



In Defense of Leon Trotsky

By David North

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Leon Trotsky (1879-1940) the leader of the Russian Revolution and Stalin's unyielding opponent remains an immensely controversial figure seventy years after his assassination in Mexico City. In this collection of essays and lectures, David North, an authority on Soviet history, examines the disputes surrounding Trotsky's life and ideas and explains their contemporary relevance. Exposing recent efforts by several British scholars to denigrate Trotsky's historical role by falsifying history, the author insists that their aim is to forestall a resurgence of interest in the great revolutionist at a time when millions of people are becoming disenchanted with capitalism. The passions evoked by [Trotsky's] name testify to the enduring significance of [his] ideas, North writes in the introduction of his book. Arguments about Trotsky are never simply about what happened in the past. They are just as much about what is happening in the world today, and what is likely to happen in the future. In the first section of *In Defense of Leon Trotsky*, North explores Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution and insists that it had a decisive impact on the events of October 1917, which is often overlooked by scholars. Examining Trotsky's varying treatment at the hands of the liberal left intelligentsia over the post-war period, North argues that shifts in the attitude of scholars towards the Russian revolutionary have been bound up with changes in the objective political and economic situation. He challenges today's historians to once again turn serious and honest attention to Trotsky's life and ideas. In the last two parts of the collection, readers will find reviews of recent biographies of Trotsky written by Geoffrey Swain, Ian Thatcher, and Robert Service. North demonstrates that these biographies reproduce many of the same claims made by Stalin in order to besmirch Trotsky's reputation and undermine his political authority in the working class. Rather than shedding light on the man and his work, these books, which are riddled with factual errors, are part of the unrelenting campaign of vilification of which Trotsky has been the object for decades. *In Defense of Leon Trotsky* contains numerous photographs of Trotsky and family members interspersed throughout the text, as well as a complete index.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

David North is the chairman of the international editorial board of the World Socialist Web Site. He is the author of numerous books, articles, and lectures on questions relating to contemporary US and international politics, European and Soviet history, and the history of the Trotskyist movement, including; *The Crisis of American Democracy*; *Marxism, History and Socialist Consciousness*; *Leon Trotsky and the Post-Soviet School of Historical Falsification*; and *The Heritage We Defend*.

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