

Attacking the WSWs, the Communist Party Marxist-Kenya salutes the gravedigger of the revolution, Stalin

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The Communist Party Marxist-Kenya (CPM-K) has issued a filthy diatribe in response to a series of polemics published by the *World Socialist Web Site*, culminating in an exposure of their groveling endorsement of their “comrade” Delcy Rodriguez’s alliance with the Trump administration in Venezuela.

In “*Trotsky’s Stock-in-trade: A Counter-Revolutionary Export Unfit for the Kenyan Market!!!*”, National Chairperson Mwaiyu Kaluka writes that the WSWs “have called us ‘STALINISTS’ and ‘MAOISTS’ in bold letters as if these are things to be ashamed of. We embrace these labels with pride,” adding that “Stalinism is nothing but the defense of Leninism against Trotskyism.”

With these words, Kaluka proudly proclaims his unrestrained backing for the monstrous crimes of Stalinism that destroyed the Bolshevik Party, annihilated workers’ democracy, liquidated revolutionary Marxism through terror, and subordinated the international working class to the interests of a privileged bureaucratic caste.

Stalinism emerged out of the isolation of the October Revolution, the devastation of the civil war, and the material exhaustion of the working class. On this basis, a conservative bureaucracy consolidated power within the Soviet state and party in the 1920s,—reinforced and maintained due to the disastrous policies pursued by the Comintern under Stalin’s leadership internationally that led to historic and, in China, bloody defeats of the working class. The maintenance of bureaucratic privilege over the needs of the international revolution was codified in the adoption of the programme of “Socialism in one country” and the political war waged against the Trotskyist Left Opposition for its defence of the struggle for world socialist revolution. Stalin’s policy culminated in Hitler’s coming to power in Germany in 1933 and the final transformation of the Communist International into a consciously counter-revolutionary force.

The defense of bureaucratic privilege required above all the physical destruction of the living continuity of Bolshevism. This counter-revolutionary task was carried out through the Great Purges of the 1930s, in which the entire leadership of the October Revolution, including Grigory Zinoviev, Lev Kamenev, Nikolai Bukharin, and Christian Rakovsky—following show trials in which the defendants, subjected to torture and psychological coercion—were compelled to deliver false confessions.

A campaign of mass murder, directed above all at the Trotskyists, saw nearly one million people killed in a wave of counter-revolutionary violence including the finest representatives of several generations of Marxist workers and intellectuals. It was the Trotskyist movement which took up the defence of these revolutionaries and the exposure of the lies used against them, most famously in *The Red Book: On the Moscow Trials*, published by Trotsky’s son Leon Sedov—murdered by Stalin’s agents in 1938—and in the staging of the Dewey Commission. The

Stalinist purges culminated in the assassination of Trotsky, while in exile in Mexico on August 21, 1940.

This slaughter sought to consciously inflict a catastrophic blow to the political consciousness of the Soviet and international working class in order to eliminate a revolutionary threat to the bureaucracy as it pursued a policy of political accommodation with imperialism.

Across the Communist International, countless militants who had fought for the October Revolution and who were pioneers in the founding of Communist Parties in their respective countries were eliminated. In Germany, leaders forged in the revolutionary struggles of 1918–23 were destroyed; in Poland, Hungary, and the Balkans, Marxists were purged; in China, cadres who resisted subordination to bourgeois nationalism were crushed. Albert Nzula, the Communist Party of South Africa’s first Black secretary general, was killed in Moscow after showing sympathy for Trotsky and voicing criticisms of Stalin.

Through the Communist International, Stalinism functioned as the principal instrument for the political disarming of the proletariat, subordinating mass revolutionary movements throughout the 1930s to the defense of bourgeois rule in the name of “anti-fascism” and “democracy” through popular frontism.

During the Spanish Civil War, the Communist Party became the chief pillar of the bourgeois Republican state, bloodily suppressing every initiative by workers and peasants and hunting down Trotskyists, anarchist militants, and members of the POUM [Workers’ Party of Marxist Unification] who were then imprisoned, tortured, and murdered.

The throttling of the Spanish working class was carried out to reassure the imperialist powers that a proletarian revolution would not threaten their interests. The sheer cynicism of this policy was exposed shortly thereafter in the Stalin-Hitler Pact. Having justified its crimes in Spain as a defense of “democracy” against fascism, the Stalinist bureaucracy openly allied itself with fascism.

The Stalin-Hitler Pact, which CPM-K today hails as a nationalist masterstroke that supposedly defended the Soviet Union, disoriented workers in the Soviet Union and internationally at the very moment when Hitlerite military aggression was erupting across Europe. It was concluded in the immediate aftermath of the systematic decapitation of the Red Army. Its founder, Leon Trotsky, who led it to victory against the wars of intervention launched against the fledgling workers’ state, was in exile; three of the five Soviet marshals, 90 percent of all Red Army generals, 80 percent of Red Army colonels, and 30,000 officers had been purged.

The Soviet Union was left gravely weakened and unprepared when Hitler launched his invasion in June 1941. The Soviet Union ultimately emerged victorious not because of Stalinism, but in spite of it, and at the cost of a staggering 27 million Soviet lives.

Summing up the impact of Stalinism, Trotsky wrote:

No one, not excluding Hitler, has dealt socialism such deadly blows as Stalin. This is hardly astonishing, since Hitler has attacked the working class organizations from without, while Stalin does it from within. Hitler assaults Marxism. Stalin not only assaults it but prostitutes it. Not a single principle has remained unpolluted, not a single idea unsullied. The very names of socialism and communism have been cruelly compromised, from the day when uncontrolled policemen, making their livelihood with a “communist” passport, gave the name socialism to their police regime. Revolting profanation! The barracks of the GPU are not the ideal for which the working class is struggling.

Socialism signifies a pure and clear social system which is accommodated to the self-government of the toilers. Stalin’s regime is based on a conspiracy of the rulers against the ruled. Socialism implies an uninterrupted growth of universal equality. Stalin has erected a system of revolting privileges.

Socialism has as its goal the all-sided flowering of the individual personality. When and where has man’s personality been so degraded as in the USSR?

Socialism would have no value apart from the unselfish, honest, and humane relations between human beings. The Stalin regime has permeated social and personal relationships with lies, careerism and treachery. It is not Stalin, of course, who determines the road taken by history. We possess the knowledge of the objective causes which prepared the path for reaction in the USSR. But it is no accident that Stalin rode on the crest of the Thermidor wave. He was able to invest the greedy appetites of the new caste with their most vicious expression. Stalin does not bear any responsibility for history. But he does bear responsibility for himself and for his role in history. It is a criminal role. It is so criminal that revulsion is multiplied by horror.

Trotsky concluded:

Moral sensibility finds its highest satisfaction in the immutable conviction that historical retribution will correspond to the scope of the crime. Revolution will unlock all the secret compartments, review all the trials, rehabilitate the slandered, raise memorials to the victims of wantonness, and cover with eternal infamy the names of the executioners. Stalin will depart from the scene laden with all the crimes which he has committed – not only as the gravedigger of the revolution but as the most sinister figure in the history of mankind.

(Leon Trotsky, “The Beginning of the End,” June 12, 1937, in *Writings of Leon Trotsky [1936–37]* (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1978), pp. 378, 382.)

More than eight decades later, long after Stalinism has completed its counter-revolutionary mission, the CPM-K’s only reference to the restoration of capitalism is its claim that Trotskyists “celebrated the fall of the Soviet Union.”

This grotesque lie is meant to conceal the fact that Trotsky and the Trotskyist movement warned consistently that the bureaucracy would seek to liquidate the gains of the October Revolution. Capitalist restoration was not imposed by Trotskyists, who had been hunted down, exiled, imprisoned, and physically annihilated by the Stalinist bureaucracy. It was carried out by the Stalinist apparatus, which dismantled state property, destroyed what remained of the planned economy, and integrated themselves directly into the structures of world capitalism. The oligarchs

who emerged from the ruins of the USSR emerged from the bowels of the Stalinist state and party apparatus.

Significantly, the CPM-K refuses to acknowledge the restoration of capitalism in China—where the Communist Party of China rules on behalf of a billionaire oligarchy intimately fused with global finance capital—because this cuts across its efforts to cultivate lucrative relations with China on behalf of its own leading members and in the interests of the Kenyan bourgeoisie.

History has delivered its verdict. Stalinism did not defend socialism; it destroyed it. Trotskyism alone fought to prevent that outcome and continues to provide the only revolutionary perspective capable of guiding the working class in the struggle for world socialist revolution.

It is in the political context of the CPM-K’s open hailing of the crimes of Stalinism and its own political alignment with bourgeois nationalist regimes that collaborate with the murderous CIA that its fixation on this author’s use of a pseudonym is politically sinister. Coupled with the vile slander that the Trotskyist movement is funded by the CIA, it is a demand to mark out individuals for political targeting, repression, and even murder. It comes from an organisation whose top leadership, including National Chairperson Mwandawiro Mghanga and General Secretary Benedict Wachira, openly joined the Ruto regime, a government responsible for mass killings, enforced disappearances, and thousands of arrests.

The CPM-K’s efforts to rehabilitate Stalin and Stalinism is an agenda shared by a host of similar tendencies internationally. This includes Neo-Stalinist parties that emerged from the former affiliates of the Third International such as the Communist Parties of Greece, Turkey, Brazil and the Russian Federation, who now ally themselves with Maoist groups such as the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Vietnamese Communist Party in denouncing as “revisionism” the efforts of the Kremlin to repudiate Stalin’s crimes.

They are joined by layers of the petty-bourgeois, pseudo-left milieu, whose hatred of the Trotskyist movement and wish to re-enact the purges and assassinations of the 1930s is rooted in their hostility to socialist revolution. This is reinforced by their embrace of “multipolar alliances” with the Russian and Chinese bourgeoisie as a means of containing US imperialism while defending the interests of their own bourgeoisie.

The WSWS will continue to wage a merciless political struggle against all such tendencies. And by clarifying the essential historical lessons of the Twentieth Century against all those who seek to silence it through lies and threats of repression, create the basis for winning the young vanguard of the working class to the ranks of the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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