

May 1 meeting at Cornell University

Leon Trotsky and the defense of historical truth

26 April 2012

More than seventy years after his death in 1940, Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the Russian Revolution of 1917 and founder of the Fourth International, remains a subject of the most intense historical controversy.

Having successfully defended the Soviet Union as commander of the Red Army, Trotsky led the opposition to the Stalinist bureaucracy that grew increasingly powerful in the 1920s. In 1927, just a decade after the revolution that he had led, Trotsky was expelled from the Soviet Communist Party and, soon after, exiled from the Soviet Union. Trotsky devoted the last decade of his life to the struggle against the Stalinist regime that had betrayed the socialist ideals of the October Revolution and to the building of a new international revolutionary working class party. In August 1940, Trotsky was assassinated in Mexico by an agent of the Soviet secret police.

During his lifetime, Trotsky was subjected to a campaign of political and personal vilification unequalled in history. The bloody purges carried out by the Soviet regime in the late 1930s were aimed at destroying all vestiges of Trotsky's once great political and cultural influence on the working class and socialist intelligentsia within the USSR.

Remarkably, even as Trotsky waged his unrelenting struggle against Stalinism, he never retreated from his critique of capitalism and his vision of world socialist revolution.

While the dissolution of the USSR vindicated Trotsky's opposition to Stalinism, the global economic crisis imparts to his critique of capitalism and world revolutionary perspective extraordinary political relevance. This is why, so many decades after his death, virtually every aspect of Trotsky's life, the personal as well as the political, is bitterly contested by

historians.

David North, chairman of the *World Socialist Web Site* editorial board and National Chairman of the Socialist Equality Party, is a leading expert on Trotsky. North's book, *In Defense of Leon Trotsky*, exposes the lies and falsifications employed in a number of recent biographies of Trotsky and has set off an international controversy. Historian Bertrand Patenaude, in the leading historical journal, *American Historical Review*, called North's defense of Trotsky "detailed, meticulous, well-argued and devastating."

In this lecture, David North will speak on the enduring significance of the life and thought of one of the greatest revolutionary figures of the 20th Century.

Meeting Details:

Tuesday, May 1, 7:00 pm

Ithaca, New York

Cornell University

Goldwin Smith 142

Map

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Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>