders remained economically dependent on the imperialist powers and collaborated in the suppression of the working class across the continent.

Trotskyism and the revolutionary potential of the African working class

Today, the development of global capitalism has created a powerful and increasingly interconnected working class across Africa, poised to play a decisive role in the international struggle for socialism. Despite the continent’s immense diversity of language, culture, and history, all African countries remain bound by a common dependency on imperialism. None have resolved the fundamental democratic, agrarian, or national questions—such as tribal divisions and artificial colonial borders.

In the sixty years since Kenya’s independence, Africa’s working class has grown dramatically. It plays a critical role in global production networks, from mining minerals in the DRC, Zambia and South Africa, to harvesting cash crops in Kenya and Ghana, to extracting oil and gas in Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea and Algeria. The global integration of capitalism has unified the working class across borders as never before, creating the material basis for a revolutionary transformation of the world.

The urgent task is to mobilise this immense power and build a genuine socialist movement rooted in the working class, committed to taking power from the oligarchs and imperialist agents, and reorganising society based on equality and human need. To fight for a socialist Kenya as part of a United Socialist States of Africa means forging unity with workers in the imperialist centres in the US, Europe, and beyond.

Since its founding in 1953, the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) has waged an unbroken struggle to defend the revolutionary heritage of Marxism and the international programme of Trotskyism against every form of political opportunism and anti-Marxist revisionism. It was established in opposition to Pabloite revisionists who abandoned the perspective of world socialist revolution in favour of a wholesale adaptation and liquidation into Stalinism, social democracy, and bourgeois nationalism. The ICFI upheld the continuity of the Fourth International, founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938 as the world party of socialist revolution, basing itself on the principle that the crisis of humanity is, above all, the crisis of revolutionary leadership.

The ICFI’s decades-long record of theoretical and political struggle in defence of historical truth, proletarian internationalism, and revolutionary intransigence, is the foundation upon which the WSWs was launched in 1998. It aims to educate, politically arm, and unify workers and youth across the world through Marxist analysis on a revolutionary perspective.

The ICFI today is spearheading critical struggles around the globe. In the United States, the Socialist Equality Party (SEP) is the only political movement waging a principled struggle against the turn of the oligarchy led by Donald Trump toward fascism, while the Democratic Party and its apologists in the media and pseudo-left seek to downplay or even normalise Trump’s fascistic policies. Across Europe, the ICFI fights against the resurgence of fascism and the assault on democratic rights, opposing NATO’s war against Russia in the Ukraine. In Sri Lanka, the SEP advanced a revolutionary programme during the 2022 uprising against IMF-dictated policies. In Turkey, the Socialist Equality Group intervenes to expose the rotten character of all factions of the Turkish ruling class—whether Erdoğan’s right-wing authoritarianism or the bankrupt nationalism of the Kemalist opposition.

Across the world, the sections of the ICFI are leading the fight to build rank-and-file committees in opposition to the pro-corporate unions, exposing the collaboration between the union apparatus and the state in suppressing strikes and cutting deals behind the backs of workers.

The hysterical tone of Omole’s statement is not the voice of strength but of fear. He does not seek to educate or persuade the members of the CPM-K. He demands silence. His method is intimidation, not explanation; slander, not theory.

The ICFI and WSWs say: Turn to study! Do not let this charlatan tell you what to think. Read the WSWs. Read Trotsky. Engage with the political and historical foundations of the international socialist movement. Come to your own conclusions through serious political education. Root yourself in the internationalist tradition of Marxism, of the October Revolution, of the Fourth International. The future belongs to those who understand it must be fought for—not with slanders and lies, but with clarity of perspective, programme, and leadership.

To the workers and youth of Kenya and across Africa, we make this appeal: Take up the fight for socialism. Build the Kenyan and African sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International. There is no time to lose.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact