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Trotsky Dossier

Introduction

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President of the St Petersburg soviet during the revolution of 1905 then again in October 1917, leader of the revolutionary military committee which organised the insurrection in Petrograd in October 1917, negotiator of the peace of Brest-Litovsk, founder of the Red Army, heated polemicist against Lenin before 1914 then his close collaborator from 1917, combatant against the degeneration of the Russian revolution after 1923, expelled from the Communist party in 1927, deported in 1928, exiled in 1929, assassinated by a Stalinist agent in 1940 in his Mexican exile - the life of Leon Trotsky is mixed up with the fabulous rise of the revolutionary movement at the beginning of the 20th century and its fall which preceded the Second World War.

[<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/trotsky4.jpg>]

This dossier, appearing shortly after the 60th anniversary of Trotsky's assassination - a crime denied by its authors and their successors for more than 50 years - deals with some aspects of Trotsky's theoretical legacy. More than a homage - which would certainly be merited - we have attempted to respond to the question of in what respect, sixty years after his death, the theoretical contribution of Trotsky retains relevance.

Theoretician of capitalist contradictions, theoretician and practician of revolution, Trotsky also analysed, while doing all he could to avert them, the two most significant defeats of the world workers' movement: the bureaucratic degeneration of the first workers' state and the victorious rise of fascism.

Qualified as "prophet" by his biographer Isaac Deutscher because of the impressive number of a posteriori verifications of his predictions, Trotsky has above all left an approach to the main historic turning points of the 20th century which renders them intelligible. This takes on all the more importance today given the social democratic betrayal from 1914 onwards followed by the Stalinist degeneration. The work bequeathed by Trotsky is all the more important for all those who wish to refound the movement for the emancipation of humanity.

Dossier - Trotsky 60 years on

Trotsky's first major contribution to Marxism came in the early years of the century with the development of what came to be known as the theory of permanent revolution. [Michael Löwy](#) analyses the continuing relevance of this theory. After his theory had been vindicated by the October 1917 revolution, Trotsky then witnessed the bureaucratic degeneration of the state and attempted to explain it in his book *The Revolution Betrayed*. [Jan Malewski](#) examines the origins of and the validity of Trotsky's analysis of the Stalinised Soviet Union. One of Trotsky's major struggles in the last decade of his life was to alert the German workers' movement to the Nazi threat. [Manuel Kellner](#) looks at how Trotsky's analysis of fascism developed and its contemporary lessons. Finally, [François Vercammen](#) analyses Trotsky's conception of the revolutionary party and [J-M Krivine](#) examines Trotsky's final struggle to found the Fourth International.