

**T**he free' world is not free; the 'communist' world was never communist. Anarchists always rejected both.

'Communism' excused its totalitarianism by the pretence that it had created a more equitable society; the free' world excuses its grossly unjust distribution of wealth while claiming that all have equal influence on government.

Neither are true. Privileged elites under 'Communism' and those with sufficient wealth are able to buy power in 'Democracies'. It was not only in the 'communist' world that 'phones were tapped, houses bugged, letters opened. This was after all done to Miss Hilda Murrell in Shrewsbury, in March 1984, but before she was abducted and murdered - a murder that has never been satisfactorily explained by the police.

The power struggle that the two systems waged not only threatened the world with nuclear conflict, but also was used to justify reckless waste of resources and destruction of the environment.

Anarchists argue that though many evils can be put down to war, to sexual or racial discrimination, to economic inequality, that these ills cannot be cured unless the monopoly of power which is the state is eliminated.

The Government itself, besides being such underlying institutions, perpetuates war, oppression, corruption, exploitation and misery.

We advocate a world-wide society of communities and councils based on co-operation and free agreement from the bottom, (federalism) instead of coercion and domination from the top, (centralism). Regimentation of people must be replaced by the regulation of things.

'Freedom' without socialism is spurious. "Socialism" without freedom is despotic. Anarchism is free socialism.

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# ANARCHIST ARGUMENTS



## End as Utopia

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Leon Trotsky, "The USSR in War",  
New Internationalist, Sept, 1939

"The Second World War has begun. It affests incontrovertibly to the fact that society can no longer live on the basis of capitalism."

Sixty years ago, in what was later regarded as his political testament, Leon Trotsky re-examined the position that had been the central tenet of his policy ever since Lenin's death, the analysis, until then defended without allowing any question, that "the Stalin regime" was merely "an abhorrent relapse in the process of transforming bourgeois society into a socialist society," "in the process of the development of the second revolution the Soviet bureaucracy was only an episodic relapse."

### Anarchist Arguments 'End as Utopia'

Until recently the only readily available reproduction of the article, & the debate that followed it, was "In Defence of Marxism," (originally Pioneer Press, N.Y., the New Park Publ. Ltd.) where it is combined with a very one sided selection of articles that discussed "The USSR in War," this has been largely rectified (as far as the debate amongst Trotskyists is concerned) by the recent Phoenix Press book "The Fate of the Russian Revolution - lost text of critical Marxism;" but this is only concerned with the debate within Trotskyism, - an important debate certainly, but, by definition, not the whole story.

Laurens Otter

For the previous ten years Trotsky had waged a constant battle, (generally speaking a more bitter battle than that which he waged against stalinism,) with those of his followers & associates who saw Stalinism as one example of the rise of a new class system. (A system which many of them believed embraced fascism and Keynesian-reformism.)

Initially Trotsky had rejected the idea of even forming an opposition faction, when he was first forced into internal exile, circumstances forced him to reconsider this but he continued to insist that even under Stalin the Communist Party was the only real party of the working class & must be supported; (this despite the fact that he had warned, and seen his warning amply justified, that Stalinist policy in China would lead to the defeat them of the working class; though circumstances again forced his hand and he had to take his opposition faction outside the Communist Party, he continued to insist that it was the party revolution, and that nothing more than reforms of the party was needed to put the Soviet Union back on the Socialist track, a position he held until the failure of the German Communist Party to offer any serious resistance to the rise of Hitler, made him revise his position once more.

A crucial part of this change was encapsulated in the term Thermidor. (Named after one of the months in the French Revolutionary Calendar.) In the French Revolution, Thermidor was the coup that overthrew Robespierre. In Marxist (and particularly Leninist) theory it had gained over-riding importance as symbolizing the end of revolution. Bolshevik theory had been, since 1917, full of fears that this or that faction would be the Thermidorean faction which would make the counter-revolution and restore capitalism. Trotsky had until 1933 assumed that the Thermidoreans would be the Bukharinist Right faction and so he had pledged himself and his followers to support Stalin against these.

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Trotsky appreciated in 1933 that he (and other Marxists) had totally misunderstood Thermidor. Unfortunately he did not spell out his conclusions to their logical conclusion, and in later years he was to fail to see the point.

In 1789, French industry had not reached the point whereat industrial capitalism was a possible class form. The revolution against the Monarchy was not therefore initially made by the budding capitalist class. France had been since the 1660's a Mercantilist society, but the growth of Mercantilism there - which had been spectacularly rapid - had been the product of the direct intervention of an autocratic monarchy. A little before, following wars of religion and dynastic struggle the French monarchy had been re-established with great strength, rather than return to civil war any possible opposition submitted to extraordinary extensions of kingly power.

The economic changes which this new powerful monarchy was able to force through and which it needed to repair the damages of the past, were given greater impetus by an half century of almost continuous foreign wars. This meant that the Mercantilists, though they rose to remarkable economic power, lacked all political power; at the very same time - as the old aristocracy was losing its economic role - the monarchy was able to deprive it of its hereditary powers.

This was the context in which the French Enlightenment philosophers wrote. This was why a large proportion of the privileged classes were extremely discontented, why the aristocracy blamed the merchants and the merchants (particularly the slave traders and the owners of the slave-plantation in the colonies) blamed the aristocracy. The revolution was launched by the Mercantilists, with the support of such dissident aristocrats as had been impressed by the American Revolution, in order to gain for the merchants political power commensurate with their economic power.

But revolutions mature as they grow, the original aristocratic leaders, the Faineants, (do-nothings,) were pushed aside by the Girondins (the slave-trading interest.) The Jacobins, the party of the smaller merchants and learned profession (themselves pushed by Hébertistes, Cordeliers, l'armée révolutionnaire - a number of more such radical and plebian [sans culottes] groupings,) finally came to power and brought about the Republic. Then came a succession of coups, not just Thermidor, but Brumaire and Fructidor.

But these were coups within Jacobinism, there was no apparent class divisions between the successive rulers. There were certainly pressures from outside, the sans-culottes wanting the revolutionary changes to resume; the more powerful merchants wanting to reverse what had happened.

Trotsky understandably argued that Bonapartism (the final beneficiary of the successive

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coups) represented no class, but balanced itself over the conflict between plebians and merchants; and because Bonapartism was eventually overthrown by a monarchist restoration he made no essential link between the rule of Bonapartism and the rise of the new capitalist ruling class; though he did insist that the Monarchist restoration had not led to a restoration of the Mercantilist class system, still less, pace his subsequent disciples, to a feudal restoration, and that therefore Thermidor should not be seen as opening the door to the restoration of a previously existing class system, but should be seen on the contrary as allowing the eventual emergence of a new class system.

There were obvious parallels; capitalist industry had been established in Russia, at the time of the Napoleonic Wars, under similarly autocratic Tsars, who had continued the policy begun by Peter the Great of reducing the power of the aristocracy. Just as in France the Mercantilists had had economic power with no commensurate political say, so in Russia the capitalist class, though dominant economically lacked political clout. Just as in France the revolution was in its early stages a Mercantilist one, but in response to the agitation of the mass of the poor, it moved out of the control of successive mercantilist layers; so in Russia it started as a capitalist one. Just as in France there was not - even later on when Bonaparte became Emperor - any fully-grown new economically dominant class, ready to establish a new form of society, (so that part presided over a society where there was a constant conflict as such a new class evolved;) so there was not in the USSR, in the Thirties, a class which had imposed its domination on the economy.

What Trotsky failed to introduce sufficiently into the analysis was the fact Britain - the chief enemy of the French Revolution - was more advanced in terms of economic development, though even there capitalist political power only became established with the election in 1828 of the Government which was to pass the Great Reform Bill; (the Mercantilist system had been established in Britain under a much less secure monarchy, and so though at first, change came slower it continued longer, then to meet the subsidiary manufacturing needs of the merchants industrial capitalist enterprises had grown; [sowing within Mercantilism "the seeds of its own destruction."])

**"The Spanish Revolution was strangled by the fascist and stalinist bureaucracy before the very eyes of the world proletariat."**

Out of successive betrayal in Germany,) Trotsky forged the theory that underlay "The Revolution Betrayed" and the founding of the Fourth International. That is the belief that Stalinism was politically but not socially a reactionary force, that it was the expression of a bureaucracy that first balanced itself between the revolutionary bolsheviks and the residual power of the bourgeoisie in Russia; (when Lenin died 85% of property in the Soviet Union was still in Capitalist hands;) and later balanced itself between the power of the Soviet workers and international capitalist influence.

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That though its policies with regard its own workers, "was differentiated only from fascism by the greater ferocity with which it attacked workers' conditions," it still operated as the party defending state economic power, and regardless of Marx's comment ("if nationalization equalled socialism, Bismark would be a socialist and a revolutionary one at that," he insisted that such state economic power contained the hope of a restitution of socialism; that defending this Stalin was, despite everything else, on the side of the revolution. Trotsky was constantly challenged from the ranks of his own supporters as more and more of them decided that Stalinism had gained independence from the two competing forces, (workers and international capitalists,) and that it had a separate agenda.

Then, a few months after the launch of the Stalin-Hitler Pact, Trotsky published "The USSR in War," it was not a panic reaction to that Pact, since the first draft had been circulated as a discussion document within the international a year before; but to have ignored the Pact and not taken it into consideration would hardly have been consistent with being a Socialist theorist.

The Stalin-Hitler Pact did indeed call in question the socialist programme on the basis of which the Fourth International had been founded and its sections operating. Only six months before, Bortenstein/Casanova, in a major work, still republished by contemporary Trotskyists; (though, unlike Trotsky, they lack the honesty that would have made him, had he needed to republish the document, add an editorial note to point out that its whole theoretical basis had been called in question by subsequent events;) had derided "the stupid anarchist fear that a Pact between those two forces was a possibility."

Trotskyist in Spain, and theoretical attacks on others, - anarchists, POUM, Left PSOE, - had depended on the belief that whatever happened Stalin in the last analysis would suddenly remember that he was supposed to be on the side of the workers. He believed that however foolish or plain reactionary Stalin's policies in this or that struggle, however much they played into the hands of the fascists, this was only accidental, faced with a clear choice between revolution and reaction Stalin would always either choose the former or remain neutral. He devoted many essays to attacking anarchists and others who didn't share his belief. Now he was forced by events to reconsider; he did not live long enough to follow the logic of his thoughts, and though his widow was to carry the argument further, the bulk of his followers, actually a new generation of his followers, who took over the International during the war, ran away from the logical conclusions.

No anarchist would now deny that in the heat of the conflict our Spanish comrades made impermissible compromises; that fearful of losing the meagre share they got of the military supplies sent to the Republic if they stood up to the Stalinists they avoided a show down. Whether or not any other result would or could have been achieved must be a matter for debate, but certainly - if only in terms of safeguarding anarchisms' reputation for the future - it would have been better to have kept undeviatingly to anarchist revolutionary principles and

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then been beaten; than to have made compromises with those who were determined to betray the cause and in secret knew that they would make their peace with fascists and even ally with them; and still (whether despite or because of the compromises,) to be beaten.

There were things that could and should have been done by the Republican Government, and which, though anarchists, POUMists and other Leftists advocated them they did not sufficiently forcibly:

The bulk of Franco's own army (that he brought from Morocco) was made up of Moroccans who only a few years before had been fighting in Spain for their own independence. The great heroic leader of that independence struggle went to the Republican leaders and said that he still had contacts with Franco's troops, that many would desert as soon as they heard that the Republic would offer independence; that, if Franco was able to prevent the news spreading, he would go to the front line with a tannoy system and broadcast to the troops. He could guarantee mass desertions if only the Republic would promise independence. The offer was refused. The Communists justifying the refusal by saying that this would frighten international bourgeois opinion. Given that the main Capitalist powers, while professing neutrality, were already turning a blind eye to the import of supplies and recruits to the fascist rebels, while intervening to hinder and prevent these going to the Republic, it is hard to see that the situation would have got any worse.

Of the Falangeist troops raised within Spain most were conscripts, in many areas the local Falangeist authorities deliberately gave priority to conscripting socialists and anarchists so as to get them out of their areas; so that there were many troops within the fascist armies who would have welcomed the chance to desert and change sides. The Republican armies, admittedly partly to avoid spies, but also out of puritanical belief that anyone who wasn't ready to die rather than allow themselves to be conscripted by the Falangists had sold out and could not be a socialist. On most fronts all deserters from fascist ranks were killed by the Republicans on sight; the Left thus closed the door to what should have been a fruitful area of recruitment.

But more important of course the anarchists out of a mistaken loyalty to the alliance of workers' organizations only at first protested verbally when the Communists (mainly but not only in Catalonia) took collectivized factories and farms away from the workers and peasants and handed them back to the bosses; when those same communists reimposed the worst capitalist work patterns, and even dress regulations; when the communists arrested leading militants of the Friends of Durrutti and of the POUM. The "Anarchist" ministers and their supporters told the mass of the CNT and other workers that there was nothing else that could be done, the workers had to submit to the Stalinists. Workers throughout Spain decided that if the choice was between authoritarian capitalism run by Franco and authoritarian capitalism run by Stalinists there was little reason to risk life, limb and family for one or other side, and what point was there in struggling for an anarchist movement that had (at least temporarily) abandoned anarchism?

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The Trotskyists therefore have a case when they say that the reformism of the Republican Left (including the anarchists) disarmed and alienated the workers, and failed to take the chance to inspire mutiny within fascist ranks. But what then? What if the Left had fought the Stalinists or at least succeeded in pushing them aside so as to pursue revolutionary policies. The whole of Trotsky's programme - the one that ended up as Utopia - was based on the assumption, (clearly stated in the Bortenstein article previously mentioned,) that the suggestion that the stalinists would make their peace with or ally with the fascists was only an irrational anarchist fear.

Bortenstein (at a time when the negotiations for the Stalin-Hitler Pact must have been in process) explained why such an alliance could never happen. Spelling it out in simple wording for "anarchist dunces;" (though it should be stressed that it was not only anarchists who had predicted the Stalin-Hitler Pact before it happened; after all in Prussia in 1933 there was a similar pact for the Red-Brown Referendum; in Italy in 1929, the Communist Party had handed to Mussolini lists of all members of left socialist and dissident communist groups, known to the P.C.I.; in Bavarian, in 1928, there was for six months reciprocal membership between the Nazis and the C.P.)

(As early as 1927, Bordiga stated that the degradation of stalinism had gone to the point that it acted as an auxiliary regime to capitalism, that whether it veered to classical "free" capitalism or to fascism was only a matter of temporary and local expediency, and, he predicted, that when - as would inevitably happen - the forces of fascism and those of classical capitalism clashed in a world war, it would be a matter of chance as to which side Stalin would support. Indeed Trotsky, himself, in the "Socialist Appeal", October 8th, 1938, said: "We may not expect with certainty Soviet diplomacy to attempt rapprochement with Hitler,..." though the fact that he and his disciples continued to dismiss the anarchist fantasy of such rapprochement shows that he cannot have been very serious. Nevertheless having hedged his bets in this way he was able to claim perspicacity, and with supreme hutzpah to pretend that he was unique in having made this claim.)

But Bortenstein taking his cue from Trotsky, (and, as I earlier said, his words are republished without qualification by Trotsky's epigones to this day,) laid it down that Stalin despite everything was objectively progressive, even though subjectively reactionary, he was forced by circumstances to defend "socialised property relations," and those same circumstances would always force him to oppose fascism; (or at least remain neutral.)

**"Both Conditions for the omnipotence of the bureaucracy (the backwardness of the country and the imperialist environment) bear however a temporary and transitional character and must disappear with the victory of the world revolution."**

**"If, however, it is conceded that the present war will provoke not revolution but a decline of the proletariat then there remains another alternative:...to the growth of a new exploiting class..."**

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The belief that stalinism, however reactionary, was merely an episodic phenomenon, (one that in the Revolution Betrayed he had said could not possibly survive an whole generation,) had, since soon after Hitler's attainment of power, been the fundamental Trotskyist analysis. Bortenstein was not original, he was just voicing the ideas of his movement's founder. But just as Marx was "not a Marxist, but Marx," to Trotsky was more than just a Trotskyist. He saw that the implications of the Stalin-Hitler Pact could not be ignored.

No doubt he held on the one hand that the matter had not been finally decided, a war was beginning that he correctly expected to be at least as destructive as the previous World War, it was too early to be dogmatic in predicting what would happen. Moreover, as he insisted at length at the beginning of this essay, divisions within the movement on the assessment of the class nature of stalinism did not (at that stage of history) necessarily lead to different political strategies and agenda. (Only a year or two before he had insisted on a breach with the editors of the Partisan Review when they had differed on the issue, but the perspectives were somewhat different at that time.)

*Not only was it early to consider the matter decided, but in any case, it was too early for a new productive system based on a new class pattern to have finally emerged. Just as entrepreneurial industrial capitalism only arose as a system in France, (displacing/transforming the original Bonapartist bureaucracy,) in the course of (and with the impetus of) the Napoleonic Wars, so the economic infrastructure in the Soviet Union could only develop to the point whereat the bureaucracy was only an episodic parasitism on soviet society, to the stage where it played the dominant role in the economy with time. Just as neither Robespierre nor the Thermidoreans could, in 1794, have forseen the development of capitalism (as distinct from Mercantilism) so neither Trotsky nor Stalin could, in 1924, forsee the stalinized/bureaucratized party producing the Nomenklatura.*

In 1939, both those who held the Soviet Union was a degenerated workers' state, and those who held it was a new ruling class, were opposed to being drawn into war as a junior ally of the soviet state, both sides argued that socialist advance necessitated the overthrow of the stalinist regime. Trotsky argued, (against the wishes of that majority of the Fourth International who supported him in this debate,) that both factions should be able to co-exist within the framework of the Fourth International. "It would therefore be a piece of monstrous nonsense to split with comrades, who on the question of the sociological nature of the USSR have an opinion different from ours, insofar as they solidarize with us in regard to the political tasks."

It could be (he would logically have reasoned) that just as the war would be at least as destructive as the previous one, it would inspire at least as much revolutionary fervour amongst European workers as seen between 1916 and 1923. If that happened, (as he predicted,) if there was a revolution, the stalinist bureaucracy whether an episodic phenomenon or a nascent ruling class would be swept away, in that case its class nature would be a matter for purely academic debate and of no material interest to the revolutionary movement. If it didn't happen; -

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and it could only (he thought) not happen if the workers had lost their revolutionary consciousness and had allowed the stalinists to disarm them globally; then he conceded that his theories must be re-examined, that indeed stalinism would be a manifestation of a new exploiting class system.

Though one might cynically say that part of the reason for postponing the final decision lay in the fact that once it was accepted that Stalin was not a mere temporary manifestation, but was an active counter-revolutionary force lay in the fact that if he accepted that immediately he would have been forced to re-examine a number of his earlier decisions, and perhaps apologize to alienated former disciples. For years he had denounced these and other Leftists as being mere centrists, because their policies stemmed from the belief that his evaluation of Stalin was wrong. He would have found it very difficult to eat those words. It is worth adding at this point that Shachtman, when he did turn to the bureaucratic collectivist position, totally failed to make such a re-examination, (at least as far as Spain was concerned.) It could be argued that this was one reason why he failed to convince the majority of the International.

He rested his argument on what must have seemed a dishonest semantic quibble; Trotsky had previously said the existence of a state-ownership economy in the Soviet Union was proof that the bureaucracy was not a ruling class. He had however in the Revolution Betrayed defined the crucial point as being whether the system could become hereditary and survive for more than a generation. He then, in his Testament, - for the sake of argument - postulated the theoretical possibility that it might become a new class system. It was clear, both from his earlier thoughts, and from the context of the rest of "The USSR in War" that by that he was meaning a system that can survive for more than a limited time.

Shachtman produced a tangential argument, since Trotsky had said that the survival of state-ownership of economy was despite everything the proof that there was still a progressive element in the USSR; and then - since he turned round and accepted for the sake of debate the theoretical possibility that a class society might arise in a society with state ownership - Shachtman claimed that this conceded that the original premise was wrong the existence of state ownership was not a proof of a progressive element, and if it was not, it never had been, and therefore belief that the USSR was a class society should be back-dated. The crucial issue of the passage of time, of the fact that for Trotsky the distinction between caste and class was whether privileged power could be inherited was ignored.

There is an interesting paradox, on the one hand Trotsky had believed that Stalin would be impelled by his role as the defender of Soviet statist property relations to act against fascism, or at least remain neutral, if the issues were clarified so that there was no room to avoid fundamental choice; on the other he had five years earlier laid it down as a principle of Trotskyist analysis that Stalinism could no longer play a progressive role outside the Soviet Union. But the Leninists had said the same earlier about social democrats and that had not prevented them working in alliance with such reformists within the soviets. Trotsky, thinking purely in terms of united front activity could bestride that contradiction, but his followers were not and so forgot the stricture that stalinism could no longer play a progressive role outside the USSR.

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Returning to Spain: one can see that had the Republican Left promised Morocco its independence, and so been able to neutralize the most significant contingents of the Falange, if it had welcomed deserters or promoted mutiny within those remaining sectors of the fascist militia which had been recruited from Republican sympathizers; if the CNT had not alienated its mass membership and other sympathizers; it would, at first blush, have moved the balance of power a long way leftwards. If the Stalinists had just remained neutral then that would have ensured the victory of the Left. But the Stalin-Hitler Pact showed that the stalinists would not have remained neutral; the probability is that the Pact would have started earlier and would have lasted longer.

It might still have been possible, (though unlikely, not necessarily much more so than was the success of the Russian Revolution,) that even with the combined power of the fascists and the stalinists against them, starved of military supplies as they would have been, (unless the Moroccan auxiliaries were able to bring their weapons with them if (when they deserted en masse,) the Spanish workers might have succeeded in making the revolution. That world opinion would have prevented Stalin and the Western powers intervening. Obviously if that had happened the impact of the success would have immediately polarized the class struggle in France.

The survival of such a Spanish revolution, the result in France, would have depended on just what percentage of the Spanish and French Communist Parties would have revolted against Stalin's alliance with fascism. Unfortunately there is no way that this could possibly be judged. There are of course indicators, many Western communists left the party at the time of the Stalin-Hitler Pact, (others who took seriously the C.P.s sudden newfound anti-militarism, were to leave when this too was abandoned in 1941.)

Moreover, there is the example of Tito in Yugoslavia. While the Stalin-Hitler Pact was still in force, that is at a time when the communist parties in the occupied countries of Europe were supposed to see the Nazis, if not as allies, as at least something approaching that, The Yugoslav Communists found the puppet fascist regime in their area bent on their extermination. It would have needed superhuman loyalty to the party line for anyone to have accepted that. (It was one thing for the Chinese Communist leadership in 1928 to accept Chang Kai Shek's drive to exterminate the militant workers of Shanghai and Canton, it would be quite a different thing to have accepted their own mass extermination.) Tito, (who had been such a loyal stalinist that he had been entrusted with co-ordinating the recruitment of stalinist volunteers for Spain,) was forced to disobey party orders and launch the partisan resistance because the Ustashe left him no option.

If one thinks about it that became the general pattern, wherever stalinist parties launched resistance movements that were either to carry them to power or to make such power a possibility, it was because loyalty to the official stalinist line effectively involved acceptance of

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mass slaughter. It had been the case for Mao and the Long March, which had been done in defiance of the official Chinese Party leadership. It was the case in Albania in Greece, it was to be the case in Vietnam. (In the case of Cuba it was dissidents from a Stalinist Front organization, rather than from the party itself, who launched the fight; that had a parallel with war-time Common Wealth, in Britain; 1939 had seen the Popular Front (Left Book Club in particular) collapse as anti-fascists shed their stalinism in disgust, they, stiffened by party members who had also resigned, founded the campaigns that later fused to form CW to oppose the Coalition Government and keep work for socialism alive through the war.)

**"The second imperialist war poses the unsolved task (socialism) on an higher historical stage...If contrary to all probabilities the October Revolution fails during the course of the present, or immediately thereafter, to find its continuation in any of the advanced countries;**

It is easy to see that had the Spanish workers' revolution succeeded, particularly if it had succeeded directly as a result of the workers' organizations declaring for Moroccan freedom, this would have had an energizing effect on the Indian Congress and similar colonial freedom movements. This too would have transformed the international political situation, anti-fascist struggle would have merged with anti-imperialist struggle. (It might be questioned whether such struggle could then have been successful.)

As it was there was a world war because the imperialist aims of fascism conflicted with the interests of the older imperialist powers. In the metropolitan states, capitalist politicians suddenly felt a need to voice democratic and anti-fascist sentiments. This didn't stop the security services in those countries devoting far more time and effort through the war to discovering and prosecuting "premature" anti-fascists in their countries than they ever did to searching out for fascist sympathisers. The anti-racist views they felt it necessary to voice not only did not compel them to grant immediate colonial freedom, but did not stop them - actually while the war was in process - taking measures to try to bolster the dominance of the empire. (Indeed even the alleged Labour Government, after the war, saw fit to reward whites who had fought in the "anti-racist war" by giving them land, in colonies, stolen from Blacks, on occasions, Blacks who had also served in the war.)

There would, have been had results in Spain been different, a markedly different sort of conflict. In pre-1939 Trotskyist theory, when this happened the stalinists would have been dragged along in alliance with the Left, and in that event it is arguable that the Left would have stood an evens, (or better than evens chance of winning world wide. History shows that the stalinists would not have done this, and it would be a very rash commentator who would venture an opinion as the whether the Left would have won in such a world struggle.

That was not of course what happened. It is worth remembering at this point that after Hitler invaded the Soviet Union the Communist Parties in the West were told to placate the capital-

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ist governments in their countries; in the USA Communists involved in Black struggles suddenly stopped their activities, calling off a planned mass march on Washington; in India the Communists attacked Congress for continuing the independence struggle, acting as informers; no doubt the same happened in other colonies; in Britain the C.P. published posters and leaflets calling for the death penalty for strikers, in the armed forces again the C.P. acted as informers against any expression of discontent amongst the troops. It was at this time that Stalin wound up the Third International, explicitly as a gesture of reassurance to the Soviet Union's allies.

No doubt even the various Fourth Internationals would concede that when Trotsky talked of the October Revolution finding its continuation in any of the advanced countries; he was obviously not thinking of revolutions in East Asia nor in the Balkans, nor even in Central Europe; but far more important that this was the distinction between October Revolution and the sundry stalinist seizures of power.

The Soviet Revolution was essentially the mobilization of the rank and file, (whether workers, peasants, or armed servicemen,) in ad hoc councils, these set out to run the industries in which they worked, the neighbourhoods in which they lived, the forces in which they served, and, in October, when the word of their councils clashed with that of central government, they displaced the latter from power. (Anarchists and other "Infantile ultra Leftists" would of course say that the Bolsheviks then took the power away from the Soviets, but we would hardly have expected Trotsky to concede that.)

The conquest in power in most of Eastern Europe was a straight conquest by the Red Army, there were it is true Communist partisans in most countries, but nowhere had the workers or peasants formed soviets, nowhere was there a significant mass mutiny in the previous regime's military forces; nowhere was there a direct revolutionary action by the bulk of the exploited population.

Indeed at first there was no social or political change to match the new satellites position as allies of the Soviet Union. Cross-class coalitions were formed, and apparently the only interest the Soviet Union had was to load the heavy industry machinery on to trains and take it to the Soviet Union. A policy that hardly suggests that, at that time, Stalin envisaged turning the countries into clones of Russia.

The rival sophisticated-Stalinist and Nato-Cold-Warrior explanations of the 1948 change are probably equally untrue. The intelligent Stalinists say that there was no intention of changing the ownership of Eastern industry, nor the nature of basically parliamentary government, until the pressure of Western propaganda aggression forced this. We are told in the West on the contrary that no one suspected Stalin's intention until Churchill's dramatic Fulton speech, and that the West only started acting to limit Soviet expansionism comparatively late in the day. The only certainty is that the beginning of the Cold War gave a much needed boost to manufacturing industry in both East and West.

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Yugoslavia, Albania and Northern Greece were certainly slightly different; in each of those home grown revolutionary forces took (or attempted to take) power without the aid of the Red Army. But still the revolution was predominantly a military affair, the partisan forces, (in most cases peasants led by middle class intellectuals, with no roots in the industrial working class, nor peasant links of the sort that existed in Spain, ready and eager to form cooperative farms,) won by purely military means, not through their mass support.

The initial Vietnam rising in 1946 - despite the wholesale massacre (some 48,000 militants in all,) of Trotskyists of three varieties and other independent socialists, - certainly had many of the marks of a soviet rising; but after negotiations between Ho Chi Minh and the French this was called off. Later, after Dien Bien Phu, 50,000 socialists from South Vietnam, led by Maung Maung Mi, fled North to join the newly established North Vietnamese state; they were all immediately liquidated.

After this China, Indo-China and Cuba did on occasions see towns behind the lines of the right-wing forces revolt, with industrial workers seizing factories and forming soviets, but in no case were the representatives of such revolutionary workers taken into the communist regime, and in most, if not all, such cases, those who initiated the struggles were purged as soon as the communists arrived. Mao Tse Tung, himself, in two books he wrote which the Communist Party assiduously sold in the early Fifties, insisted that China was not a Communist State but a Popular Front one, defining the governmental alliance as a block of five classes, in which the "national bourgeoisie" played a major role.

There were of course two genuine - though abortive - revolutionary upsurges: in Italy in 1944, Togliatti had to be flown in from Moscow, in an American supplied plane, (Lenin's sealed carriage in reverse!) to prevent the abolition of the monarchy, and halt the occupation of factories.

In France two years later, again the workers occupied the factories, they had arms they had seized from the Germans at the end of the War, almost certainly more weapons than had De Gaulle's government, the Communist persuaded the workers to end the occupation, disarmed them, collected their weapons, handed them over to the Government, three weeks later called them out on strike to see them mowed down by the state with weapons they'd handed in; the Communists didn't even make their three ministers in the Government resign.

Hardly the continuation of October!

**"if...the proletariat is thrown back every where and on all fronts - then we should doubtless have to pose the question...Have we entered the epoch of social revolution and socialist society, or on the contrary the epoch of the declining society of the totalitarian bureaucracy?"**

The Fourth International, to its credit, did not decide immediately after the war that the exten-

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sion of stalinist power constituted the revolution of which Trotsky had spoken. It was not until Tito was expelled from the Comintern that that decision was taken, until the the Eastern European satellite states were described as petit bourgeois regimes, the International rightly insisted that no workers' revolution had taken place, so while "progressive forces" might be in power, they were not in any sense workers' states. It is easy to understand why Tito's break with stalinism took the official Trotskyists off balance given their initial refusal to follow Trotsky and reconsidering the nature of the Stalin regime. Tito was apparently breaking with Stalin for laudable reasons; but their theory said that Tito's regime was a petit bourgeois one whilst Stalin's, despite Stalin, remained a workers' state - albeit degenerate. A petit bourgeois regime, however promising, could not be supported against a workers' one, however degenerate.

It is perhaps not quite fair to say that the Trotskyists refused to reconsider the nature of the Soviet Union. "The USSR in War" was debated at length in 1946, not least because Mme. Trotsky resigned from the committee of the international that year, because of the committee's failure to accept the consequences of Trotsky's testamentary analysis; (her open break didn't come for another seven years, by which time she had considerably developed her position;) at that time in most countries a number of Trotskyists did break with the official parties; and the debate continued; indeed in Britain it was two years later when - for a month - Grant adopted the "State Capitalist" position; during which month he converted Jock Haston who held the view briefly while moving out of Trotskyism altogether to social democracy, but during that brief time, in turn converted "Mr. Honey" (Ygael Gluckstein/Tony Cliff) subsequently the guru of the Socialist Workers' Party (GB).

To support Tito, the Fourth International had to redefine the stalinist satellites as workers' states; since they had never had workers' revolutions they could not argue - without embarrassment - that they were degenerated workers' states, (or at least they could some did, and it was to prove a matter of contention,) so a changed analysis "deformed workers' states" was substituted. They conveniently forgot that the original formulation "degenerate workers' state" was a quote from Lenin who said in 1922 that the Soviet Union which had been a deformed workers' state had since undergone severe bureaucratic degeneration. (Not surprisingly, after a few years, a minority faction of the FI awoke to the fact that the formulation had caused the international to make unacceptable compromises with Stalinism; but instead of junking it completely it contented itself with semantic quibbles about the distinction between degenerate and deformed. That was not the only semantic quibble the analysis of the FI majority was said to be at one and the same time "obviously true" but "palpably false.")

However this redefinition conveniently got them off the hook of Trotsky's Testament. If the satellites were workers' states, of whatever sort, then objectively there had been a revolution of sorts. Trotsky's belief that stalinism could not, after 1933, play a progressive role outside the soviet union, (indeed this was such an essential part of Trotsky's thinking that it was the reason for forming the Fourth International, until he came to believe this, he had been opposed to having distinct

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parties, let alone a distinct world party;) was quietly forgotten. So the revolution Trotsky predicted as happening "at the end of the war now beginning," did happen after all, even if no one noticed it happening as a revolution, even though it took the form of military conquest, even though it did not happen in any of the advanced capitalist countries, (it should not be necessary to say that as Marxists, Lenin and Trotsky believed not only that socialism could only triumph in developed capitalist countries, but that such gains as had been made in Russia could only be preserved, if the revolution spread in a short period of time to such countries,) even though it was led by Stalin and certainly did not (as Trotsky had insisted such a revolution must inevitably do,) "lead to the overthrow of the bureaucracy in the USSR."

By deciding that it wasn't true that Stalinism could no longer play a progressive role outside the Soviet Union, the Fourth International abandoned the primary reason for its own existence. Trotsky until Hitler's accession to power has resolutely opposed the formation of rival parties to the communists, his followers were expected to operate on the fringe of the stalinist parties, however unwelcome they were, however often stalinist thugs broke up their meetings. On no account would he even consider the formation of a distinct international. It was only when, after the Nazi success, he came to the conclusion that the stalinists (outside the Soviet Union) had exhausted their progressive potential and could never more play a progressive role in the world politics that he put work towards building a Fourth International on the agenda. So when twenty years later the rival factions that were about to split and form competing Fourth Internationals jointly adopted the analysis that the East European satellites and China were deformed workers' states; they were implying that, in whatever distorted way, Stalinism had played a progressive role.

Logically, if they had followed the reasoning of the theorist they honoured, the competing Fourth Internationals should then have decided that there was no justification for having a Fourth International; (or if there was a justification it lay in the fact, (that the FI did not feel it was necessary to consider in its Conference documents,) that the Third International was no more, and so the question of the impermissibility of forming a rival international, if the Communist one was actually revolutionary, hardly arose;) the small factions (John Lawrence's group in St. Pancras, Cochrane's American Socialist Union in the USA, and their co-thinkers in France,) that sided with neither FI, and reverted to acting on the fringe of the official Communist Parties were at least true to this fundamental point of Trotskyist theory.

The two internationals were over the years "to go forth and multiply." But all of the progeny started with this basic denial of the very reason why Trotsky founded the FI. It meant that their activities and policies, particularly their activities and policies at the height of the 1960's left-ist upsurge, were little more than a parody of what Trotsky set out for his followers. Trotsky's ideas (which, as shown above, he was prepared at the end to reconsider in the light of the Stalin-Hitler Pact,) were oriented to the industrial world, they envisaged sparking off workers' actions, which could drag the stalinists along in the wake.

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The post-53 FIs, not only ignored Trotsky's political Testament, they also ignored the whole basis for their own existence as an international. Trotskyism became, in its most public manifestations, a series of colonial freedom solidarity movements, consistently tail-ending the more militant sectors of Stalinism, totally uncritically accepting stalinist regimes as socialist forces. Its sole aim being to enlarge the sphere of stalinist power in the economically backward world. No doubt it tried to push the stalinists faster than the latter were prepared to go; but that was hardly what Trotsky meant. It must be admitted that this total abandonment of Trotsky's strategy was not just due to the failure to make a correct analysis of the new stalinist states. In the Sixties, those who were later to found the Socialist Workers' Party, were every bit as enthusiastic supporters of Ho Chi Minh, every bit as anxious to break up the meetings of anyone who criticised this stalinist, as were the Fourth Internationalists.

They, for years, pointed to the supposed successes of the stalinists as proof that stalinism was progressive, illogically claiming that this proved it was not a new class society; now that stalinism has collapsed in the USSR the same people say the collapse proves that stalinism was retrogressive and therefore it could not have been a new class society; some couple with this the apparent triumphal success of capitalism under Thatcher. Certainly this latter position is more logical than the former; both rest on a vastly oversimplified view of how class societies come to power. When capitalism triumphed in Britain (with the Great Reform Bill) the need to dig mines and build factories and sell goods meant that there was a sharp increase in the value of land and shipping; enormous sums of money were channelled into the pockets of the old Mercantilist and land-owning aristocracy; the Tory Party (then the Mercantilist Party) swept back to power for almost two decades in the middle of the nineteenth century. Such temporary restorations happen, even where the revolution came in by less subtle means than in Britain.

Yet even this was not the full extent of the degeneration of what goes for official Trotskyism. Now that the Soviet Union has collapsed, unlamented, under the weight of its own internal contradictions, there is an obscene race by competing Trotskyist factions to jettison their residual criticisms of stalinism so as to allow them to work with those Communists who refuse, even now, to see that the regime they promoted was fundamentally anti-working class.

**"If this conception is adopted, that is, if it is acknowledged that the proletariat does not have the forces to accomplish the socialist revolution..."**

**"However onerous the second perspective may be, if the world proletariat should actually prove incapable of fulfilling the mission placed upon it by the course of development..."**

**"...ended as Utopia. It is self-evident that a new 'minimum' programme would be required for the defence of the interests of the slaves of the totalitarian bureaucratic society."**

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Trotsky of course laid all the responsibility for the rise of a new exploiting regime on the working class. No doubt, ultimately, the working class was responsible for those who it chose as leaders; but for Trotsky that is a remarkably simplistic argument. It is, as if he is suggesting some character deficiency in the working class has allowed, a new lot of exploiters to step in and hit the working class, itself, once again; which might be thought to be harsh from someone who, since 1917 had adhered to Lenin's belief that the working class is not capable of reaching beyond trade union consciousness without middle class intellectual leadership; who moreover in "On Terror" justified the substitution of the bolshevist dictatorship for the dominance of the soviets, saying that working class rule, that is the dominance of workers acting through the soviets was only possible to the extent that the bolshevik party exercised dictatorship over the soviets.

It should be emphasized that when Trotsky talked of the "socialist programme, based on the internal contradictions of the capitalist society," ending "as a Utopia" he was harking back to the way the young Marx dismissed the early socialists, (who saw socialism arising as the extreme form of republicanism, *i.e. based on the internal contradictions in Mercantilist society,*) as Utopian. When (in the words Trotsky used elsewhere) he talked of socialism "being taken off the order of the day," he was again thinking in terms of the early Marx's "anti-socialist" polemics. But the young Marx, of 1844, who denounced Weitling and Moses Hess, for sowing Utopian illusions, was not saying socialism was not desirable. He was saying that it could not be achieved that way, that the circumstances were not then ripe, that it needed the working class to complete its break with its former allies in the Republican bourgeoisie, before it could struggle on its own behalf.

Trotsky in 1939 was writing only 22 years after the Bolshevik revolution and though he was thinking about what would be the situation at the "end of the war now beginning," he would, no doubt, assume that this would be within a decade of when he wrote. Marx, on the other hand, wrote in 1844, 55 years after the fall of the Bastille; and only four years after that he held that the march of events had moved far enough onwards to make alternative proposals possible. It is understandable that Trotsky would insist even in 1949 the time would not be ripe to replace the Marxist perspective in the same way that Marx had changed the Jacobin one. Fair enough; but then, twenty or thirty years later, the FI feebly continued to challenge anyone who insisted that stalinism was a new class, saying that they ought therefore to "take socialism off the order of the day;" they showed that they had not begun to understand Trotsky's reasoning. To be sure Trotsky was partly to blame, he failed to bring out in his major works his full thinking on Thermidor.

While in power Trotsky had resisted all discussion in terms of Thermidor. This was, he said, a Menshevik pre-occupation. Even when he was ousted from the leadership he broke with his more extreme followers when they argued that Thermidor had happened. It was in a small

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essay, written immediately after Hitler's accession to power in 1933 that Trotsky re-examined the question. It was then that he saw that the fall of Robespierre was not the beginning of a return to the pre-revolutionary society, for Mercantilism - miscalled Feudalism by most of his followers - was not restored. It was the accession to power first of a Jacobin Bureaucracy, a Jacobin Bureaucracy which after two (arguably three) further changes led to Bonapartism. But as he stressed then, even the Restoration of the Bourbons, was not a restoration of Mercantilism. Napoleonic and the restored Bourbon kings never restored the pre-revolutionary economic system. They each represented a bureaucracy which balanced itself between the plebian masses and the old Mercantilist forces.

This balance allowed the development of industrial capitalism, Mercantilism had necessitated industrial manufacture, but had not provided the right conditions for this to flourish; (*even though industrial capitalism was already economically but not politically the dominant system in England,*) which to some extent under Louis Phillipe, and more fully under the Second Republic was to emerge as the new ruling class. The industrial development had been necessary during the Napoleonic Wars, and despite the Restoration elite's snobbish contempt for the manufacturing interest, the wealth they produced was too necessary to allow development to be halted.

Trotsky thus then made the distinction between the counter-revolution and the rise of a new exploitative society. Tragically - because he equated the existence of class divisions with the prevalence of private ownership - he did not explore the logical consequence of this distinction, and in later works he argued as if the distinction did not exist; completely failing to take advantage of the insights he had gained in writing that earlier article. Until (and except for) "The USSR in War" he never allowed the rise of a new ruling class and thought only of a return to capitalism.

It was as he had shown in 1933 totally illogical and ahistorical. France had been the country that had, in the 17th Century, adopted Mercantilism most fully; it had done so under Monarchical patronage; and the French Monarchy had achieved enormous wealth by so doing. France springing from being well behind Holland & Britain in economic and military terms to being the dominant power in Europe. The French Revolution occurred in the form it did; because that very thorough adoption on Mercantilism, and the total involvement of the Monarchy and the state prevented the independent growth of the Merchant classes. These Merchant classes (with some aristocratic allies) launched a revolution, which was then taken over by internal battles amongst the merchant and professional classes. We have discussed what happened.

Russia had industrialized, at the turn of the 18th to 19th Century in a similar Monarchically-patronized way. In a very rapid economic advance she had been pulled up from being a backward country to joining the most economically advanced nations. She was able to provide her

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army with an armoury comparable to that of Napoleonic France; yet she had virtually no independent capitalist class, in the sense that Western countries had. Like the French Revolution before it, the October Revolution happened because the normal route to independent power of the capitalist class had been distorted by royal patronage.

The logic of Trotsky's own earlier article was that the class rule that arose in France had been something totally different from what had previously existed. Although the seeds of capitalism had been sewn in England before, no one had at the end of the 18th century thought of the possibility of a class-divided system which lacked an hereditary aristocracy. Trotsky said, but never later - until "The USSR in War" - followed-up this line of thought, that one should look for an entirely new pattern of class division.

No doubt part of the reason for the confusion was the habit that Leninists had of labelling all pre-capitalist societies, Feudal. An habit that would have shocked Marx who always denied siring the fourfold "Marxist" categories of class society. If they hadn't so confused Feudalism they would know that in the Ninth (and early Tenth Centuries) in the Carolingian Empire the only time and place when all holdings depended on feofs alone; there was no such thing as private ownership and no hereditary rights. The historic proof that state ownership is not a guarantee of lack of class division.

But the historical record is a digression. Returning to our own century, to the post WWII years; we see the Fourth International(s) neither tried to mount an adequate "defence of the interests of the slaves of the totalitarian bureaucratic society," nor studied the nature of class forces in order to create a new philosophy of the self-liberation of the exploited classes. They transformed themselves instead to junior auxiliaries of the new exploiting class. The revolution (in the advanced capitalist countries) Trotsky had foreseen did not happen; the stalinist bureaucracy was not overthrown; Marxism ended as Utopia; and Trotsky's epigoni reduced his programme to a mere parody.