

# SPARTACIST



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## Documents and Discussion on the Collapse of Stalinism

**On the Collapse of Stalinist Rule in East Europe . . . . . 4**  
by Joseph Seymour

**For Marxist Clarity and a Forward Perspective . . . . . 16**  
by Albert St. John

**Spartacist Group of Poland Founded . . . . . 23**

**Mexico: Platform of the Trotskyist Faction . . . . . 28**

Special Russian-Language Section:

**Советские трудящиеся:  
Долой план «500 дней» Ельцина-Горбачева! . . . 49**

**ICL Raises the Banner of Trotskyism in Leningrad, Moscow / . . . 63**  
From Russian-Language Spartacist Bulletin No. 1

**For a Trotskyist Party in the USSR! . . . . . 64**

## Review: Pierre Broué's Trotsky— Tailored for Perestroika...31

Louis Sinclair: A Friend and  
Trotsky Scholar Dies . . . . . 3

Letter: Guns and Old Japan . . . . . 2  
Tamara Deutscher, 1913-1990 . . . . . 30

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## Letter

## Guns and Old Japan

10 October 1990  
Tokyo, Japan

Dear Comrades,

I am writing in regard to the article "The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution" which appeared in the last issue of *Spartacist* (No. 43-44, Summer 1989). While I thought it extremely important to place the question of the right to bear arms in an international context, the paragraph concerning Japan has two factual errors and, I think, a misleading assertion.

1. The "Great Sword Hunt," which disarmed the Japanese peasantry, was carried out in 1587 under Toyotomi Hideyoshi, not the Tokugawa shogunate. Tokugawa Ieyasu became shogun (military dictator of feudal Japan) in 1603 and the Tokugawa Bakufu (government of the shogun) officially dates from 1615.

Guns were first introduced to Japan in 1543 by three lost Portuguese, and within a decade gunsmiths throughout Japan were producing the weapon in massive quantities. By the end of the century more guns were used in Japanese battles than were owned by any single European country at the time (Noel Perrin, *Giving Up the Gun*, 1979). But by 1575 the first opposition to guns began to emerge as it came as quite a shock that a "common farmer" could kill an "elite samurai" so readily.

As part of Ieyasu's consolidation of power, in 1607 he ordered all gun-makers to move to either Nagahama or Sakai (the major gun manufacturing areas) and appointed a "Gun Commissioner" through whom all orders had to be cleared, thus further ensuring his control over weapon production. Eventually, and not surprisingly, orders ceased to be cleared and gunsmiths were soon out of work, with many actually returning to sword-making to eke out a living. The last time guns were used in battle was in 1637 and it wasn't until Commodore Perry sailed into Tokyo harbor (1853) that firearms were again manufactured.



S. Yoshioka Collection, Kyoto

Painting of samurai firing pistol made for use on horseback, i.e., for use only by upper samurai families.

The Tokugawa shogunate's policy of monopolizing the means of violence in the hands of the state was no different from the European feudal lords who also ensured that their peasantry were unarmed. The methods and social  
*continued on page 47*

English Edition

# SPARTACIST

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## ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The material in this issue is overwhelmingly on the urgent events in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. We have had to put off the following articles, originally projected for this issue of *Spartacist*: Discussion material on the Proletarian Military Policy by Bert Matthes and John Holmes, and the ICL's reply to Pierre Broué's polemic against us on this subject (the latter was published in *Cahiers Leon Trotsky* No. 29, September 1989); a letter by Robin Blick and reply by *Spartacist* on the Bolsheviks and "one-party dictatorship."

## CORRECTION

A caption on page 30 in the last issue of *Spartacist* (No. 43-44, Summer 1989) incorrectly dated the Trotskyist-led uprising against the return of the Allied imperialists to Vietnam at the end of WW II. The uprising occurred in Saigon in 1945, not 1949.

# A Friend and Trotsky Scholar Dies

*Adapted from Workers Hammer, No. 117, October 1990, newspaper of the Spartacist League of Britain.*

A memorial meeting was held in Glasgow on 28 September 1990 to honour the life and work of Louis Sinclair. Louis Sinclair devoted the bulk of his adult life to collecting and cataloguing the writings of Leon Trotsky. His bibliography of Trotsky's writings—published by the Hoover Institute, and republished in an updated version by Gower Publishing Company in Vermont—remains a standard reference. At the time of his death he was working on an index of pre-1940 internal bulletins of the Trotskyist movement. In single-mindedly struggling to preserve Trotsky's written legacy, Louis Sinclair's pioneering archival work has greatly facilitated our access to and knowledge of vital questions of revolutionary strategy and tactics.

The tributes from members of the International Communist League, printed below, were read out at the memorial meeting. They were among several dozen testimonials received from around the world from socialists, archivists, friends—many of them longtime participants in the workers movement whose appreciation of Louis Sinclair extended over several decades. The main address was given by Charles van Gelderen, a supporter of the United Secretariat, who first met Louis when he was a member of the Revolutionary Socialist League in 1937.

Prometheus Research Library  
New York, 22 September 1990

Glasgow

Dear Comrades,

I want to share with you my thoughts and feelings on the occasion of this memorial meeting to Louis Sinclair.

I first met comrade Sinclair in 1958 while he was visiting San Francisco, principally to work in the archives of the Hoover Institute at Stanford. At that time, he also went through my modest library, and I had the pleasure of his finding two Trotsky source items for inclusion in his definitive bibliography of Trotsky material in English.

He was a warm and genial man then and remained so in all our subsequent contacts. Over the years, our correspondence became more regular and frequent. I went to Glasgow to meet with him, and he proudly showed me some of the treasures from his Trotsky holdings.

When we set up the Prometheus Research Library, committed in part to the same work in which he had spent his life, we regularly routed to him anything we thought might be of interest to him. In his last years comrade Sinclair, militantly not involved in current affairs of the movement, corresponded with both myself and George Breitman who was the architect of the English-language *Writings of Trotsky* and the writings and speeches of James P. Cannon. This helped bring comrade Breitman and me together on certain archival projects.

Fortunately for our Glasgow comrades, they were able to meet sometimes with Louis Sinclair and come to appreciate the immense reserve of erudite Marxism that he was.



Trotsky Collection, Glasgow University

**Louis Sinclair**  
**1909-1990**

Louis Sinclair's life work was overwhelmingly financed by his own meager wages and then pension as a retired Scottish school teacher. Through much of his adult life, he literally singlehandedly fought to preserve the truth and therefore the integrity of Leon Trotsky and his work.

I deeply regret knowing very little of Louis Sinclair's earlier involvement in the Scottish Trotskyist movement. I believe it would illuminate and add a dimension to our understanding of the history of our movement on this island. But he left this a closed chapter.

Truly the passing of Louis Sinclair is a sad occasion. One does not easily imagine that another like him will soon arise. I regret that circumstance and geography kept us from closer collaboration.

In deepest solidarity with your meeting and regrets at my absence,  
Jim Robertson

I wish to pay tribute to Comrade Louis Sinclair on behalf of the International Communist League. Shortly after we set up a branch of the Spartacist League in Glasgow, I had the privilege of meeting him. We were able to assist him in his very valuable work on a couple of occasions. I last saw him in the Southern General the week before he died.

Louis was the world's foremost bibliographer of Trotsky,  
*continued on page 48*

## From ICL Discussion on Eastern Europe and Soviet Union

# On the Collapse of Stalinist Rule in East Europe

*This article was submitted as a contribution to the current International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) internal discussion on the collapse of Stalinism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The International Executive Committee has authorized the publication here of the most politically comprehensive of the submitted documents. This is the first of two such articles. The second appears on page sixteen.*

by Joseph Seymour

Can capitalism be restored in a bureaucratically ruled workers state through an essentially political process, i.e., without a civil war which destroys the military apparatus of the state? Manifestly yes. Does this run counter to Trotsky's specific prognosis for the Soviet Union in the mid-late 1930s? Yes. Does it negate the Marxist theory of the state or Trotsky's understanding of Stalinism in a more general sense? No.

Marx did not maintain that the destruction of the military apparatus of the state through civil war is a necessary condition for social revolution (or counterrevolution) at all times and in all places. In a public speech in 1872, immediately following the liquidationist congress of the First International in The Hague, Netherlands. Marx stated:

"The workers will have to seize political power one day in order to construct the new organization of labour; they will

have to overthrow the old politics which bolster up the old institutions, unless they want to share the fate of the early Christians, who lost their chance of heaven on earth because they rejected and neglected such action.

"We do not claim, however, that the road leading to this goal is the same everywhere.

"We know that heed must be paid to the institutions, customs and traditions of the various countries, and we do not deny that there are countries, such as America and England, and if I was familiar with its institutions, I might include Holland, where the workers may attain their goal by peaceful means. That being the case, we must recognize that in most continental countries the lever of revolution will have to be force; a resort to force will be necessary one day in order to set up the rule of labour."

— Karl Marx, "Speech on the Hague Congress,"

*The First International and After*, edited by David Fernbach

Empirically, I believe Marx was wrong. The working class could not have taken political power peacefully in Britain or the United States in the 1870s. Since the proletariat was never remotely close to power in these countries during this period, it is not a fruitful question for historical speculation. The important point is that Marx did not consider the transfer of class political power without a civil war to contradict *theoretically* the idea that the military apparatus of the state defends the economically dominant class in society.

Marx never spelled out a scenario whereby the working class could seize political power by peaceful means. Had he



Yevgeni Khaldei

**Red Army marches into Austria, 1945. Soviet people fought heroically to defeat Nazism. Stalin appealed to nationalism, not internationalism, in fighting "The Great Patriotic War."**

Wide World



Stalin's brutal forced collectivization at its height, 1929: banner calls for "Liquidation of kulaks as a class." Trotsky thought a military coup at the time would have been a vehicle for a bourgeois counterrevolution.

done so, it might have run something like this. A workers party wins an election. It has considerable support in the ranks of the armed forces, and a significant section of the officer corps is unwilling to resort to a coup to overthrow the workers government. The die-hard reactionaries are thus isolated and removed from command. The workers government then proceeds to purge and dismantle the old state apparatus.

Lenin did not consider that Marx was either empirically or theoretically wrong in projecting the possibility of a proletarian revolution by peaceful means in Britain and the United States in the 1870s. Rather he maintained that with the development of imperialism, characterized by an enormously strengthened state bureaucracy and militarism, such a prospect was no longer possible in any advanced capitalist country. However, one cannot mechanically transpose the conditions for a proletarian revolution against a capitalist state in the imperialist epoch to that of a capitalist counterrevolution in a bureaucratically ruled workers state surrounded by imperialist powers.

### Trotsky on the Fate of Stalinist Russia

During his long struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy Trotsky considered a number of *different* paths whereby capitalism might be restored in the Soviet Union. For example, during the collectivization crisis of 1928 Trotsky foresaw the danger of a right-wing military coup overthrowing the Stalin regime:

"In general the post-Lenin leadership is unwinding the October film in reverse. And Stalinism is Kerenskyism moving from left to right. In a country which has been shaken by the greatest of all revolutions, a bourgeois order could not possibly assume a democratic form: For victory, and for the maintenance of this victory, the bourgeoisie would need a supreme and purely military concentration of power, rising 'above all classes,' but having as its immediate

point of support the kulak. That is Bonapartism. Thermidor is only a stage on the road to Bonapartism....

"In a Thermidorian overturn, and still more in a completely Bonapartist one, the *army* would play a major role—in the second case, the decisive role. For this reason, we must follow with the greatest attention the processes that are taking place in the army. We must not forget that in the June [1928] report to the Moscow conference of party workers, the right 'leader,' referring to his friend Klim, said: 'If you again resort to extraordinary measures, the army will answer with an insurrection.'" [emphasis in original]

— "The Danger of Bonapartism and the Opposition's Role," *The Challenge of the Left Opposition* [1928-29]

Again, the important question is not whether a rightist military coup was actually possible in Russia in 1928. The important point is that Trotsky considered it theoretically possible that the decisive agency of bourgeois counterrevolution could be a section of the military cadre of the workers state. Furthermore, he projected that such an overturn need not provoke a full-scale civil war. With Stalin's defeat of the Right Opposition and establishment of a totalitarian police state in the early '30s, the possibility of a military coup receded. In any event, Trotsky never returned to this particular scenario.

Much of the internal discussion on the collapse of Stalinist rule in East Europe has centered on Trotsky's polemical metaphor about "running backwards the film of reformism." A number of comrades assume the term reformism as used here is synonymous with the idea that the proletariat can take power in the capitalist country through peaceful means. But this was *not* how "reformism" was centrally defined among leftists of Trotsky's generation.

Eduard Bernstein, the ideological founder of social-democratic reformism, maintained that the goals of socialism could be achieved through incremental measures carried out by the *bourgeois state* under the pressure of the workers movement. Hence the title of his major work was

*Evolutionary Socialism.* The anti-revisionist Marxists like Luxemburg and Kautsky countered that socialism could be established only through and after the conquest of political power by the proletariat. In her classic polemic against Bernstein, "Reform or Revolution," Luxemburg does not state that the "seizure of political power by the proletariat" requires under all circumstances an armed insurrection and civil war. By implication this was left an open question. She does insist that the proletarian revolution could succeed only at the moment of "the decomposition of bourgeois society" and the "collapse of capitalism."

Trotsky used the phrase "running backwards the film of reformism" to polemicize against those professed leftists who maintained that the Stalin regime had *already* transformed the USSR into a bourgeois state through a gradual and organic process—Bernsteinism in reverse:

"The Marxist thesis relating to the catastrophic character of the transfer of power from the hands of one class into the hands of another applies not only to revolutionary periods, when history sweeps madly ahead, but also to the periods of counterrevolution, when society rolls backwards. He who asserts that the Soviet government has been *gradually* changed from proletarian to bourgeois is only, so to speak, running backwards the film of reformism." [emphasis in original]

—"The Class Nature of the Soviet State," in *Writings [1933-34]*

Who today would argue that the governments of East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Hungary have been *gradually* changed from (deformed) proletarian to bourgeois? East Europe is manifestly in the throes of a capitalist counterrevolution of a catastrophic character with massive social convulsions and radical changes in the political sphere.

Trotsky's view that a capitalist counterrevolution, as well as a proletarian political revolution, in Stalin's Russia would entail civil war was a *prognosis*, not a dogma. It was predicated on resistance by the working class, not resistance by conservative elements of the bureaucratic apparatus. That is how the question is posed in *The Revolution Betrayed*:

"...a further development of the accumulating contradictions can as well lead to socialism as back to capitalism; (h) on the road to capitalism the counterrevolution would have to break the resistance of the workers; (i) on the road to socialism the workers would have to overthrow the bureaucracy. In the last analysis, the question will be decided by a struggle of living social forces, both on the national and the world arena."

The decisive element is the *consciousness* of the Soviet working class, which is *not static* but is affected by innumerable shifting factors domestically and internationally.

Trotsky projected that the contradictions of Stalinism would be resolved in the historic short run. Indeed, he repeatedly emphasized the fragility and instability of Soviet bonapartism. In the last period of his life, he believed that World War II would determine the fate not only of Stalinism in Russia but of capitalism on a world scale:

"The second world war has begun. It attests incontrovertibly to the fact that society can no longer live on the basis of capitalism. Thereby it subjects the proletariat to a new and perhaps decisive test."

—"The USSR in War," September 1939, *In Defense of Marxism*

Trotsky projected two polar outcomes to the war:

"If this war provokes, as we firmly believe, a proletarian revolution, it must inevitably lead to the overthrow of the bureaucracy in the USSR and regeneration of Soviet

democracy on a far higher economic and cultural basis than in 1918."

Trotsky did not believe that failure of proletarian revolution would restore the prewar status quo:

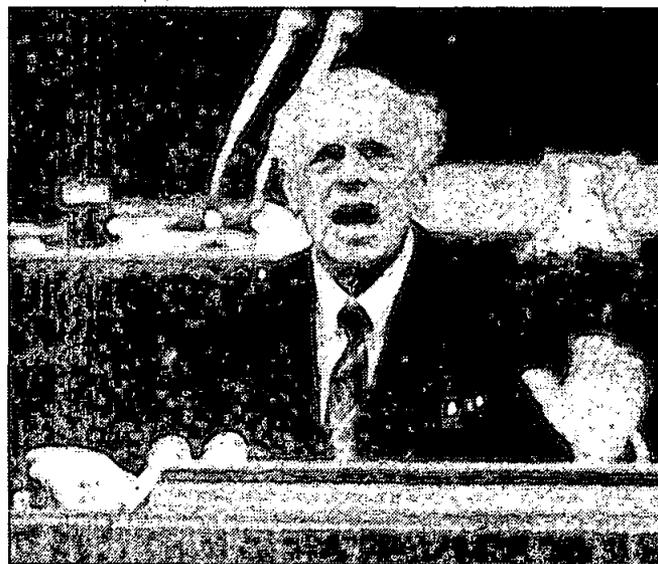
"If, however, it is conceded that the present war will provoke not revolution but a decline of the proletariat, then there remains another alternative: the further decay of monopoly capitalism, its further fusion with the state and the replacement of democracy wherever it still remained by a totalitarian regime. The inability of the proletariat to take into its hands the leadership of society could actually lead under these conditions to the growth of a new exploiting class from the Bonapartist fascist bureaucracy....

"Then it would be necessary in retrospect to establish that in its fundamental traits the present USSR was the precursor of a new exploiting regime on an international scale."

The actual outcome of the war did not conform to either of these polar alternatives. Both Stalinism and capitalism survived with, however, a radically altered geographical balance of power. Stalinism was maintained and strengthened in the USSR while deformed workers states were established in East Europe and then China. Capitalism was restabilized in West Europe and Japan, with Stalin's complicity, under the hegemony of American imperialism.

We have previously noted that the failure of Trotsky's predictions concerning World War II contributed to the Trotskyist movement's confused response to the postwar expansion of Stalinism. Conceptually, the idea of a deformed workers state was a logical extension of Trotsky's analysis of the Soviet Union in the 1930s. Empirically, it was evident that East Europe was being transformed politically and economically along the lines of Stalin's Russia.

Yet "orthodox" Trotskyists such as Mandel and Cannon resisted this conclusion because they believed it conferred upon the Stalinist bureaucracy a more historically progressive role and a more prolonged life than Trotsky had projected. The question facing the Trotskyist movement was not simply recognizing and defining the class nature of the East European People's Democracies in a static sense. Trotsky's analysis of the political dynamics of Stalin's Russia in the late '30s—the "struggle of living social



Reuters  
Andrei Sakharov pushed imperialist lies about Afghanistan at Soviet Congress, 1989. Sakharov was prophet of hoped-for "bourgeois-democratic" counter-revolution in USSR.

forces," in his words—could *not* be mechanically transposed to postwar East Europe or, for that matter, to the postwar USSR.

### The Evolution of Postwar Soviet Stalinism

During the 1930s the Soviet bureaucracy claimed its historical legitimacy from the October Revolution. Lenin was made into an icon, the Stalinized version of "Marxism-Leninism" became a quasi-state religion. The main body of Russian anti-Communists were the White Guardist émigrés, who were Russian nationalists of the deepest dye and identified themselves with European fascism. In the late '30s anti-Communist Ukrainian nationalists looked to Nazi Germany as their great-power protector.

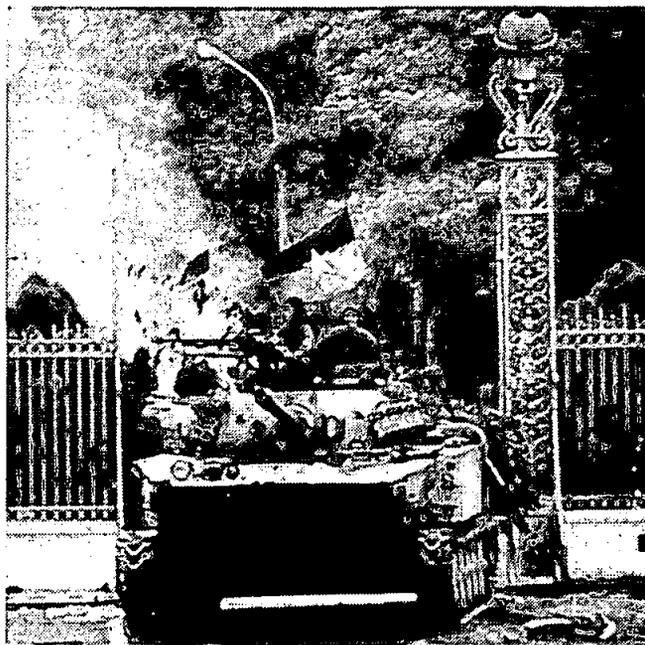
The prevailing outlook on the European left, and certainly within the Soviet bureaucracy and intelligentsia, was that the historic alternative to Communism in Russia was fascism, a view strengthened by the Spanish Civil War. The main Russian advocates of parliamentary democracy, the émigré Mensheviks, were reduced to insignificance as little-regarded advisers to their West European big brothers in the Second International.

The defeat of Hitler's Operation Barbarossa broadened the domestic political base of the Kremlin bureaucracy and shifted its ideological axis. The Stalin regime now above all appealed to defensive Soviet patriotism. Roy Medvedev later recalled that in 1945-46 there was near-universal support in the Soviet Union for extending its strategic frontiers far to the west. Increasingly, the later Stalin regime linked its political legitimacy to the "Great Patriotic War" and preserving the fruits of victory. This was even more so for the Khrushchev and Brezhnev regimes, whose principal figures gloried in their personal contribution to the victory over Nazi Germany. In popular Soviet political culture—films, novels, museums, monuments—the Great Patriotic War superseded Red October. I cannot recall a major Soviet film about the revolution and Civil War produced in the Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods.

By the 1950s the White Guardist reactionaries were no longer regarded as a serious opposition by anyone, even their imperialist sponsors. It is not simply that their cadres were old and dying. The Kremlin bureaucracy had appropriated Russian nationalism by identifying it with Soviet patriotism and pride that the USSR had become a global power second only to the United States.

At the same time, a new counterrevolutionary force was germinating within the establishment Soviet intelligentsia. Here the key and representative figure was Andrei Sakharov, "father of the Soviet H-bomb" and a leading adviser to Khrushchev on nuclear policy. Sakharov came to believe that the Cold War was an insuperable obstacle to the economic modernization and political liberalization of the Soviet Union. In the late '60s he came out for a "convergence" of socialism and capitalism on the basis of a "scientific democratic approach to politics, economics, and culture" (*Sakharov Speaks*, edited by Harrison E. Salisbury). Intellectually, Sakharov had taken the doctrine of "peaceful coexistence" to its logical conclusion. Sociologically, he represented the appetite of the Soviet intelligentsia to free itself from the restraints of the proletarian dictatorship and achieve conditions of life—material, political and cultural—similar to its counterparts in the capitalist West.

By the early 1970s Sakharov had become overtly anti-Communist, declaring, "I am skeptical about socialism in



Demulder/Gamma-Liaison

**NLF tank crashes through gate of presidential palace, Saigon 1975. Vietnam was a victory for international working class, blow to U.S. imperialism.**

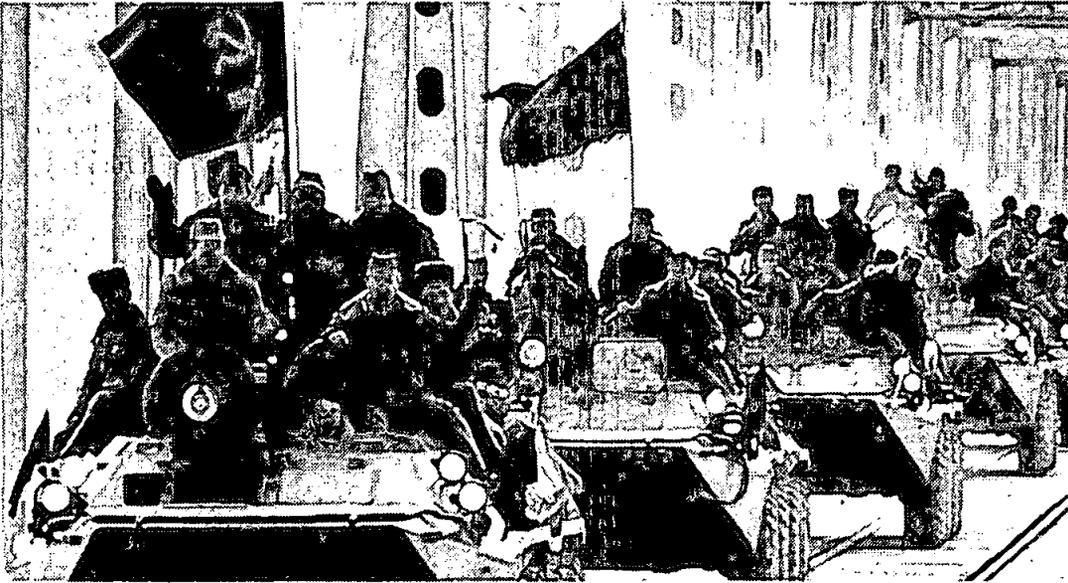
general" and "on the whole our state has displayed more destructive features than positive ones." These views were still unusual for an establishment intellectual of Sakharov's generation. But he was clearly a harbinger of things to come and today is rightly honored as the prophet of the hoped-for "bourgeois-democratic" counterrevolution in the Soviet Union.

The Brezhnev regime came to power in 1964 determined to restore bureaucratic order after the tumultuous Khrushchev period. To achieve this end, it adopted a two-pronged strategy. It pursued a "soft" policy toward the working class and collective farmers. For example, food prices were frozen at the 1963 level, the year when Khrushchev's price increases provoked widespread popular protests, at least one of which was met with bloody repression. Through the mid-'70s consumption levels increased significantly while labor discipline was relaxed.

The Brezhnev regime's message to the Soviet people was just to enjoy the marked improvement in living standards after the terrible hardships of the early Five Year Plans, the war and postwar reconstruction. This sclerotic version of Stalinism tended to *depoliticize* Soviet society. The film *Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears* conveys the change from the socialist idealism which still animated working-class youth in the early Khrushchev period to the self-absorbed consumerism and social malaise of the later Brezhnev years.

The Brezhnev regime systemically suppressed the pro-Western intelligentsia of the Sakharov type. A number of prominent intellectuals and cultural figures emigrated to the United States and West Europe. Suppressing the "dissident" intellectuals did not entail a return to an especially harsh, much less totalitarian, police state since they were not very numerous and were regarded by the population at large as traitors to the fatherland.

While suppressing the advocates of Western-style "democracy," the Brezhnevite bureaucracy showed a tolerance toward the renascent Russian nationalist intelligentsia (the main point of contact being the literary journal *Nash*



Fe/Time

**Defeatist wing of Soviet bureaucracy opposed war in Afghanistan. Gorbachev betrayed Afghan peoples and defense of USSR when he withdrew troops, February 1989.**

*Sovremennik*). In the late '70s two émigré Soviet journalists observed: "The Russian party is the only unofficial and even oppositionist ideological group which enjoys increasing freedom for chauvinist propaganda and active recruitment of adherents" (quoted in Alexander Yanov, *The Russian New Right* [1978]). Thus one can discern in the Brezhnev period a tendency by the Kremlin bureaucracy to extend its political support by making common cause with Russian nationalism.

While, of course, paying lip service to the Stalinized version of "Marxism-Leninism," the actual ideology of the Brezhnevite bureaucracy might be termed "superpowerism." Its ultimate goal was to achieve friendly collaboration with Washington in determining the course of global politics.

Contributing to the unusual stability of the 18-year Brezhnev regime were two historically contingent developments external to the USSR: the Vietnam War and the oil-price boom. The Vietnam War, by weakening and internally demoralizing U.S. imperialism, allowed the Soviet Union to achieve strategic nuclear parity by the early '70s. The effects of the war, including Washington's hope of using Moscow to broker a sellout by the North Vietnamese, led to the momentary triumph of Brezhnev's "détente" politics in the early '70s. After the fall of Saigon in 1975, Washington scrapped détente and returned to a more aggressive line toward the USSR leading to Cold War II. The oil-price boom of the '70s, by bringing the Soviet Union a significant economic windfall, allowed the regime to sustain a relatively high level of military spending, consumer goods production, agricultural imports and industrial investment.

But by the late '70s even the petrodollar windfall could not stave off the hard choice between guns, butter and machinery. The Brezhnev regime increased military spending and sought to maintain consumption levels while progressively cutting industrial investment. These cutbacks, combined with the lax labor discipline, led to a stagnation in labor productivity.

The Soviet Union faced the harsh choice between guns and butter at a time when a new generation of bureaucrats (represented by Gorbachev and Yeltsin) and intellectuals was entering the political stage, a generation which saw little need for guns. The Gorbachev/Yeltsin/Gavril Popov generation first came to political consciousness during the era of Khrushchev's "peaceful coexistence." For them, Hitler's

Operation Barbarossa and the U.S. threats to A-bomb the Soviet Union in the early Cold War period were past history. Rather they saw the United States and West Germany as models of economic modernity to be emulated.

Increasing sections of the bureaucracy and intelligentsia came to believe that labor productivity could be restored only through the whip of market competition (e.g., widening wage differentials, piece rates, unemployment and plant closures). The professed concern for labor productivity was a form of false consciousness by which the intelligentsia disguised (including from itself) its appetite to improve its material well-being at the expense of the proletariat. Under the relatively egalitarian Brezhnev regime, the lower echelons of the Soviet intelligentsia (teachers, doctors, research assistants) often had lower standards of living than industrial workers.

In retrospect, it seems that the Afghan war was quite important in the formation of a powerful *defeatist* current within the Soviet bureaucracy and intelligentsia. These elements came to believe that only unilateral Soviet withdrawal could re-establish the conditions for arms control agreements and favorable economic relations with the West. More generally, they blamed Brezhnev's aggressive posture and military "adventurism" for provoking Cold War II. Hence the rise to power of Gorbachev, the fracturing of the Kremlin bureaucracy and the collapse of Stalinist rule in East Europe.

### **The Evolution of Stalinist East Europe**

In seeking to generalize about the evolution of postwar East Europe, I am excluding both Yugoslavia and East Germany as exceptional cases in opposite ways. Because Yugoslavia experienced an indigenous social revolution (albeit within the broader context of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany), the Belgrade Stalinists had a qualitatively greater degree of autonomy than their counterparts in the rest of East Europe. For some decades the Tito regime straddled the Cold War divide by playing off Washington and Moscow. After the initial break with Stalin in the late '40s, anti-Soviet nationalism played little role in Yugoslavia's internal political life. Rather nationalist passions and conflicts were directed inward among the various peoples of the multinational state. Thus the political and economic

evolution of Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Kosovo, etc., has been quite different, indeed divergent. The restoration of capitalism in Yugoslavia would almost certainly lead to the breakup of the country, perhaps amid bloody strife among the various South Slav and Albanian peoples.

If Yugoslavia was marked by the autonomy of its bureaucracy and the multinational-character of the state, East Germany was marked by the bureaucracy's lack of autonomy and the non-national character of the state. Because East Germany was the military front line with Western imperialism, the Kremlin exercised a greater degree of control over the political life of the German Democratic Republic (DDR) than in other East European countries. From the other side, the pressure of the increasingly powerful West German capitalist state further limited the options available to the East Berlin Stalinists. Thus East Germany never experienced the phase of "national-liberal Communism," the attempts to play off Moscow and Washington characteristic of other East European countries. The East Berlin bureaucracy under Ulbricht and Honecker was even more committed to freezing the postwar status quo than was the Kremlin oligarchy.

The principal postwar Stalinist regimes in East Europe, established upon the ruins of the Third Reich, had degrees of popular, centrally proletarian, support ranging from significant in Poland and Hungary to massive in Czechoslovakia. However, these regimes lacked the national legitimacy of the Soviet bureaucracy, whose popular authority had been powerfully reinforced by the victory over Nazi Germany. Thus social order in the new People's Democracies was highly volatile, as growing popular opposition to Stalinist rule was reinforced by nationalism directed against Moscow and its perceived local agents.

The importance of the direction of nationalism was underscored in its own way by the most stable of the East European Stalinist regimes, namely, Bulgaria. The main historic enemy of Bulgarian nationalism was Turkey, while Russia was traditionally regarded as Bulgaria's great-power protector. The Bulgarian Stalinists never removed the statue honoring Tsar Alexander II in central Sofia. Even today

the former Bulgarian Stalinists turned professed social democrats benefit from the pro-Russian/anti-Turkish tilt of Bulgarian nationalism.

The consolidation of totalitarian police states eroded, to say the least, the initial popular support and even enthusiasm for the new People's Democracies. The Polish film *Man of Marble* depicts an idealistic young model worker—a true hero of socialist-labor—who is victimized by the paranoid police apparatus. Economically, the one-sided concentration on heavy industry, combined with autarky, drove down living standards, further fueling proletarian hostility to the Stalinist regimes.

Facing an increasingly hostile society, the East European bureaucracies began to split into Moscow loyalists and what can be termed national-liberal Communists more attuned to the popular moods. Fearing Yugoslavia-type splits, Stalin moved to exterminate any potential East European Titos. The Polish party leader Wladyslaw Gomulka was imprisoned and placed under house arrest; Rajk in Hungary and Slánský in Czechoslovakia were subjected to show trials and then executed. These purges further polarized the East European bureaucracies while enormously enhancing the popular authority of the "national Communist" victims. When László Rajk was rehabilitated in 1956, one million people—a third of Budapest's population—attended the ceremony.

During the crisis of "de-Stalinization" (1953-56), bureaucratic rule was preserved in East Europe only through the actual or potential military intervention of the Soviet armed forces. In Poland in 1956 an incipient proletarian political revolution, signaled by the Poznań uprising, was headed off at the last minute by the restoration to power of Gomulka. In Hungary the bureaucracy was swept away by proletarian political revolution as workers councils assumed de facto power in Budapest and other big cities. The liberal-national Communist Imre Nagy sought to form a coalition government with forces to his right. Stalinist rule was restored only with the military occupation of the Soviet army.

Shane Mage's writings immediately after the Hungarian Revolution (of which key sections were reprinted in *Spartacist* No. 30, Autumn 1980) are extremely germane to

Der Spiegel



**17 June 1953: Soviet tanks blocked East German workers uprising. East Berlin workers appealed to workers in West: "We're cleaning house in Pankow, you sweep out the crap in Bonn."**



Young Socialist



Left: Poland 1956. 500,000 workers listen to Wladyslaw Gomulka, whose restoration to power headed off an incipient political revolution. Above: Hungary 1956. Workers uprising against hated Stalinist regime was crushed by Soviet troops. AP

the current developments in East Europe. Mage insisted that whether the collapse of Stalinist rule led to a workers government or to capitalist restoration would be determined by the political consciousness and leadership of the working class, specifically the ability of the workers movement to overcome and combat illusions in parliamentarism and nationalist prejudices. This would be true even where there existed proletarian organs of dual power as was the case in Hungary in 1956.

Mage further pointed out that following the collapse of Stalinist rule, Western economic penetration would be a most powerful weapon for the forces of capitalist restoration:

"Another decisive aspect of the return to capitalism under petty-bourgeois democratic leadership would be the ties of Poland and Hungary with the capitalist world market, most important, of course, with the gigantic economic strength of U.S. imperialism. It is no secret that the main positive political program of U.S. imperialism toward East Europe is based on massive economic aid, in the form of 'loans' and outright gifts. This 'aid' would have a dual effect: it would be a political ace of trumps in the hands of the bourgeois politicians who alone would have access to the American largesse, and it would very rapidly serve to reorient the economies of Poland and Hungary back to their traditional dependence on Western capitalism."

—from "The YSL Right Wing and the 'Crisis of World Stalinism,'" 1957

Today, it should be added that the *illusion* of Western economic largesse has been a powerful weapon in the hands of petty-bourgeois "democrats" in East Europe, especially since the Stalinists had mortgaged these countries to Wall Street, the City of London and Frankfurt.

The restoration of bureaucratic order in Poland and in Hungary after 1956 had a quite different character. Gomulka immediately made sweeping concessions to all forces in Polish society—the workers councils, leftish intelligentsia, small-holding peasants and the Catholic hierarchy. Once the crisis was defused, he disbanded the workers councils and cracked down on the radical intelligentsia. The suppression of the intelligentsia was especially severe during and after

the 1968 "Prague Spring" when a wing of the bureaucracy openly appealed to Polish nationalism and anti-Semitism.

Uniquely in Stalinist East Europe, the Catholic church, which had great popular authority even in the Stalin era, was granted a wide latitude of political freedom after 1956. Thus the church hierarchy was well placed to achieve hegemony over all oppositional forces in Polish society when the Warsaw Stalinists were forced into another period of liberalization after the violent worker protests against food-price increases in 1970.

In one regard, post-1956 developments in Hungary were the inverse of those in Poland. In the latter liberalization was followed by increasing repression; in the former repression was followed by increasing liberalization. After the revolution was suppressed by the Soviet army, 2,000 participants were executed, 20,000 were arrested and thousands more deported to the USSR. By the early '60s the Kádár regime decided that normal social life could be restored only by conciliating Hungarian society. The economy was redirected to rapidly increase consumption levels ("goulash Communism"). Controls over intellectual and cultural life were relaxed under the slogan, "He who is not against us is with us." The introduction of "market socialism" in 1968 increased the social power and personal wealth of technocrats and managers while spawning a new class of petty capitalist entrepreneurs.

Popular support for Communism in Czechoslovakia was far greater than in Poland or Hungary. The pre-World War I Czech Social Democracy was one of few parties of the old Second International which in its majority went over to the Communist International. In the early postwar years, Gottwald, Novotný & Co. benefited from the widespread feeling that Czechoslovakia had been betrayed by the Western capitalist "democracies" to Nazi Germany at Munich in 1938. The Prague Stalinists also appealed to and exploited Czech nationalism and centralism against Slovak separatism, which in World War II had taken the form of a clerical-fascist regime under Msgr. Tiso.

Because of the regime's deeper political roots, the crisis

of "de-Stalinization" in Czechoslovakia occurred more than a decade later than in the other principal East European countries. When it came, the result was a combination of the Polish and Hungarian experiences. As in Poland, a liberal-national Communist, Alexander Dubček, replaced the hardline Stalinist Novotný. Dubček's "socialism with a human face" regime soon acquired near-universal support and even enthusiasm, although many Czech workers were initially wary about the proposals for market-oriented economic "reforms." The situation became increasingly open as Czechoslovakia was sliding toward a proletarian political revolution. To forestall a Hungarian-type development, Brezhnev had the Warsaw Pact forces invade Czechoslovakia and overthrow the Dubček regime. Czechoslovakia thus entered the 1970s with the most repressive and despised Stalinist regime of any major East European country.

As was true of the Brezhnev regime in the USSR, the principal East European Stalinist regimes in the 1970s—Gierek in Poland, Kádár in Hungary, Husák in Czechoslovakia—sought to pacify the working class by improving or at least maintaining living standards. But whereas the oil-price boom was an economic windfall for the Soviet Union, it caused a sharp deterioration in the terms of trade of the East European countries. To avoid cutting consumption levels, the Stalinist regimes borrowed heavily from Western banks. Thus the stage was set for the IMF-dictated austerity programs which form the crucial background for ascendancy of capitalist-restorationist forces.

As previously noted, the Brezhnev regime was able to suppress the relatively small current of pro-Western intellectuals without disrupting normal social life. This was not possible in East Europe where the oppositional forces, bolstered by nationalism, were far greater. Furthermore, because of Poland and Hungary's heavy indebtedness to Western banks, these Stalinist regimes were subject to imperialist economic blackmail if they violated the "human rights" of the "dissident" intellectuals.

After the worker protests against food-price increases in 1976, the Gierek regime abandoned any effective attempt to suppress opposition. Thus the way was open for the Catholic hierarchy, in league with some social-democratic intellectuals (Kuroń, Michnik & Co.), to organize Polish

workers at the point of production. Whence the origins of Solidarność. We have written extensively about Solidarność from its inception in the summer of 1980 through the imposition of martial law in December 1981. There is no reason to replicate this material here.

For present purposes, I want to emphasize certain aspects of the temporary suppression of Solidarność and its aftermath. The decision of the Polish military to move against Solidarność and their success in doing so was conditioned by the general expectation of Soviet military intervention. Jaruzelski could plausibly present himself to the Polish people as the only realistic alternative to a prolonged Soviet intervention. Gorbachev's foreign policy by its very nature fatally undermined the Jaruzelski regime's sole claim to political legitimacy.

As we noted at the time, Jaruzelski's counter-coup introduced a large element of military bonapartism into the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy. This would have an important bearing on how governmental power was transferred to Solidarność eight years later.

The suppression of Solidarność in no way changed the desperate economic straits facing the debt-ridden Polish economy. To repudiate the Western debt would have been feasible only with the redirection of resources throughout the Soviet bloc. This in turn required a proletarian political revolution against the Kremlin bureaucracy. By the late 1980s the Warsaw Stalinist regime was centrally faced with the task of suppressing working-class resistance to a new round of austerity measures demanded by Western bankers.

Because the Catholic church in Hungary was nowhere near as strong as in Poland, the growth of anti-Communist oppositional forces was more diffuse, interpenetrating the Stalinist bureaucracy and establishment intelligentsia. In the late '60s-early '70s, a quasi-social-democratic grouping emerged among the establishment intelligentsia, the so-called "Budapest School" made up of the followers of George Lukács. Under the aegis of the 1976 Helsinki Accords, there emerged groups openly advocating a "bourgeois-democratic" counterrevolution.

The official trade-union bureaucracy made some effort to defend the workers' interests against the more damaging effects of Hungary's version of "market socialism."



Czechoslovakia  
1968: Warsaw Pact  
tanks roll over  
"Prague Spring" of  
liberal Stalinist  
Alexander Dubček.

However, this took the form of pressure politics within the upper echelons of the Kádár regime. The working class was kept passive and passively adapted to the prevailing political currents among the petty bourgeoisie. An opinion poll taken in 1976 indicated that if open, multiparty elections were held in Hungary, a "democratic socialist" party would get more than 40 percent of the vote, a Christian Democratic party would get close to 30 percent and the Communist party only 5 percent. The Hungarian populace merely tolerated the Kádár regime as long as economic conditions remained satisfactory and Hungary's inclusion in the Soviet bloc appeared unchallengeable. Both these conditions disappeared in the late 1980s.

In Czechoslovakia, the purge and suppression of the Dubčekite wing of the bureaucracy and practically the entire intelligentsia entailed the re-establishment of a harsh police-state regime. Under these conditions, the traditionally leftist Czechoslovak intelligentsia moved to the right, toward social democracy and bourgeois liberalism. Whence the origins of the Civic Forum via Charter 77. Since all working-class activity was suppressed, it is difficult to gauge the political consciousness of the Czechoslovak working class in a positive sense. However, whatever their goals and values the majority of workers certainly felt they had been politically raped in 1968. The Husák regime, viewed purely as an agent of the Kremlin, lacked even the limited political legitimacy of the "liberal" Stalinists Gierek in Poland and Kádár in Hungary.

### The Current Situation in East Europe

Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia now have capitalist-restorationist governments. It is not clear, at least to me, whether the present governments of Romania and Bulgaria are actually committed to establishing a capitalist economy, as they so profess, or are "liberal" Stalinist regimes faking it under unfavorable international conditions. My current judgment is the latter. Throughout East Europe, the old Stalinist military and police cadre have passively acquiesced to the new right-wing governments. It does not however follow that the army and police will defend these governments and their programs in the face of mass opposition. The counterrevolution now taking place in East Europe can still be defeated and reversed.

The wholesale privatization of state enterprises and the drive to create a capitalist market economy will generate massive unemployment and the general immiserization of the working people. This is bound to provoke some level of working-class resistance. The CIA, in a document submitted to the U.S. Congress last spring, worries that: "As long as aggressive implementation of austerity measures coincides with prolonged decline in living standards, there will be a risk of public protest that could set back reforms and economic recovery" ("Eastern Europe: Long Road Ahead to Economic Well-Being" [May 1990]). *Business Week* (6 August 1990), a perceptive American bourgeois journal, noted: "Worker unrest is the wild card in Eastern Europe's privatization drive and could slow or even derail government plans."

Our perspective should be to broaden and intensify such worker unrest with the aim of creating organs of proletarian dual power to overthrow the counterrevolutionary governments in Warsaw, Budapest and Prague. In the face of a workers uprising, it is likely that the army and police will

be passive or will split/splinter.

There are significant differences in the present situation and balance of political forces among the various East European countries. In those countries which have experienced decades of "liberal" Stalinist rule—Poland and Hungary—the Stalinists are totally discredited and the reactionary forces strongest. In those countries which had hard-line Stalinist regimes—Romania and Bulgaria—the "reform-minded" Stalinists, who now claim to be converts to social democracy, have substantial popular support and the reactionary forces are relatively weaker. Czechoslovakia is an intermediate case.

Poland—In 1988 the Warsaw Stalinist regime was faced with a wave of workers' strikes against the latest IMF-dictated austerity program. In August the interior minister, General Kiszczak, made a deal with Walesa. The latter would use his influence to quell the strike wave in return for the legalization of Solidarność. In early 1989, generals Jaruzelski and Kiszczak, with Gorbachev's approval, pushed through the deal with Solidarność (the Round Table negotiations) against opposition from the civilian wing of the Warsaw Stalinist bureaucracy.

The Round Table negotiations led to the June 1989 elections in which Solidarność won a predictable landslide victory. The Stalinists then *abdicated* governmental power to Solidarność although Jaruzelski retained the presidency as a semi-figurehead. The former ruling Stalinist party simply disintegrated.

One can only speculate as to why the military wing of the Polish Stalinist bureaucracy spearheaded the capitulation to capitalist-restorationist forces. Probably the military cadre placed the highest priority on preserving social order, and were less concerned with the economic and political content of that order. Perhaps they believed that, unlike the civilian bureaucracy, they would retain their positions in the ruling elite. Perhaps also many Polish officers sympathized with the nationalist attitudes of Walesa & Co.

In early 1989 the official trade-union organization, the OPZZ, broke its ties to the regime, and its leader, Alfred Miodowicz—an old-line Stalinist—denounced both Solidarność and Jaruzelski from the left, claiming to represent the workers' interests. Especially since the revived Solidarność



Laski/Sipa

**Polish students brandish crucifixes during 1979 visit of Pope Paul. Polish Stalinists abdicated to clerical-nationalist, pro-capitalist Solidarność.**

dropped its "trade union" façade, the OPZZ is by far the largest organization of the Polish working class. However, Miodowicz's OPZZ is *not* a contender for political power; it is simply a defensive trade-union-type organization.

At the beginning of this year, the Solidarność government imposed an economic "shock treatment" which has slashed real wages by 40 percent and produced over half a million unemployed. This has encountered working-class resistance, notably a rail strike last May, as well as protest actions by small-holding farmers.

How best to push through the economic "shock treatment" has led to a bitter split in Solidarność between Walesa and the "moderate" government of Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a Catholic intellectual and long-time Walesa adviser. Walesa is seeking to channel mass discontent into an anti-red purge and anti-Semitism. His propagandists contend that under the present regime the main beneficiaries of privatization are the old Communist managers and functionaries. At the same time, Walesa's forces have singled out for attack prominent Solidarność intellectuals of Jewish descent (e.g., Michnik and Geremek). Walesa's Solidarność opponents have defended themselves by accusing him of being a would-be dictator of the Pilsudski type. The main importance of the split for us is that it tends to *discredit* all elements of Solidarność.

There is today in Poland a near-complete political vacuum on the left, and the working class is, except for the OPZZ, economically atomized. Thus even a small Trotskyist propaganda group could be catapulted into the leadership of working-class actions.

Hungary—Under the pressures of economic austerity, imposed by foreign Western bankers, the Hungarian Stalinist bureaucracy began to disintegrate internally in the late 1980s. The collapse was signaled by the forced retirement in 1988 of Janos Kádár, the longest-ruling leader in East Europe. There followed an all-sided factional struggle within the ruling Stalinist party in which the extreme right wing represented by Rezső Nyers—the original architect of Hungary's "market socialism"—emerged dominant.

In the spring of 1989 the Committee for Historical Justice, whose stated aim was to rehabilitate Imre Nagy, served a function similar to that of the Round Table in Poland. It was the organizational medium by which the leadership of the Stalinist bureaucracy came to terms with the forces of the "bourgeois-democratic" counterrevolution.

In the summer of 1989 the still-ruling Stalinist party attempted to transform itself into a social-democratic party, a transformation later effectively carried out by the East German Stalinists. In the Hungarian case, the attempt was abortive and the Stalinist party completely dissolved, creating a vacuum of political power in the period leading up to the elections last April. These elections were won by the clerical-nationalist Democratic Union, the most right-wing of the major contending parties.

Even more so than in Poland, there is a complete vacuum on the political left, while the working class is organizationally atomized. Thus it is difficult to foresee the specific political character and organizational form of working-class resistance to the capitalist-restorationist regime in Budapest.

Czechoslovakia—Just as the hard-line Stalinist regime in Prague was directly installed by the Kremlin, so it was directly deposed by the Kremlin. While the fall of Honecker in East Germany seriously weakened the Husák/Jakeš regime, the decisive impetus for the November 1989 "velvet



Bankuti/NY Times

**Hungary today: Homeless families sleep in Keleti station, Budapest, where market "reforms" have created 20,000 homeless.**

revolution" came from Moscow. The Soviet government and media publicly renounced the 1968 intervention, effectively repudiating the Prague regime. Gorbachev & Co. doubtless intended this as a pressure tactic to support the "reform-minded" wing of the Czechoslovak bureaucracy.

The effect, however, was to legitimize and encourage escalating mass protests and a planned general strike. The mass mobilization was locked up by a rapidly formed umbrella organization, the Civic Forum, which ranged politically from Dubčekites-turned-social-democrats to clerical reactionaries with the petty-bourgeois liberal Václav Havel occupying the center. Within days the entire right wing of the Stalinist bureaucracy *defected* to the Civic Forum and the hard-line rump abdicated governmental power.

Unlike Poland and Hungary, the coming to power of a capitalist-restorationist government in Czechoslovakia was not prepared by the decades-long growth of anti-Communist nationalism among the masses. Dubček is still a highly regarded figure, and former "reform-minded" Communists are prominent in the new government. There is little indication that Czech and Slovak workers accept the restoration of a capitalist market economy as an inevitable outcome of the "velvet revolution." Also unlike Poland and Hungary, there is not overwhelming external pressure for an economic "shock treatment" in Czechoslovakia. The Havel regime has moved extremely cautiously on the economic front for fear of provoking working-class opposition and splitting the Civic Forum.

The most surprising and for us significant aspect of the current situation is the relative strength of the rump Communist Party, which won 13 percent of the vote in last June's elections, second to the Civic Forum and more than the Christian Democrats. Since practically the entire petty bourgeoisie voted for the Civic Forum or parties to its right, 13 percent of the electorate translates into about 20 percent of the proletarian vote. The CP did just about as well in Slovakia as in Bohemia/Moravia, thus indicating its support is not distorted by Czech nationalism. And since the



June 1990:  
Romanian miners  
patrol Bucharest  
after suppressing  
rightist attempt  
to topple  
post-Ceaușescu  
regime.

right wing of the former ruling bureaucracy defected to the Civic Forum, the vote for the Communist Party was more consciously leftist as well as more proletarian than the vote for the East German SED-PDS.

Working-class resistance to the effects of capitalist restoration is likely in the first place to be channeled into the Communist Party perhaps in bloc with social-democratic elements now in the Civic Forum. And young leftists hostile to Havel & Co. could well be attracted to the CP, which now postures as the socialist opposition. Uniquely in East Europe, the construction of a Trotskyist party in Czechoslovakia requires political combat against an old-line Stalinist organization which retains substantial working-class support.

Romania and Bulgaria—The present governments of these countries consist of elements of the old Stalinist bureaucracies who profess conversion to Western-style social democracy. These regimes—which won open, multi-party elections—are under heavy attack from reactionary forces supported to some degree by Western imperialism. Thus the situation in Romania and Bulgaria is *dominated and polarized* by a continuing struggle for governmental power. This struggle will lead either to civil war (prefigured by the intervention of Romanian miners against the right-wing students in Bucharest last June) or to the capitulation of the existing regimes to the right.

Whereas in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia the workers are likely to be drawn into struggle against the economic actions of the current governments; in Romania and Bulgaria socialist-minded workers are likely to be drawn into struggle to defend the present “leftist” governments against the right. Such mobilizations might produce incipient organs of dual power. Our perspective should be to combine united-front military defense against the right with a political struggle to discredit and destroy the workers’ illusions in the present erstwhile-Stalinist-cum-social-democratic regimes.

### The Terminal Crisis of Soviet Stalinism

The Gorbachev regime came to power in 1985 believing that the introduction of market mechanisms (perestroika) would revitalize the economy while political liberalization (glasnost) would gain the support of the intelligentsia for

the new regime. Instead the dismantling of centralized planning has produced bureaucratized anarchy while the diversion of consumer goods into private markets has fueled the suppressed hyperinflation. At the same time, all manner of reactionary political forces have come to the surface. Most directly threatening to the central Soviet government was the rise of nationalist forces, leading to massive communalist bloodletting in the Caucasus and secessionist movements in the Baltic republics.

Faced with the disintegration of Soviet society, the Kremlin bureaucracy splintered, signaled by the splitting up of the original Gorbachev team into mutually hostile figures. Yegor Ligachev became the spokesman for the conservative Stalinist apparatchiks, who desired to maintain the status quo with minimal changes. Boris Yeltsin—Moscow party boss in the early Gorbachev regime—became a pseudo-populist demagogue allied with the pro-Western “democratic” opposition. Yeltsin masked his support for “free market” economics by attacking the privileges of the bureaucratic elite and calling for increased consumer goods by cutting military spending and industrial investment. But now he has tacked his slippery demagogy onto a program of open capitalist restoration, the 500-day Shatalin plan.

The Democratic Platform, an openly capitalist-restorationist faction with a thin social-democratic veneer, emerged in the CPSU and has recently split out as an independent party. The conservative Stalinists established an organizational base in the Russian Communist Party, formed last summer, whose very name indicates an appeal to Russian nationalism. More generally, the old-line Stalinists have blocked with a wing of Slavophile nationalists hostile to Western “decadence” and “cosmopolitanism.” Thus the leading Russian nationalist ideologue Valentin Rasputin links Western capitalist investment to such other Western-imported “evils” as rock ‘n’ roll, homosexuality, pornography and Jews.

In the Soviet Union, it is difficult to envision the capitalist-restorationist forces achieving governmental power short of civil war, as has occurred in East Europe. The force of Soviet patriotism and bureaucratic conservatism, especially among the military cadre, is too strong and the obstacles to mobilizing the masses behind the “bourgeois-democratic” counterrevolution too great. Anti-Soviet nationalism provided the glue holding together the

disparate social and political elements making up Solidarność and the Civic Forum.

The Soviet military cadre are naturally hostile to the dismemberment of the USSR and the weakening of its state power. The military command's conservative attitude toward the Soviet state was especially apparent during the Lithuania secession crisis early this year. For the past few years, talk of a military coup to restore social order has become increasingly commonplace.

Russian society today is polarized (prefiguring a possible civil war) between the forces of the "bourgeois-democratic" counterrevolution, exemplified by the Democratic Platform, and an amalgam of conservative Stalinist and Slavophile elements, with the working class divided between the two camps. Thus the Kuzbass miners staged a one-day political strike in support of Yeltsin while the official trade unions, led by old-line Stalinist apparatchiks, have engaged in economic strikes against the Democratic Platform-dominated local government in Moscow.

The currently prevailing attitudes among Russian and Russified workers appear to consist of highly contradictory elements—hatred of the bureaucracy, illusions in "pure" democracy, Soviet patriotism, a desire for economic security and social egalitarianism, identification of centralized planning with bureaucratic commandism. All evidence indicates that the mass of Soviet workers do *not* support the establishment of a capitalist market economy *as such*. Gavril Popov—prominent "free market" economist, leader of the Democratic Platform and mayor of Moscow—now fears that the rise of "left-wing populism" will derail the transition to capitalism:

"...now we must create a society with a variety of different forms of ownership, including private property; and this will

be a society of economic inequality. There will be contradictions between the policies leading to denationalization, privatization, and inequality on the one hand and, on the other, the populist character of the forces that were set in motion in order to achieve those aims. The masses long for fairness and economic equality. And the further the process of transformation goes, the more acute and more glaring will be the gap between those aspirations and economic realities."

—"Dangers for Democracy," *New York Review of Books*, 16 August 1990

Our immediate goal should be to forge a Trotskyist propaganda group which can cut through the present polarization between the forces of the "bourgeois-democratic" counterrevolution and their conservative Stalinist/Slavophile nationalist opponents. In the first place, we should orient toward those worker activists and intellectuals who want to defend socialism as they understand it, such as the militants of the United Front of Toilers. It is necessary to *emphasize in this political milieu* those aspects of our program which cut sharply against the Stalinist/Russian-nationalist outlook.

Precisely because we oppose the current reactionary secessionist movements (e.g., in the Baltics), it is all the more necessary to emphasize our principled position for the right of nations to self-determination. Combatting anti-Semitism is strategically vital to building a genuinely communist party in Russia today, where anti-Semitism truly conforms to Bebel's old definition as "the socialism of fools." We should publicize our libertarian position on social questions such as abortion, homosexuality and pornography. For centralized economic planning under soviet democracy and social freedom should be a very attractive program in Russia today.

10 October 1990

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## From ICL Discussion on Eastern Europe and Soviet Union

# For Marxist Clarity and a Forward Perspective

*This article was submitted as a contribution to the current International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) internal discussion on the collapse of Stalinism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. The International Executive Committee has authorized the publication here of the most politically comprehensive of the submitted documents. This is the second of two such articles. The first appears on page four.*

by Albert St. John

It is obvious from the many written contributions to the international discussion on the Russian question writ large that many comrades are going back to their Marxist libraries, and particularly the writings of Leon Trotsky, who devoted the last 17 years of his life primarily to an analysis of the new phenomenon of Stalinism as a parasitic bureaucratic caste resting on the economic foundations established by the first (and only) proletarian social revolution. I agree with comrade Andrews that the events of East Germany, Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are not breaking new ground theoretically, but rather involve the application of Trotsky's penetrating analysis to a new period. A re-reading of this rich body of writings reveals many works that have suddenly acquired new sharpness and deeper insight as we now witness the final collapse of Stalinism. This has been my own experience.

In the absence of scientific study and analysis to understand a changing world, a communist is left on the very thin and dangerous ice of impressionism and subjective reactions, which ultimately will reflect the pressure of alien class forces. In that spirit, here is my nomination for a cover quote for this International Discussion Bulletin:

"A superficial idealistic mode of thinking that operates with ready-made norms, mechanically fitting living processes of development to them, easily leads one from enthusiasm to prostration. Only dialectical materialism, which teaches us to view all existence in its process of development and in the conflict of internal forces, can impart the necessary stability to thought and action."

— Leon Trotsky, "The Workers' State, Thermidor and Bonapartism," *Writings (1934-35)*

I thought that the single most clarifying contribution to the recent discussions in the Bay Area was made by comrade Andrews regarding the often-used quote by Trotsky found in "The Class Nature of the Soviet State": "He who asserts that the Soviet government has been gradually changed from proletarian to bourgeois is only, so to speak, running backward the film of reformism." Written in October 1933, after the call for a new, Fourth International, the statement was most specifically directed at those who were saying that the collapse of the Communist International meant at the same time the collapse of the Soviet Union as

a workers state. Nonetheless, Trotsky did frame the statement as a general thesis, and it has come to be understood as such, that a bourgeois-counterrevolution could not take place in a workers state without military battles.

Using the analogy of the French Revolution, the rise to power of the Stalin faction was early on compared to the "Ninth Thermidor" of 1794, when the dictatorship of Robespierre was overthrown and power shifted to more moderate forces. But as originally used in the mid-twenties Thermidor had been conceived of as the threat of capitalist restoration by social forces unleashed by, but to the right of, the Stalin faction. By 1935 it was clear that the shift to the right had in fact taken place long ago and Trotsky corrected the analogy and revised both the conceptions of Thermidor and Bonapartism.

In 1794 Thermidor had occurred on the basis of the new bourgeois society and state. It had to be recognized that Soviet Thermidor had already occurred, and had been a *political* rather than a social counterrevolution, signaling the shift of power from the revolutionary vanguard into the hands of a conservative bureaucracy. The political shift had taken place on the social basis of the planned economy, which still existed. "The year 1924—that was the beginning of the Soviet Thermidor," wrote Trotsky.

Andrews argued that by assuming a workers state would



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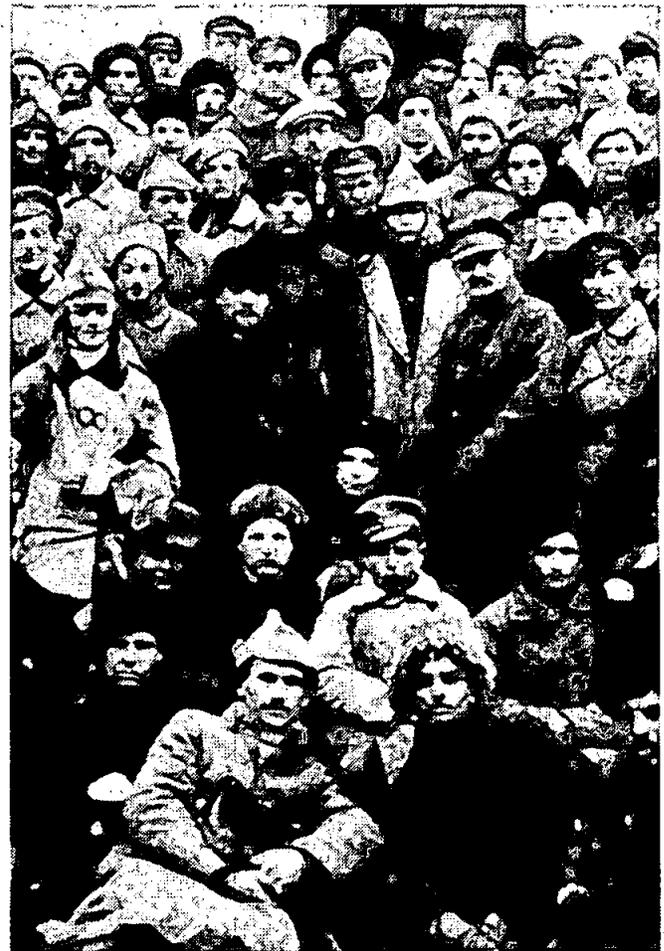
**France: Thermidor 1794. The revolutionary Jacobin Robespierre after arrest by Committee of Public Safety.**

be as resistant to counterrevolution as a capitalist state, Trotsky had overdrawn the analogy with bourgeois society, and that in this regard an identity between the two different class societies could not be made. The proletariat is a different kind of ruling class than the bourgeoisie, he said. At the upper levels capitalist society consists of a relatively small group of large property owners, a net of conscious individuals each protecting their own property through a system of property. Behind the special bodies of armed men, each big capitalist therefore is a particular point or node of resistance to the overthrow of the system as a whole. In contrast the proletariat as a ruling class is numerically larger but more atomized. The preservation of proletarian power therefore depends principally on *consciousness* and *organization*, and the link of the vanguard with the most conscious layers of the mass. Thus, the ability of a workers state to defend itself depends heavily on the political character of its central cadre.

This immediately brought to mind how vulnerable the early Soviet state was in March 1921, when the Menshevik-inspired Kronstadt mutineers called for "Soviets without Bolsheviks," and the delegates of the 10th Party Congress, with considerable loss of life, went across the ice to storm the fort and put down the rebellion. The Civil War had wrecked the economy and the Bolsheviks were a minority government. In 1921, the survival of the first workers state depended on a relatively small number of party and Red Army cadre under the political leadership of Lenin and Trotsky, who because of their internationalist program were determined to hold on to the Russian Revolution while striving through the Comintern to extend the revolution into Western Europe.

How much more tenuous is the survival of the proletarian property forms when their defense depends instead on a conservative nationalist bureaucracy that has politically expropriated the proletariat in order to guard the conquests of the social revolution for its *own* benefit and by its *own* methods. Trotsky wrote that it is because of this dual role of the Stalinist bureaucracy and not only due to repression that the workers—if they do not see another possibility—will "with clenched teeth" tolerate the bureaucracy, fearing that if it were overthrown, the field would only be cleared for the class enemy. Over five decades after Trotsky made this analysis, this was exactly the position persistently voiced by many of the DDR workers we met regarding the Modrow government in the period before Treptow, even as they were coming to seek out the Trotskyists for help in stopping the sale of their factories.

But what happens when the regime of the Stalinist "gatekeepers" of the planned economy collapses, or they are persuaded that their self-interest lies elsewhere? Then, if the workers are not able to take state power, what force stands in the way of a total collapse of the planned economy? By 1936 the Stalinist bureaucracy had become conscious of itself as a social layer whose needs were counterposed to workers revolution. Therefore, said Trotsky, "it has ceased to offer any subjective guarantee whatever of the socialist direction of its policy. It continues to preserve state property only to the extent that it fears the proletariat." In the DDR, the Stalinist regime collapsed, caught between Gorbachev and public outrage, and its remnants, rather than see the proletariat in power, delivered up the East German deformed workers state to German imperialism. They not only opened the gates, but above all sought to avoid "chaos" (read:



L.Y. Leonidov

**Lenin and Trotsky among delegates to the 10th Congress of Russian CP, March 1921. Delegates helped crush counterrevolutionary Kronstadt mutiny.**

resistance from the workers) as they co-administered the liquidation of the planned economy and the restoration of capitalism.

In fact, Trotsky himself acknowledged that there were "limits beyond which the analogy with the Great French Revolution cannot pass." In 1935 Trotsky wrote "The Workers' State, Thermidor and Bonapartism" to revise the earlier incorrect conceptions mentioned above. In this important work he also discusses the different roles of a bourgeois and a workers state. Here he stresses the *dissimilar* traits of capitalist and socialist relations. Once freed from the restraints of feudalism, bourgeois relations develop automatically. The bourgeois state confines itself to a police role, leaving the market to its own laws. Therefore under capitalism the replacement of political regimes has only indirect and superficial influence on the market economy. In contrast the proletarian revolution, having expropriated private property, transfers the productive forces directly to the state it has itself created. Unlike the anarchistic bourgeois economy the planned socialist economy is not built automatically but *consciously*. Therefore, he writes, "Progress towards socialism is inseparable from that state power which is desirous of socialism or which is constrained to desire it." Thus, he concluded, without the intervention of a conscious proletarian vanguard, the collapse of the Stalinist political regime would lead inevitably to the liquidation of the planned economy and to restoration of private property. A similar

point is developed in *The Revolution Betrayed* in the section, "Is the Bureaucracy a Ruling Class?" Consequently, I think Trotsky's earlier generalization about "running backward the film of reformism" does overextend the analogy and in fact is inconsistent with his later analysis on the dissimilarities in the role of the state and the crucial role of consciousness in the defense of proletarian property relations.

As Stalinism finally collapses under the weight of its inner contradictions, the crisis of the leadership of the proletariat is posed with a new urgency. The decisive battles will be fought on the political terrain of the Soviet Union, where it all started in 1917. And here I believe is where the different origins of the Soviet Union on the one hand, and all the deformed workers states on the other, have become decisive. In 1917 a self-conscious proletariat carried out a social revolution and then defended that revolution and extended the dictatorship of the proletariat nationally in three years of civil war. And it was this class consciousness, more than Stalin's crude anti-German nationalism, that motivated 28 million Soviet citizens (the current Soviet estimate) to fight to the death to defend their state against the Nazis in World War II. There is living memory of those historic acts within the Soviet workers, who are descended from that working class led by the party of Lenin and Trotsky that fought its way to state power. Therefore it is not at all accidental that it is only in the Soviet Union that a strategically important sector of the workers carried out widespread and effectively organized strike action that almost immediately had a political character that harked back to the early soviets. In an

immediate sense they took these actions to force improvements of their outrageously miserable living and working conditions. But there were also indications coming through the filtered news reports; that the workers also knew that something much more had been taken away from them, namely the political control of their state and economy. In the USSR, it is likely that the attempt to restore capitalism will be accompanied by civil war. As recent polls demonstrated, there are significant numbers of people in the Soviet Union that *want* to be Trotskyists. And since there is no shortage these days of anti-communist "anti-Stalinists" among the intelligentsia, there must necessarily be reflected in these polls and other manifestations a perception that Trotskyism means defense of the planned economy and building socialism on the basis of workers democracy.

In "The Class, the Party and the Leadership" [20 August 1940, published in *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)*, Pathfinder Press, 1973], which I strongly urge comrades to read, Trotsky states that despite being a small party with insignificant support among the working class in early 1917, the Bolshevik Party was able to acquire a mass base because first Lenin, and then the rest of the party, had a very clear revolutionary conception that corresponded with the actual course of the revolution. Its program and slogans gave organized expression to the rapidly changing consciousness of the working class. With *our* Trotskyist analysis of Stalinism and our program for political revolution, we too possess a revolutionary conception of what must be done to defend and extend the gains of October. We all realize that the

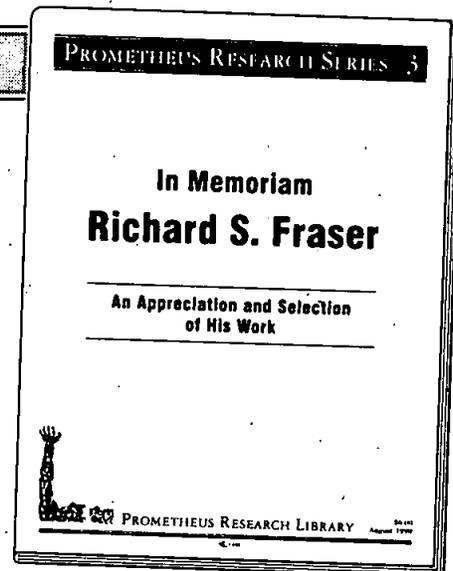
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**After breach of Berlin Wall, November 1989. In absence of revolutionary leadership, nascent political revolution in DDR was overtaken by capitalist counterrevolution.**

terminal collapse of Stalinism poses great dangers for the Soviet Union. But the ensuing loss of political and moral authority of the Stalinists, combined with the breakdown of the repressive police regime, also affords us remarkable opportunities to reach the Soviet workers and soldiers with the revolutionary program of the ICL that have not existed since the beginning of the Soviet Thermidor in 1924. These possibilities are posed so sharply *because* of the revolutionary origins of the Soviet Union.

In contrast, the liquidation of the planned economy of the former DDR following the collapse of the Stalinist regime underscores the qualitatively different origins of all the deformed workers states and the effect of this on the consciousness of the proletariat. In the German Democratic Republic (DDR) and Eastern Europe the expropriation of capitalism was carried out by the Stalinists for their own reasons and by their own methods. As Trotsky pointed out in 1939 after the Red Army occupied Eastern Poland, Stalinism bases itself on state property, so private capitalist property was abolished in order to bring the new regimes into accord with the regime in the USSR. Thus, the series of postwar transformations were not accomplished as conscious acts by the proletariat as an organized class as in Russia, but from the top down by military-bureaucratic means, the former capitalist states having been smashed in the course of the war. There is an interesting section in "The USSR in War" (*In Defense of Marxism*) where Trotsky's analysis of these earlier expropriations applies equally well to the methods used to establish the post-World War II deformed workers-states. To carry out these expropriations, he said, the bureaucracy would of necessity have to issue an appeal for independent activity on the part of the masses in order to constitute a new regime. But having awakened the revolutionary masses, the bureaucracy would then resort to ruthless

police measures to suppress the workers and assure the preponderance of the-bureaucratic regime.

Thus the political regimes of all the postwar deformed workers states were qualitatively the same as in the USSR after decades of Stalinist degeneration. This includes Yugoslavia, China, North Korea and North Vietnam; and later Cuba, where the differences if any were only quantitative. While the statification of the means of production is a progressive measure, Trotsky argues that the transformation of property relations is not the primary political criterion for us, but rather whether these transformations resulted in the raising of the consciousness and organization of the proletariat. From this decisive standpoint, he wrote, "the politics of Moscow...completely retains its reactionary character and remains the chief obstacle on the road to world revolution."

Therefore, even though the social transformations in East Germany and Eastern Europe had initial popular support, because of the deformed and incomplete character of the revolutions the proletariat was rendered no more conscious of its historical tasks. In the absence of such revolutionary traditions, the resulting consciousness was more one-sided, a contradictory form of false consciousness derived from the lies and deceptions of Stalinism and a popular-frontist worldview that substituted false categories like "peace-loving countries" and "progressive peoples" or "wings" of imperialism for a revolutionary worldview based on a class-struggle perspective. In the DDR one really got a sense of this; that we live in this protected "socialism in half a country" and out there is an essentially unchangeable hostile world without class contradictions. With independent political expression precluded and the trade unions being merely instruments of Stalinist economic policy, the working class in the DDR was atomized and politically disarmed. Unlike the earlier generation in 1953, who saw revolutionary opportunities in the wake of Stalin's death, there was both a defense of old Stalinist dogma ("export of revolution," etc.) as well as a broader cynicism that equated socialism with Stalinism. This latter view predominated more in the heavily populated southern regions of Halle/Leipzig, which voted heavily for the Christian Democrats (CDU) and Social Democrats (SPD). We generally saw a more leftist expression in the Stalinist SED/PDS strongholds of Berlin and the



Theo Heimann

**4 December 1989: Demonstrators in front of SED/PDS Congress call "For a Renewed Party!" Illusions in SED/PDS gave way to demoralization when Stalinists gave go-ahead to reunification.**

Интернационалистический привет  
нашим товарищам  
советским солдатам и офицерам!

Зимой 1917 года большевистская революция открыла перед  
человечеством возможность жить в условиях коммунистической

¡Saludos internacionalistas a  
nuestros compañeros cubanos!

Internationalistische Grüße an unsere vietnamesischen Genossen!  
Cách mệnh quốc-tê chào đón cộng sản bạn Việt-Nam!

Cách mạng tháng Mười 1917 đã dẫn dắt chiến sĩ cách mạng từ một  
quốc gia như chính những công dân của cộng hòa Xô Viết.

Pozdrowienia od Internacjonalistów,  
Witajcie Polscy Towarzysze!

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rosyjskiego, polskiego i niemieckiego komunizmu, spranego o międzynarodową jedność  
akcji którego wzorem była Rosa Luxemburg. Łączy tych, tak jak i wiele ich sobie  
związanych, rewolucji znova do waza.

Towarzysze Polacy, przyjechaliście na pracy do NRD (DDR), ale spotkali Was  
tu obelgi od szowinistów, niemiłe zarobki, niedobre pomieszczenia, a teraz i specjalne  
przepisy mające na celu ograniczenie Waszej wolności ruchu i bytu w tym kraju gdzie  
przez wiele lat istniała możliwość życia do starości na dobre zarobki i Niemcy



Spartakist Photos



Trotskyistische Liga Deutschlands organized Spartakist Groups in DDR around key demands "Down with Stalinism!", "No to Capitalist Restoration!" and "For a Red Germany of Workers Councils in a Socialist United States of Europe." Spartakist banner: "For a Leninist-Egalitarian Party!" (left). Greetings in Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese and Polish distributed to Soviet soldiers and immigrant workers; Trotskyist literature was eagerly received, including outside December 1989 SED conference (above). TLD and Spartakist Group members founded the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany on 21 January 1990.

more lightly populated north, where we did most of our political work until shortly before the March 18 elections.

This false consciousness and clinging to the SED resulted in demoralization and anger in the wake of the somewhat orchestrated "revelations" of the corruption of the Honecker regime in October 1989, then a kind of heady exuberance and optimism that the SED could be reformed following the mass resignations of the Government and Central Committee in November and early December, followed by paralysis and desperation after Gorbachev and Modrow gave the green light to capitalist reunification in February. (Modrow, it should be remembered, had been the "popular" SED mayor of Leipzig during the period of the increasingly right-wing Monday night demonstrations, before being summoned to Berlin to administer the liquidation of the DDR.)

But that is only a description of the very wide swings in the mood and consciousness of the mass of the East German proletariat (which also had a disorienting effect on our partial forces). A more precise analysis of why the proletari-

at in the DDR did not mobilize is captured in a quote from, again, "The Class, the Party, and the Leadership" where, speaking in the context of the Spanish Revolution, Trotsky writes, "Workers in general do not easily break with the party that awakens them to conscious life. Moreover the existence of mutual protection within the Popular Front lulled them: since everybody agreed, everything must be all right." In the potentially revolutionary situation that existed in the DDR from, broadly speaking, October 1989 through the elections in March 1990, the false consciousness and confusion of the workers was reinforced by the petty-bourgeois layer that constituted the active political spectrum from the SED/PDS to the Communist Platform, Die Nelken, the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) and the United Left. The intellectual leaderships of these organizations were drawn overwhelmingly from the same layer of the "new intelligentsia" that is Gorbachev's base in the USSR. And indeed they were predominantly Gorbachevite. With a class outlook hostile to the workers, all agreed there must be some

form of "market socialism," meaning the discipline of the market will force our lazy workers to produce more for us, or else tough luck, no job for them. Therefore all understood that the one thing that was to be avoided was agitating the workers to resist the necessary and inevitable "restructuring." The code word for this was "avoiding chaos." All they had to offer the workers were soothing reassurances that everything would be all right. In general the factories were avoided. Here and there "soviets" were organized by United Left members that were in fact a mini-SPD-type ploy of organizing the workers to deal with the "inevitable" capitalist takeover. Being predominantly Gorbachevite, these organizations also obscured or avoided any programmatic or social analysis of Stalinism, instead perpetuating the liberal notion that it was simply a repressive and corrupt system. Socialism equaled Stalinism and market socialism equaled "democracy." So it wasn't the case that the workers of the DDR had no leadership. Rather the program of their traditional party, in the new colors of the "reformed" PDS, as well as the parallel programs of the other "leftist" DDR groupings, ran at an angle of 180 degrees to the objective interests and periodic impulses of the working class.

In Spain the Stalinists "wanted to eliminate the need for fascism by proving to the Spanish and world bourgeoisie that they were themselves capable of strangling the proletarian revolution under the banner of 'democracy'," as Trotsky succinctly put it. In Germany, where the Western Strike Force of the Red Army has faced NATO forces for nearly 40 years, Gorbachev wanted to persuade the German and world bourgeoisie that the Cold War and NATO were no longer necessary by demonstrating that the Soviet bureaucracy was capable itself of reversing the military, political and social outcome of World War II, the "Great Patriotic War Against Fascism." As evidence of good faith, East Germany was handed back to German imperialism. This was not the first time this deal was offered. In 1952 Stalin offered to pull out of East Germany, if only the united capitalist Germany would remain "neutral" and stay out of the newly formed NATO. The Christian Democrat Adenauer refused. This is what the sleazy Soviet foreign minister Shevardnadze was referring to earlier this year when he said that a neutral Germany "was a very old and very good idea."

So there is no mystery why civil war was averted in the DDR. Standing orders say that all Warsaw Pact armies, especially the NVA, are under direct Soviet command in wartime. Further, it was reportedly on orders from the top Soviet command in the DDR that no armed force was used against the mass demonstration in Leipzig on October 9. So on the one hand, it was Moscow policy that neither Red Army nor East German forces took any action in defense of the fallen Honecker regime. The absence of bloodshed allowed our forces very wide latitude. Then starting in late December the Betriebskampfgruppen were quietly demobilized and disarmed by the "transitional" government led by Modrow and Gysi. This was a party militia organized at the factory level after the 1953 uprising to put down any future revolt before it could coalesce. It was never used for this purpose, and instead its members came to see themselves as guardians of the workers state at the factory level. With components in every factory in the country I believe it was numerically larger than the regular army. It not only had access to small arms, but also artillery and armor, including tanks. Particularly since the in-plant party and trade-union organizations disappeared after November, this national



Neuber

**Members of *Betriebskampfgruppe* (factory militia) in DDR. National network of militias was demobilized by Stalinists to block organized worker opposition to capitalist reunification.**

internal structure of a factory-based militia had the very real potential to become the organized political/military locus of the political revolution. Therefore its early demobilization by the Stalinists had to be a conscious act intended to prevent the militia from playing that role.

The disarming of the proletariat was a decisive blow from the standpoint of organizing the force necessary to seize control of the state in order to defend the planned economy and state property from liquidation. After its dissolution there was also a noticeable loss of coherence and organization in the factories, further atomizing the proletariat. What Bonn had thought would only be acquired someday through military action by NATO was thus handed over as a political decision by the Stalinist bureaucracy. In the several weeks immediately prior to the March elections, Kohl's Christian Democrats launched their really massive electoral blitzkrieg that, as Andrews so aptly put it, grabbed the East German workers by the throat. The factories were hit heavily, especially in the south. A number of workers in the Halle/Leipzig area said they would either vote CDU or SpAD, i.e., for capitalism or revolution. This extremism indicated a growing desperation. When 85 percent of the workers voted for the CDU or SPD-based coalitions, politically it was all over for the DDR. The subsequent disposal of the planned economy by the treaty that went into effect on July 1 was just a legal formality.

In conclusion, I do not see a basis for the worries expressed by some that comrades are politically disarmed or that the events in Germany and East Europe are theoretically



**3 January 1990:**  
Spartakist  
spokesman  
Renate Dahlhaus  
(lower right)  
addresses 250,000-  
strong united-front  
protest against  
fascist desecration  
of Soviet war  
memorial, Treptow  
Park, East Berlin.

problematic. Some 65 years after Stalinism first made its appearance as the result of the isolation of the first workers revolution, Trotsky's analysis now shines through with an even greater clarity. We are Trotskyists and do not mourn the passing of this parasitic phenomenon. Its life span was prolonged only because workers revolution had not been extended to the industrial West, itself in large measure a product of the crimes of Stalinism against the workers movement, both by omission as well as commission. The danger lies in the fact that Stalinism's demise has not been brought about by the struggles of the proletariat. At the same time the present situation opens up unprecedented opportunities for our programmatic tendency. With the possible exception of South Africa (and that is only conjunctural) there is not a Stalinist party in the world that has not been fractured by crisis. Our traditional fake-Trotskyist opponents are deeply confused and compromised by their tailing of the anti-Communism of Cold War II.

There are opportunities for our German section as well. Because the SPD is trying to protect the wage levels and social benefits of its historic base in West Germany, SPD unions have become involved in a series of strikes in the former DDR for substantial wage increases. The "miracle" of a strong German economy and currency has been based on a muting of class conflict purchased with a very high standard of living for the West German workers, itself an acknowledgment of their potential social power. Now that stability is threatened as the German ruling class pours billions of deutschmarks into the former DDR to fulfill its "historic mission." And the German economy doesn't exist in a vacuum either, as interimperialist rivalries are exposed by the U.S. power grab in the Middle East. This period is *not* equivalent to, say, 1928 in China, where Trotsky could find no satisfaction in the fact that his analysis was proven correct. Temporary confusion and demoralization of sections of the proletariat is not the same thing as being smashed and atomized by bloody defeats.

We never prejudged the outcome of our efforts to forge the party and leadership necessary for a successful political

revolution in the DDR. In practice we were opposed by qualitatively larger objective forces, ranging from Moscow to Bonn and Pankow, as well as the effects on the proletariat of the deformed character of the origins of the DDR. I would say that our own biggest failure was in not aggressively organizing Spartakist Gruppen in the early period before Treptow. As it was, the first and for a long time the only group, was not organized in Berlin until around mid-December; our first new TLD members were not taken in until January 7 (Gunther and Dieter!). While in hindsight (following the split of March 4) Gunther and Dieter were larger active obstacles to recruitment than had been realized, the failures of the earlier period were due—as was Lenin's problem in 1905,—primarily to political resistance to turning our face to the masses and historic weaknesses within the TLD itself, which more or less oscillated between sectarianism and passivity and a tendency toward liquidating into a strategic united front. Having failed to recruit in this early period when it was easier, we stayed "poor" in the later period when it was more difficult. Instead of a possible two or three hundred new members we had ten or fifteen. But recruitment of valuable cadres did start finally during the belated election campaign and has continued steadily ever since then. And "Spartakist" did become a widely recognized political entity in the DDR, which was a first for any section of our international tendency. This is a testament to the power of our Trotskyist program.

We have lived through an extended slow and increasingly reactionary period that may have affected some comrades with its seeming permanence, although this view is conditioned more by living in the United States. In a broader international sense the postwar period that started with the Cold War in 1947 is dramatically coming apart, and big changes are taking place in the world. We should thoughtfully and systematically pursue the new opportunities that have opened for us, particularly in the Soviet Union. Only by study and struggle can we go from one period to another without falling off the train as history makes a turn.

6 September 1990

# Spartacist Group of Poland Founded

We are proud to publish the working agreement between the International Communist League and our comrades of the newly founded Spartakusowska Grupa Polski, first printed in *Workers Vanguard* No. 513, 2 November 1990. The militants of the SGP come to the ICL, having arrived at revolutionary Trotskyism after several years of efforts to rediscover the program of authentic communism. The cadre include some who were politicized by the events of 1980-81 in Poland but were repulsed by the reactionary clericalism of Solidarność. They were among the founders of the Ruch Młodej Lewicy (RML—Young Left Movement), initially a somewhat heterogeneous grouping which sought to function as a left wing within the youth organization of the Polish United Workers Party (PZPR—the ruling Stalinist party). Seeking the road to proletarian internationalism, our new Polish comrades came into conflict with the Stalinist nationalist perversion of Marxism and with the deeply nationalist pro-Solidarność left. They were excluded from a May Day demonstration in 1988 for carrying banners hailing Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht, revolutionary leaders of the Russian, Polish and German workers. Increasingly attracted to Trotskyism, they were instrumental in seeing that key works by Trotsky like *The Revolution Betrayed* were translated into the Polish language.

Thus, by the time they first came into contact with ICL literature this summer, the comrades who now constitute the SGP had through their own experiences and struggles arrived at a similar political thrust on several key questions. But it was necessary to draw a sharp political line against

the pro-Solidarność outfits like the Mandelites and Morenites who masquerade as Trotskyists. As the Polish comrades noted in a letter to our German section: "In the Trotskyist movement in Poland, we often meet with activists who have a 'Solidarność' pedigree, or in any case put all their hopes in 'Solidarność.' Until now it is difficult for them to shed these illusions. Either they don't know or they deliberately suppress the reality of our true tradition (for 'tactical' reasons). It is increasingly more difficult for us to have a common language with them."

For the ICL, this agreement represents a welcome result of our ongoing propagandistic intervention into the events in Poland from without. It is also a modest vindication of our insistence on reviving the historic revolutionary unity of the German, Polish and Soviet proletariat. The beginnings of political revolution in East Germany (DDR) a year ago allowed us for the first time to reach out to Polish workers with Trotskyist propaganda in their native language. A statement of "Internationalist Greetings to Our Polish Comrades" (December 1989) by our comrades in Germany, produced through the assistance of a Polish-speaking sympathizer in London, was widely distributed among the thousands of Polish workers in the DDR. Subsequently, a "Letter to Polish Workers" (May 1990) by the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany was distributed in Poland itself, to the combative rail workers in Szczecin as well as the Warsaw congress of the OPZZ trade-union federation. This letter, counterposing the Trotskyist perspective of proletarian internationalism to escalating Greater German chauvinism

**Platforma**  
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**ARBEITERPRESSEKORRESPONDENZ**  
**SPARTAKIST**

Nr. 17  
 Mittwoch, 10. Januar 1990  
 5 Pfennig

**Aufruf der Spartakist-Gruppen und TLD  
 Ehrt Lenin, Liebknecht, Luxemburg!**

Am 15. Januar 1919 wurden in Berlin Karl Liebknecht und Rosa Luxemburg von den KPD-Führern ermordet. Am 21. Januar 1924 starb in Berlin Ignaz Reiss an einer Lebererkrankung.

Am Samstag, den 14. Januar wird es ab 9 Uhr eine Gedenkveranstaltung an der Friedrichstraße in Berlin-Friedrichshagen, an der die revolutionären ArbeiterInnen Liebknecht und Luxemburg zum 71. Jahrestag ihres Märtyrertodes gedenken werden. Die Gedenkveranstaltung wird von der Gruppe der Spartakist-Gruppen und TLD durchgeführt.

Kommunistisches Partei Deutschlands  
 Sozialistische Partei Deutschlands  
 spricht von "linken Gruppen" vor der Möglichkeit einer Arbeiterisch-revolutionären Entwicklung in der DDR, nicht unter der stalinistischen Herrschaft von Walter Ulbricht. Dabei werden die

Young Left Movement in Poland and Spartakist Workers Party in Germany have fought to revive internationalist tradition of the "Three L's": Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg. For revolutionary unity of German, Polish and Soviet workers!



WV Photo

Bulletin [Australia]

New York, September 1981: Spartacists opposed power grab by reactionary Solidarność, company union for the CIA and capitalist bankers. Solidarność leader Lech Wałęsa (right) flaunts money from Western backers.

and the nationalism of Solidarność, came into the hands of the RML.

Nine years ago our call to "Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution" stood out sharply as a concretization of the Trotskyist insistence that the USSR and the deformed workers states be defended against capitalist restoration. Sundry opportunists sneered that such a principled stance would find

no support within the Polish workers movement. The revolutionary regroupment in Poland is therefore particularly satisfying. The adherence of Polish comrades to the ICL, along with fusions of new forces in Canada and Mexico, bears witness to the power of the Leninist program to regroup subjective communists internationally. Forward to the reforging of the Fourth International!

## Agreement for Common Work Between Young Left Movement of Poland and ICL

1. From October 1917 on, capitalism has sought to crush the world historic achievements of the Russian Revolution. The restoration of capitalism would mean massive immiseration and unemployment of the working people, bringing back all the backwardness and chauvinism of the past, and preparations for a new interimperialist war. We Trotskyists stand for *unconditional* military defense of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states against imperialism and internal counterrevolution.

2. In Poland the primary agency for counterrevolution has been Solidarność, aided and abetted by imperialism, the Vatican and social democracy. By the time of its first congress in 1981, Solidarność had consolidated behind a program of social counterrevolution: support to anti-communist "free trade unions," restoration of capitalism through bourgeois parliamentarism, and liquidation of the planned economy. Had Solidarność been victorious, it would as well have threatened the existence of the other deformed workers states, placing in the hands of the imperialists the main supply and communication routes between the Soviet Union and the DDR, then the front line state confronting NATO. At that time the international Spartacist tendency (iSt, now the ICL) demanded "Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution" and supported Jaruzelski's preventive military coup, while fighting for a proletarian political revolution to oust the

parasitic bureaucracy. The RML [Young Left Movement] agrees with this position. These events were an acid test for all would-be revolutionaries; it is necessary to swim against the stream when the Marxist program stands counterposed to the existing consciousness of the overwhelming bulk of the working class.

3. We reject the claims of fake-leftists that counterrevolutionary Solidarność was leading a "proletarian political revolution" in 1981. A genuine proletarian political revolution is premised on the *defense* of the collectivized property relations. As opposed to workers "self-management," which in reality means the introduction of capitalist property relations through the pitting of workers in different enterprises against each other, we stand for a planned, socialized economy (including the collectivization of agriculture) free of Stalinist bureaucratic parasitism, arbitrariness and national autarky. The basic direction of the economy and society must be decided through workers democracy, that is, rule by workers councils.

4. True to the program of the early Communist International, Trotskyism stands for world socialist revolution. In contrast, Stalin's dogma of "socialism in one country" is a nationalist, anti-socialist lie aimed at conciliating imperialism. The Gorbachev bureaucracy's appeasement of imperialism and its undermining of the collectivized economy,

unleashing bloody national and ethnic conflicts, threatens the very existence of the homeland of October. The Polish Stalinists, who mortgaged the economy to the Western bankers and drove the working class into the arms of the CIA and Vatican, are self-evidently politically bankrupt. Those who have paved the way for capitalist restoration cannot lead the struggles to beat it back.

5. Posed pointblank is the need to build an authentic Trotskyist vanguard party in Poland, part of a reformed Fourth International. But we reject the idea of a "family of Trotskyism"; genuine Trotskyism has nothing in common with such pro-Solidarność purveyors of anti-Sovietism as the followers of Nahuel Moreno and the United Secretariat [USec] of Ernest Mandel, who in 1983 hailed the Solidarność leadership as the "best socialists in the world." The RML, a group known for honoring the communist leaders Lenin, Luxemburg and Liebknecht, came to recognize that Trotskyism represented the continuation of the revolutionary traditions of the "3 L's." The RML first came into contact with the program of the ICL while it was engaged in discussions with the Morenoites. Particularly decisive in winning it to the program of the ICL were (a) agreement over the character of Solidarność and (b) the RML's support to the "Trotskyist Platform" published by the Trotskyist Faction of the Mexican POS, which subsequently fused with the Grupo Espartaquista de México.

6. A Trotskyist party must be a tribune of the people, championing all victims of oppression. The drive to restore capitalism revives and intensifies all the "old crap" of the prewar social order, from reactionary clericalism to Pilsudskiite nationalism and anti-Semitism. As Rosa Luxemburg wrote in 1905: "The clergy, no less than the capitalist class, lives on the backs of the people, profits from the degradation, the ignorance and the oppression of the people." The Catholic hierarchy, conciliated by the Stalinists, has long exercised decisive influence over Solidarność. Cler-



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**Polish railway workers in Szczecin strike in May against capitalist "shock treatment" of Solidarność regime.**

ical reaction particularly targets women. Smash the attacks on abortion rights! For free abortion on demand! For free 24-hour childcare facilities! For the strict separation of church and state! Down with the conservative Stalinist dogma that glorifies the institution of the family, the main social institution oppressing women. Only the achievement of a genuine socialist society, based on material abundance and egalitarianism, can truly liberate women.

7. We honor the 600,000 soldiers of the Red Army who died liberating Poland from the Nazis. But today the forces of capitalist restoration have fueled the growth of virulent anti-Semitism, from skinhead Nazis in Germany to the KPN [Confederation for an Independent Poland] vermin here to the Great Russian chauvinists of Pamyat. For workers united

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Resignation From Canadian CP.....3	Resignation From the YCL.....22
A Call To All Communists.....5	Dublin Spartacist Youth Group.....24
Militants Split From Mandel's USec.....9	Trotskyist Fusion in Mexico.....25
Against United Secretariat Liquidationism—For Trotskyism!.....11	Spartacist Group of Poland Founded.....32



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fronts to smash the fascists! Workers in Poland: smash chauvinist attacks on Jewish people, Ukrainians, Gypsies, homosexuals! Honor the heroic fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising of 1943! Defend leftists and former members of the PZPR [Polish United Workers Party] against anti-communist witchhunts! For class struggle against attempts to dismantle social gains of the collectivized economy: for factory occupations and strikes against privatizations and plant shutdowns!

8. In East Germany what began as a political revolution turned into a capitalist counterrevolution. This defeat for the workers movement has whetted the appetites of the Fourth Reich of German imperialism for a renewed "*Drang nach Osten*" [drive to the East]. Our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany [SpAD] uniquely fought against capitalist reunification and fight today against anti-Polish and anti-immigrant chauvinism, as an essential part of the struggle for socialist revolution. Polish communists must fight relentlessly against Pilsudskiite nationalism, which

subjects the workers to the dictates of the IMF while spewing out anti-Russian and anti-German chauvinism. Only proletarian internationalism offers a way forward—For the revolutionary unity of Russian, Polish and German workers! For a socialist united states of Europe!

9. Reformists and centrists, forsaking the principle of defense of the deformed workers states against counterrevolution, assist in infecting the working masses with the poison of national chauvinism. Thus, such organizations as USec, the Morenoites and Workers Power backed both the Polish nationalists of Solidarność, while in Germany tailing after such groups as the PDS, SPD and/or the United Left, which supported revanchist capitalist reunification. Adapting to conflicting appetites of different national bourgeoisies, the fake-Trotskyists are an obstacle to the construction of an international vanguard party.

10. Polish Trotskyists must seek to reclaim the best traditions of the Polish workers movement, forged in the struggle against national chauvinism. This is exemplified by Rosa Luxemburg, a Polish Jewish communist and leader of the revolutionary German proletariat. Reviling Luxemburg for her internationalism, Stalin never trusted and finally liquidated the Polish CP, which was the first to come to the defense of comrade Trotsky by asserting in 1923 that "the name of Comrade Trotsky is insolubly connected with the victory of the Soviet Revolution, with the Red Army, with communism."

11. While today Walesa and Jaruzelski obscenely whip up Polish nationalism by celebrating the defeat of the Red Army outside Warsaw in 1920, we reaffirm the policy of the early Polish CP, which not only rose to the defense of the Russian Revolution but recognized that the Polish proletariat was a bridge to extend westward the revolution to the borders of Germany, with its powerful proletariat. The subsequent defeat of the German revolution of 1923 was a major impetus for the consolidation of the Stalinist bureaucracy with its false ideology of "socialism in one country."

12. The RML agrees with the iSt position on Afghanistan, hailing the Red Army intervention, which posed the extension of the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples and particularly to the oppressed women of Afghanistan. Gorbachev's withdrawal was a sellout, greatly

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encouraging the imperialists in their drive to overthrow the Soviet workers state. We reject the anti-Soviet demand raised by fake-leftists to withdraw the Warsaw Pact troops from East Europe—Soviet troops have constituted the first line of defense of the workers states against NATO imperialism. Out of the ranks of Soviet soldiers and officers will come many fighters for Trotskyism.

**13.** The comrades of the RML constitute themselves as the Spartakusowska Grupa Polski (SGP). The SGP and the ICL look forward to an early fusion, where the SGP will become part of a democratic-centralist International. In the interim, in matters of mutual concern regarding Poland, both parties to this agreement will consult.

**14.** The SGP needs to develop a systematic public face, recruiting cadre and intervening in various struggles and movements with ICL propaganda. A Leninist-Trotskyist party in Poland will be built from above through splits and fusions of ostensibly revolutionary organizations. Cadre can be won from among left Stalinists, as well as ostensible Trotskyists.

**15.** The ICL will assist the comrades in Poland in developing a systematic educational program to better acquaint them with the specific positions of ICL sections on various problems and events in the world. Fuller political integration will be enhanced by travel and mutual exchanges of visits with other ICL sections. In particular, it is envisaged that



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**Warsaw monument to 1943 Ghetto uprising, erected by Jewish survivors in 1946.**

comrades from Poland participate in the SpAD's election campaign, as well as helping to translate election materials and fundamental ICL documents into the Polish language. The establishment of an ICL group in Poland represents a real step in our capacity to bring the program of Trotskyism to the East European and Soviet proletariats.

20 October 1990

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# Platform of the Trotskyist Faction

The following document by the Trotskyist Faction was submitted on 20 May 1990 to the Mexican POS, affiliated with the dissident Morenoite Internationalist Faction. At a meeting on 1 July, the Trotskyist Faction fused with the Grupo Esparquista de México (Spartacist Group of Mexico), part of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

## I.

### For unconditional military defense of the USSR and the social gains of the workers states.

Based on the conception of Trotsky embodied in his work, "War and the Fourth International," we state: DOWN WITH NATO! No pacifist illusions in disarmament. Only international proletarian revolution can bring peace to humanity. Only the working class can disarm, by insurrectional means, its respective warmongering bourgeoisies.

For the proletarian internationalism of Lenin. We oppose any kind of support to counterrevolutionary or restorationist movements in the workers states, movements which hide behind "nationalist" demagoguery, illusions in bourgeois democracy and freedom of religion. For relentless struggle against the reactionary ideology of Great Russian chauvinism and anti-Semitism.

For proletarian political revolution in the USSR and in all the deformed workers states. Power to revolutionary workers councils: Down with the parasitic bureaucratic caste! Only the working class and the revolutionary party can consistently defend the gains of the October Revolution.

For the right of secession from the USSR for all the republics which desire it in order to form independent WORKERS STATES.

Reclaim Lenin and Trotsky's conception of proletarian internationalism, which is based on the unity of the exploited and oppressed against the exploiters and oppressors, rejecting the anti-Marxist conception that there are "reactionary and progressive peoples," which comes out in our line on the fratricidal war between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Such a conception can only serve as a cover

for these wars.

To reaffirm the Marxist conception that the Stalinist bureaucracy, as such, has a dual function, or plays a dual role, in the workers states, as was expressed in the classic works of Trotsky, particularly in "The Class Nature of the Soviet State," *The Revolution Betrayed*, *In Defense of Marxism*, the *Transitional Program*, etc. Against the Shachtmanite (and Healyite) conception that the bureaucracy is "counterrevolutionary through and through," which is utilized as a justification for abandoning in practice the Trotskyist program of unconditional military defense of the workers states in the face of constant aggression and imperialist counterrevolution. Against conditional or "conjunctural defensism" of the workers states, which infuses the program and politics of the Internationalist Faction (IF) of the IWL.

## II.

### For a united socialist Germany in a federation of socialist workers states of Europe.

Down with the Fourth Reich! No to capitalist reunification! The German working class must take the lead in the process of political revolution with the program of world socialist revolution. For united-front actions to smash the fascist danger! No to the sellout of the social gains of the DDR! Full rights for all immigrant workers! Defend the rights of women, homosexuals, Jews, leftists, against ultra-rightist terror and imperialist counterrevolution.

We reject the slogan, "Warsaw Pact Troops Out," as a capitulation to the NATO of Bush, Thatcher and Mitterrand. Revolutionary fraternization with the soldiers and officers of the Red Army based on defense of the gains of the workers states and for the formation of revolutionary soldiers and sailors councils.

We salute the Red Army in Afghanistan and the heroic combatants of Jalalabad against the mercenary armies of fundamentalist reaction supported by the CIA. We denounce the shameful capitulation of the Moscow Stalinist bureaucracy which made a pact with imperialism for the



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Soviet troops under review before Berlin's Treptow war memorial. Trotskyist Faction denounced Morenoite slogan "Warsaw Troops Out," and called for revolutionary fraternization with the Red Army to defend deformed workers state.

withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghan soil. We reject the shameful capitulation of the so-called Trotskyist movement which joined the imperialist campaign of "Russians out of Afghanistan!"

We salute the sending of Cuban troops to Angola during the war against the agents of the South African regime. We denounce the capitulation of Castro and the Kremlin which negotiated with imperialism the departure of the Cuban internationalist fighters.

We reject the slogan of a "Constituent Assembly" for Germany, recently raised by the [Morenoite] PTS (see the special pamphlet, "Where Is the MAS Going?" [Buenos Aires]), for being a slogan for capitalist restoration.

**III.**

**For the construction of Trotskyist parties in the USSR and in all the workers states,**

sections of the Fourth International which lead the struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy, confront imperialist counterrevolution, and unite under the program of the Fourth International the political and social revolutions throughout the world. A process of unity which will not take place through the "unconscious dynamic" of struggles, as the PTS and the IWL maintain, but only as the *Transitional Program* lays out: by resolving the crisis of proletarian leadership in a fight to the death against the old leaderships and centrism.

**IV.**

**Stop Solidarność Counterrevolution in Poland.**

Eliminate from our program any kind of "critical" support to this agency of capitalist restoration and anti-Communism. Along with this, no political confidence in the bankrupt Stalinist bureaucracy! For proletarian political revolution to bring down the Walesa-Jaruzelski government! For the program of proletarian internationalism against the clerical nationalism of Walesa, the Pope and the Black Madonna! For revolutionary unity of the Polish, German and Soviet proletariat against

the schemes of the International Monetary Fund.

**V.**

Proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucracy is more urgent than ever to defend the gains of the October Revolution. Against Gorbachev's perestroika and so-called "market socialism," Trotskyists fight for a truly centralized, planned economy, based on workers democracy. Faced with the bankruptcy of COMECON under the bureaucracy's leadership, we fight for genuinely cooperative economic relations among the workers states based on solidarity and proletarian internationalism.

**VI.**

We oppose the document titled "Thesis of the PTS on the Political Revolution" presented by the PTS; we reject it as any kind of basic document or programmatic guide for the Internationalist Faction, as it is fundamentally revisionist. The document in question reasserts and lays claim to the principal concepts of the IWL and Morenoism, such as a "world counterrevolutionary front," "February revolutions" in the workers states and dissolving the revolutionary party in an objectivist and eclectic conception of the class struggle, leading us to capitulate to different petty-bourgeois, reactionary and counterrevolutionary leaderships that arise in the process.

In the case of the PTS this objectivist conception has led it to raise the slogan of a constituent assembly in Germany, which means objectively acting like a simple variant of Morenoism and the IWL.

Comrades: The political crisis which has been opened in the Mexican group and the ranks of the Internationalist Faction can only be overcome if we assimilate and reclaim the traditions and programmatic guidelines of the Fourth International. We call on all the comrades of the IF to discuss and support the general line of this Platform.

Humberto H., Arturo Urbina  
Mexico City, 19 May 1990

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# Tamara Deutscher

The following obituary is reprinted from *Workers Vanguard* No. 510, 21 September 1990, newspaper of the *Spartacist League/US*.

Marxist historian and commentator Tamara Deutscher died in London on August 7 at the age of 77. She was a regular contributor to the London-based journal *New Left Review* and other publications, dealing particularly with developments in East Europe and the Soviet Union. Until his death in 1967, she had devoted much of her considerable energy and talent to collaborating with her husband, Isaac Deutscher, author of the invaluable three-volume biography of Leon Trotsky. In the preface to his biography of Stalin, Deutscher called her "my first, the severest and the most indulgent critic." She continued to supervise the publication of Deutscher's works for the remainder of her life and was particularly pleased that his books had finally begun to appear in their native Poland as well as other deformed workers states.

Like her husband, Tamara Deutscher's commitment to the cause of socialism and her Marxist outlook were molded in childhood, by the revolutionary ferment which swept through Poland, particularly its Jewish population, in the era of the Russian Revolution. She was born Tamara Lebenhaft in 1913, into a left-wing Jewish family in the proletarian center of Lodz. In describing her background, she would note that the city was then known as Red Lodz, because of the socialist consciousness and combativity of the workforce, predominantly in the large textile mills which sprang up around the turn of the century.

Isaac Deutscher was for a period a leading proponent of the Polish Opposition which was expelled from the Communist Party in the early 1930s. He broke with Trotskyism over his opposition to the founding of the Fourth International in 1938. Tamara Deutscher was never, to our knowledge, directly associated with the Fourth International nor with any organized current of ostensible Trotskyism. Her outlook was, however, deeply influenced by the teachings of Trotsky and other classical Marxists.

Our comrades had the opportunity to have discussions with Tamara Deutscher on two occasions. The first, in 1986, came when we were preparing a review of the book *Memoirs of a Jewish Revolutionary*, an autobiography by Hersh Mendel, a Polish Communist militant in the interwar years who had been a close comrade of Isaac Deutscher. The second time we met was in June of this year, when comrades who had recently returned from a trip to Poland visited her and exchanged observations about developments in Poland and East Europe.

Though she had in the past expressed militant disinterest in following the various ostensibly Trotskyist tendencies, she had begun reading publications of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist). She expressed particular interest in the "Letter to Polish Workers" which our comrades of the Spartakist Workers Party of Germany had been distributing both in Poland and Germany, opposing Solidarność and its drive toward capitalist restoration and advancing a Trotskyist alternative to bankrupt Stalinism.



Tamara Deutscher had nothing but contempt for the political cynicism and rampant anti-Sovietism which permeates the contemporary ostensibly Trotskyist left. In 1979 she publicly withdrew her sponsorship of the journal *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, backed by Ernest Mandel's United Secretariat, when it approvingly reprinted a call by a group of Soviet émigrés for a total economic, technical and cultural boycott of the USSR. She wrote:

"The Appeal calls for nothing less than a wholesale boycott of the USSR and a complete break of all relations between West and East—in other words, for isolating the Soviet Union and putting it into quarantine. Such methods would in no way help the process of democratisation in the East. On the contrary, they would only strengthen all reactionary forces in both camps."

She detested nationalism, and particularly the Polish nationalism which has always been synonymous with anti-Sovietism and anti-Semitism: "I guess I'm an old Luxemburgist at heart," she told us with a smile. When Solidarność arose in the fall of 1980, her response was distinctly at odds with the uncritical enthusing of the fake-Trotskyists and various other tailists of social democracy. She warned against the deadly influence of nationalism and clericalism, around which Solidarność was to consolidate into an agency for counterrevolution by the fall of 1981.

In an article in *New Left Review* (January-February 1981), she pointed to "the rather unusual spectacle" of striking Polish workers "kneeling in front of the altar during the  
*continued on page 48*

# Pierre Broué's Trotsky: Tailored for Perestroika

## A Review by Daniel Dauget

*To Tamara Deutscher, who worked so hard and with such success to make Isaac's thought available in major European languages.*

In the autumn of 1988, Pierre Broué, professor at the Institute of Political Studies of Grenoble University, published in Paris a biography of Leon Trotsky that has not yet appeared in languages other than French. For the preceding 25 years, the only major existing biography of Leon Trotsky—co-leader with Lenin of the Russian Revolution, founder and commander of the Red Army, and the most intransigent fighter against the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet workers state—was the world-renowned trilogy written by Isaac Deutscher. Deutscher was ably assisted in his research for this biography by his wife Tamara. He was the first historian to work in Trotsky's personal archives, including the then-closed section at Harvard. The trilogy, *The Prophet Armed* (1954), *The Prophet Unarmed* (1959) and *The Prophet Outcast* (1963), is honest and powerful, the crowning achievement of Deutscher's life.

Deutscher (who died in 1967) had joined the Polish Communist Party in the late 1920s at the age of nineteen. It was said in the Communist International of Lenin's time that "the German party is the biggest and the Polish is the best." Beginning in the mid-1920s Stalin declared a holy war on "Luxemburgism," which he considered the Polish version of Trotskyism; the party leadership was repeatedly purged. Deutscher himself was expelled in 1932 with a grouping that criticized the "third period" and the bureaucratic party regime and which was influenced by the ideas of the Trotskyist opposition in the USSR. Stalin finally dissolved the Polish party outright in 1938 for being "infected" with Trotskyism, which in Stalin's terms was synonymous with being "an agency of the Polish political police."

Even after breaking with organized Trotskyism when he opposed the founding of the Fourth International in 1938, Deutscher remained a bitter opponent of Stalinism from a socialist vantage point while, however, at times suggesting that Stalin's rise was inevitable. In addition to his Trotsky trilogy, Deutscher's writings on the Soviet Union after the 1956 "Khrushchev thaw," his anti-Zionist, secular Marxist writings on the Jewish question, and his pedagogical polemics with young New Leftists at the height of the Vietnam antiwar movement are among his important contributions which we in the International Communist League still value. Unfortunately Deutscher's works are by and large unknown in France.

Deutscher presented Trotsky as the embodiment of clas-

sic Marxism—proletarian revolutionary internationalism—which he knew to be *counterposed* to the mainstreams of the contemporary workers movement, Stalinism and Social Democracy. In contrast, Broué seeks to present a Trotsky palatable to intellectuals who reject Leninism and the entire communist world-revolutionary outlook—he tailors Trotsky to fit the worldview of the current Gorbachevite intelligentsia in the Soviet Union.

Broué's academic work was for decades in the service of the ostensibly Trotskyist Lambertist tendency in France, of which he was a member for over 40 years. But some months after his book appeared Broué was expelled from Lambert's Parti Communiste Internationaliste (PCI—formerly OCI) for giving a speech on Trotsky to a meeting sponsored by an outfit known to have been linked with Nouvelle Action Royaliste (*Le Monde*, 25-26 June 1989), which stands for the restoration of a "popular" monarchy but which advocated a vote for the social-democratic-head of the French popular front, François Mitterrand, in the 1981 presidential elections. The Lambertists' crass support to the same Mitterrand popular front goes back to the early '70s; the PCI's internationally notorious reputation for gangsterism and its increasingly systematic Stalinophobia predate by decades the split with Broué. "Historic truth" is not served by Broué's failure to mention his organizational affiliation as anything more than a historical question (he writes that he joined the French section of the Fourth International in 1944); in fact the political program of the Lambert group weighs heavily on this biography of Trotsky.



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Pierre Broué speaking in New York, October 1989.

*Pierre Broué, Trotsky, Paris, Fayard, 1988, 1,105 pages.*

In the preface Broué states that although Deutscher's trilogy contributed to breaking the conspiracy of silence, "today it represents, in my opinion, a real obstacle to knowing Trotsky, all the more so as it is presented as the work of a 'Trotskyist' or a 'sympathizer' [translation throughout by *Spartacist*]." While comparisons with Deutscher's work are to be expected, Broué clearly has an ax to grind. Broué even approvingly quotes anti-communist George Lichtheim's slanderous assertion that Deutscher's trilogy was a "discreetly veiled apology for Stalin." (He also quotes without comment Leonard Schapiro, who made a career as the Anglo-American bourgeoisie's most favored anti-Bolshevik historian—see "Leonard Schapiro: Lawyer for Counterrevolution," *Spartacist* No. 43-44, Summer 1989.)

Dismissing Deutscher, Broué writes in his preface: "But Deutscher is not a historian.... In addition, he is not settling personal accounts with Trotsky, but in fact political accounts...." It is certainly true that Deutscher's objectivist view of the rise and consolidation of Stalinism colors his work, and his opposition to the formation of the Fourth International is evident in his treatment of that question in *The Prophet Outcast*. But Deutscher was honest about it, openly presenting the positions he believed in when he differed with Trotsky. In Broué's thoroughly self-serving settling of political accounts, he tends to set Deutscher up as a straw man, "defending" Trotsky against Deutscher to the point of obscuring or deforming many of Trotsky's and Deutscher's views.

From our own standpoint, one general point may be made on the work of the two authors. In the preface to *The Prophet Unarmed*, Deutscher said: "Carlyle once wrote that as Cromwell's biographer he had to drag out the Lord Protector from under a mountain of dead dogs, a huge load of calumny and oblivion. My job, as Trotsky's biographer, has been somewhat similar...." In the post-WW II context Deutscher was almost unique in his intellectual courage. Most of the Western intelligentsia was supping at the Cold War table, while a minority served as apologists for Stalinism. Deutscher was neither. Despite our important differences with Deutscher, we are inclined to be in solidarity with his attempt to go against the stream, and are not at all so inclined with regard to Broué's attempt to swim *with* the stream of perestroika.

For the reader relatively new to Trotsky, Broué does provide a detailed and coherent account of his life, covered in five sections of roughly equal length: The Ascent (to 1917), Power (1917-1923), In Opposition in the USSR (1924-1928), In Opposition in Exile (1929-1933), and The Fourth International (1933-1940). Broué synthesizes previous research into a thousand pages of small print, and even those familiar with Trotsky will find innumerable minor details that illuminate Trotsky's political existence. Using the book as a reference work is aided by a 20-page chronology of Trotsky's life and 50 pages of thumbnail biographies and index of persons mentioned, which includes virtually everyone who ever had any contact with Trotsky or the Fourth International, although a subject index is unfortunately lacking (a habitual and infuriating failure of most French academic publications, but one to which Broué has not entirely succumbed in editing the French edition of Trotsky's writings).

Broué makes much of the fact that he was able to work in the famous "closed section" of the Harvard Trotsky archives, which were opened, as Trotsky wished, in 1980.

He says that he was "the first researcher...without a *passé-droit* [a favor granted against the rules]" to enter them with his team. But what Broué does not say—or rather covers up with his *passé-droit*—is that Isaac Deutscher, although he worked alone, also *had access to the closed archives* while working on the final volume of his trilogy in 1959, by permission of Natalia Sedova, Trotsky's widow. Broué's shabby little manipulation is characteristic of the petty-mindedness prevalent among academics.

In some domains Broué's *Trotsky* goes into more detail than Deutscher did, and he corrects certain minor factual details in Deutscher's trilogy. But in the end his biography represents only a quantitative extension of our knowledge. There is no equivalent, for example, to the indispensable work E.H. Carr performed in going through the Leningrad *Pravda* to arrive at a definitive assessment of Zinoviev's 1925 opposition.

Broué takes advantage of the recent interest in Trotskyism and the history of the Soviet Union to address criticisms of Trotsky made by liberal historians such as R.V. Daniels and Baruch Knei-Paz, as well as more general anti-communist slanders about Trotsky's role as creator and commander in chief of the Red Army during the Civil War. Equally important, he repeatedly addresses traditional Soviet "historiography" and misrepresentation of Trotsky. "This book is, of course, addressed to the French public, but I won't hide the fact that it is also addressed to Soviet historians: may it assist them by serving as a reference, foil or element of comparison, but may it assist them in the work of reappropriation whose success is essential for all of us! May it exist for historic truth!"

### Broué's *Trotsky* and Glasnost

Glasnost has propelled Broué onto the international arena in the role of semi-official "interpreter" of Trotsky and one of the intermediaries between the Soviet intelligentsia and self-styled "Trotskyists" abroad. Broué's widely publicized travel to the Soviet Union at the end of 1988 under the



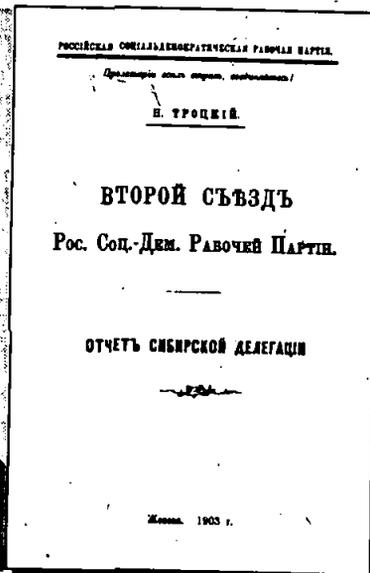
Oxford University Press

**Isaac Deutscher. His three-volume biography of Trotsky is indispensable to an understanding of Trotsky's life and work.**

Penguin Books



Trotsky in Siberia.  
Inset: Trotsky's Report of  
the Siberian Delegation  
(1903 Russian edition).



auspices of the France-USSR Friendship Society would have been unheard of only a few years before. However, trying to find out what Broué really thinks of Trotsky and Trotsky's politics among the welter of innuendos, omissions and tendentious interpretations in his book is a bit like trying to discover the "real" line in a motion voted by the French Communist Party: "on the one hand" you have lots of references to the class struggle, but "on the other hand" the bottom line is support to the popular front. Through little touches, through omissions and distortions, Broué's otherwise scholarly biography tries to paint a portrait of the intransigent revolutionary Leon Trotsky that will be more "acceptable" to petty-bourgeois and social-democratic opinion, and it does so on such burning questions as that of the party, Kronstadt, Georgia, etc. It is also a vehicle for arguing that today's "Trotskyists" should be accepted by the pro-Bukharin perestroika intelligentsia in a latter-day version of a "left"-right bloc against "Stalinism."

A Trotsky palatable to the Soviet bureaucracy, social democrats and pro-capitalist Eastern European "anti-Stalinists"? Broué is confident that his book will do the trick. He begins his biographical account: "I believe [the readers] will discover a man who is very different from the idea they had had of him, and even more different from the image they had been given of him. I am convinced that, with me, they will like this Trotsky." Broué presents a "Trotsky" whose struggle for the Fourth International is stripped of its urgency, whose opposition to the popular front is denatured, whose theory of permanent revolution is practically disappeared, whose uncompromising attack on the nationalist dogma of "socialism in one country" is buried, and who is, moreover, "likable"! Broué wants us to "like" Trotsky, but that was not the point of Trotsky's life. By most accounts Trotsky was not a particularly warm or personable individual; he was, however, one of the most profound revolutionary politicians of this epoch and uniquely embodied and fought for the continuity of the program of the Bolshevik Revolution.

We certainly hope that Broué's *Trotsky* will soon be translated into other languages. But Broué intends his book as a political intervention into the struggles now taking shape in the USSR and Eastern Europe, which will determine not only the near-term future of this region but possibly the fate of mankind. In this regard it must be said that

Broué's *Trotsky* calls to mind the opening lines of Lenin's *State and Revolution*:

"What is now happening to Marx's theory has, in the course of history, happened repeatedly to the theories of revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes fighting for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their theories with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonize them, so to say, and to hallow their names to a certain extent for the 'consolation' of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time robbing the revolutionary theory of its substance, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarizing it."

### Trotsky as "Freelancer"

Broué's treatment of Trotsky's political activity between the decisive 1903 Bolshevik-Menshevik split and the October Revolution is at the core of his interpretation, because it is here that he deals with the debates within the Russian Social Democracy over the nature, form and structure a revolutionary party must have if it is to take state power, as well as with the role of political and programmatic debate in forging such a party. After the 1903 split between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, Trotsky became "a sort of freelancer in the party."

Broué praises Trotsky for this, seeing in it the cause for Trotsky's leading role in the 1905 Revolution as chairman of the St. Petersburg Soviet and his brilliant propagandistic use of his trial following the 1905 defeat:

"In fact, effectively freed from any factional obligations, at a good distance from the ups and downs of the conflicts between the two main factions, satisfied in this respect with his 'unitary' position whose victory seemed to him assured in the future, Trotsky had his hands completely free to devote his attention and activity to the events that were unfolding in Russia...."

—Broué, p. 97

To read this, one would conclude that Lenin's factional struggle against Menshevism was irrelevant—if not outright counterposed—to intervening in and leading the revolutionary struggle. Indeed, Broué views Trotsky's role as the leading "conciliator" between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks as exemplary.

Earlier, as Broué notes, "Trotsky, partisan of centralization



Y.A. Zhelyabuzhsky

**Lenin playing chess with Maxim Gorky, Capri 1908. In European exile, Lenin forged the Bolshevik Party capable of leading Russian Revolution.**

and of the authority of the Central Committee ever since he had been deported to Siberia, was seen in the émigré circles as Lenin's 'hatchet man.' At the 1903 Congress Trotsky began a *programmatic* struggle against Lenin on the question of the party. For example, Trotsky opposed the sovereignty of the party congress: "*The Congress is a register, a controller, but not a creator*" (*Report of the Siberian Delegation*, 1903). Although the programmatic implications were far from clear at the time, the 1903 split was a fundamental split on the party question. Trotsky's federalist position on this question was also reflected in *Report of the Siberian Delegation* with his rejection of the Bolshevik definition of a party member that required "personal participation in one of the Party bodies." In practical terms Trotsky was in favor of the Menshevik definition of a party member as one who gave "personal assistance" to the party—he wished to allow all the broad "workers organizations," which existed alongside the party committees in many major Russian cities, to act in the name of the party *regardless* of their adherence to the statutes or decisions of party congresses.

At the same time that Broué enthuses over Trotsky's independence, he mentions in passing that Trotsky was wrong on the party question during this entire period. But what he says pales in comparison with Trotsky's own judgment:

"The deep differences that divided me from Bolshevism for a whole number of years and in many cases placed me in sharp and hostile opposition to Bolshevism, were expressed most graphically in relation to the Menshevik faction. I began with the radically wrong perspective that the course of the revolution and the pressure of the proletarian masses would ultimately force both factions to follow the same road. Therefore I considered a split to be an unnecessary disruption of the revolutionary forces. But because the active role in the split lay with the Bolsheviks—since it was only by ruthless demarcation, not only ideological but organizational as well, that it was possible, in Lenin's opinion, to assure the revolutionary character of the proletarian party (and the entire subsequent history has fully confirmed the correctness of those policies)—my 'conciliationism' led me at many sharp turns in the road into hostile clashes with Bolshevism."

—Trotsky, "Our Differences" (November 1924)

The traditional "center" and right wing of the Social Democracy were only too happy to use Trotsky's name and journalistic brilliance as a left cover for their own positions and *as a weapon against Lenin*. Thus Broué reports that "Trotsky was on good terms with Kautsky and the 'center' of the German Social Democracy until at least 1912.... It was Kautsky during this period who, to Lenin's great anger, opened the pages of *Die Neue Zeit* and *Vorwärts* to Trotsky." Broué also details Trotsky's warm relations with the Austro-Marxists of Vienna, noting that he rapidly became "the uncontested head of the Social Democratic colony in Vienna" from 1909 to 1912. He passes rapidly over the fact that during the same period Rosa Luxemburg viewed Trotsky with "systematic suspicion" and as a "dubious individual," no doubt due to his ties to her right-wing opponents in the German Social Democracy.

Broué's attitude toward Trotsky during these years is exemplified by his treatment of the infamous August bloc. The Vienna *Pravda* edited by Trotsky attempted to "conciliate" the Bolshevik and Menshevik factions—Broué approvingly quotes the professional anti-communist Leonard Schapiro's praise of the Vienna *Pravda* for not being as polemical as the Bolshevik press. A 1910 agreement between the factions provided for Bolshevik financial support to the Vienna *Pravda*, with Kamenev (who was close to Lenin and was Trotsky's brother-in-law) responsible for administering the Bolshevik funds. The agreement stipulated that the Mensheviks would get rid of their right wing, and the Bolsheviks of their left wing. While the Bolsheviks respected the agreement, the Mensheviks did not, and in the subsequent polemics, Trotsky sided with the Mensheviks and got rid of Kamenev. Trotsky's articles, aimed at militants inside Russia who were unfamiliar with the details of the dispute, denounced the Bolsheviks as a "conspiracy of the émigré clique." Kautsky solicited and published several articles by Trotsky attacking the Bolsheviks, which provoked angry rejoinders not just from Lenin, but also from Plekhanov and Rosa Luxemburg. When the Bolshevik Prague Congress in 1912 proclaimed that it represented the party as a whole, Trotsky organized a "unity" counter-conference in Vienna in August.

"In Trotsky's mind [the conference] was to have been the general unification, the reunification of the party. In fact, the Bolsheviks' rejection of it reduced the participants to a bloc against them, which they baptized the 'August bloc.' The Polish Social Democrats and Plekhanov also chose not to appear.... In fact, Trotsky's return to the factional arena proved particularly unfortunate. Independent of his intentions, and even of his precautions, the positions he took after the Prague conference and his role in forming the August bloc made him appear, despite himself, as the soul of a general coalition against the Bolsheviks and an indirect supporter of the 'liquidators'."

—Broué, pp. 139-140

Every qualifier in Broué's description of Trotsky's role in the August bloc is wrong or misleading. As is clear from Trotsky's denunciation of the Bolsheviks as an "émigré clique," he was well aware that what Broué so delicately terms "general unification" was a polemical cudgel with which to attack Lenin. Trotsky did not just "appear" to be the soul of the anti-Bolshevik coalition, he *was* in fact that soul in that he was the most left-wing, most respected force outside the Bolsheviks. Trotsky's actions were not misconstrued "despite himself," but were an accurate reflection of the role he played vis-à-vis the Bolsheviks in the entire period from 1903 to at least 1915.



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**Karl Kautsky opened pages of *Die Neue Zeit* to Trotsky during latter's anti-Bolshevik period.**

The outbreak of WWI and the betrayal by the parties of the Second International, most of whose leaders supported their "own" governments in the bloody interimperialist war, shifted the grounds of dispute within the world socialist movement, forcing realignments and regroupments. Lenin and Trotsky both fought against the imperialist war, and both attended the gathering of antiwar socialists held in Zimmerwald, Switzerland in September 1915. Broué argues that after Zimmerwald, despite "real disagreements" between Lenin and Trotsky, there was "a reasonable prospect for a gradual rapprochement between the two men who in reality were divided only [sic!] by the 1903 split, which had long since been outdated." What Broué slides over is the fact that Lenin never repudiated the 1903 split—instead he generalized from it to a fully-formed *theoretical* position on the necessity for revolutionary cadres to organize a vanguard party, separate from reformist and centrist tendencies. Trotsky was ultimately won to Lenin's side on this question in 1917.

There is something anachronistic and evocative of the worst aspects of French political traditions in Broué's repeated presentation of Trotsky as a simple "star," "freelancer," too busy being "a leader of men" and giving brilliant speeches before and after the Revolution to have been a "party man" or to have had the time to "familiarize himself with [the] faction fights in the corridors." Trotsky was a factionalist before 1917—on the wrong side. But his program of conciliationism could never have built the sort of hard faction that could win leadership in the party, nor the kind of party that could take state power.

In his admiration for Trotsky the left-Menshevik, Broué also never considers the potential authority that Trotsky would have gained and retained among stalwart Bolsheviks had he come over to Lenin's side as a hard party man in 1903—an authority that would have served him well in the subsequent period when he fought to carry forward the authentic Bolshevik program against Stalin's usurpers.

The fact is that Broué—whose years as a Lambertist witnessed the consummation of numerous rotten blocs on the national and international arenas—*agrees* with Trotsky's conciliationism before 1917, and much prefers Trotsky the anti-Leninist to Trotsky the Bolshevik. Dealing with the pre-1917 Trotsky Broué subtly puts *Lenin* under the gun, surely

an interpretation that will not pass unappreciated by the unfortunately pervasively anti-Leninist contemporary Soviet intelligentsia.

### Kronstadt and Georgia

Broué adds little to what is already known of Trotsky's activity during the period from 1917 through 1923. But he does stress the elements of dispute between Trotsky and some of the "Old Bolsheviks" on issues ranging from military tactics during the Civil War to Trotsky's insistence on the need for central planning to rebuild the war-ravaged economy. These disputes are useful background for understanding the factional battles and line-ups of the late 1920s.

More tendentious is his chapter on Kronstadt and the Sovietization of Georgia in 1921. Artificially lumping together these two events in a separate chapter entitled "The Crisis of the Revolution," Broué subtly attempts to imply that what really got Trotsky worried about the degeneration of the Revolution were these two Menshevik touchstones. Making liberal use of the definitive book by Paul Avrich on the mutiny of the Kronstadt sailors, he still downplays the existence of a *plot* between the insurgents and the external counterrevolution, which is documented in Avrich's book despite the author's anti-Bolshevik stand.

Broué also denatures the attitude of Lenin and Trotsky on the question of the Sovietization of previously Menshevik-led Georgia in 1921, which came about as a result of the internal uprising led by the Georgian Communists actively supported by an intervention of the Red Army. The independent states in the Caucasus during the Civil War sought and found the direct military protection of the imperialists—first the Germans and then the British—posing a direct threat to the Revolution.

Lenin was very preoccupied with the correct timing of the Soviet intervention. He insisted on bending over backward to make all possible concessions to the Georgian nationalist intellectuals and small traders to secure their support for a socialist Soviet Republic in Georgia; he was also rightly concerned that leading Bolsheviks on the spot (e.g., Ordjonikidze and Stalin) did not sufficiently share these concerns. But Broué implies that Lenin was "reticent" on the *principle* of military support to the Georgian insurrection by the Red Army. Moreover, Broué claims that the invasion of Georgia was the first time Soviet Russia intervened outside its "recognized borders." (Recognized by *whom*? The Civil War was at this time just drawing to a close and the whole of the Caucasus had previously been part of the tsarist empire.) Soviet military interventions had already taken Azerbaijan (April 1920) and Armenia (December 1920).

Taking the Caucasus back was not controversial in the Bolshevik Party. Not only was the military threat real, but the region had provided prerevolutionary Russia with two-thirds of its oil, three-fourths of its manganese, one-fourth of its copper and much of its lead. On 8 April 1920 the Central Committee of the Russian party set up a special Caucasus Bureau to direct the military and political offensive in the area. Ordjonikidze was in charge of it. After taking Baku, Ordjonikidze had proposed an invasion of Georgia in May 1920, but the CC opposed this because Poland had just invaded the Ukraine. Indeed, at that time Soviet troops had already taken much of Armenia—but they had to withdraw to fight in the Ukraine and the Armenian Dashnak nationalist forces gained the upper hand again.

Far from being part and parcel of the crisis, exemplified



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**Red Army marches into Tbilisi, 1921. Red Army intervention spiked imperialist threat to Revolution and defended Georgian Bolsheviks against repression under Menshevik government.**

by Kronstadt, that led to both the New Economic Policy (NEP) and the banning of factions, the Georgia military intervention was a mop-up operation representing the end of the Civil War. The "bitter taste" that Broué claims this operation left in Trotsky's mouth exists only in Broué's. Broué claims that Trotsky defended the intervention in Georgia only out of party "solidarity." He *censors* Trotsky and does not even quote from the pamphlet in which Trotsky makes a principled refutation of the venomous arguments of the social democrats of that time:

"In any case, we cannot be accused of turning the zig-zags of historical development into traps, for, while actually recognizing the right of national self-determination, we take care to explain to the masses its limited historic significance, and we never put it above the interests of the proletarian revolution."

—Trotsky, *Between Red and White* (1922)

Furthermore, Trotsky wrote in 1940, when he was no longer bound by the party "solidarity" of 20 years earlier, that Georgia had "constituted an open gateway for imperialist assault in the Caucasus.... Forcible sovietization was justified: the safeguarding of the socialist revolution comes before formal democratic principles" ("Balance Sheet of the Finnish Events"). In Broué's treatment of Georgia we learn more about his own social-democratic criteria for opposing the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 than we do about the Bolshevik Party's policy on the national question or Trotsky's analysis of the degeneration of the revolution.

In addition, the decision to occupy Georgia was not simply a matter of weighing the defense of Soviet Russia against the right of national self-determination. It also involved weighing the defense of the revolutionary vanguard in Georgia against the right of national self-determination. Broué briefly notes in passing the anti-Communist repression by the Menshevik government. In fact, the Bolshevik government had attempted to find a *modus vivendi* with the

Tiflis, Mensheviks. In May 1920 the Soviet government signed a treaty recognizing the independence of Georgia. In turn, the Mensheviks' regime pledged "to recognize the right of free existence and activity of the Communist Party...and in particular its right to free meetings and publications" (quoted in Firuz Kazemzadeh, *The Struggle for Transcaucasia (1917-1921)*). When this treaty was signed, over 900 Georgian Bolsheviks were languishing in the Mensheviks' prisons.

The Tiflis Mensheviks flagrantly violated their pledge to grant basic democratic rights to the Communists. In fact, the effect of the repression was worse since many Bolsheviks attempted to utilize the promised legalization. Kazemzadeh, who is by no means sympathetic to the Bolsheviks, writes:

"In spite of Russian supervision and support, the legalized Communist Party of Georgia did not thrive. It can even be said that legalization hurt its activities, for many persons were lulled into a sense of security, admitted their party membership and were duly noted on black lists by the Georgian police. At the first indication of subversive activity the Georgian Government resumed the persecution of Communists, jailing some and exiling others. It has been claimed that over two thousand Bolsheviks were exiled between May and November, 1920."

—Kazemzadeh, *The Struggle for Transcaucasia (1917-1921)*

Had the Soviet government not intervened militarily, it would have meant acquiescing to the political destruction of the Georgian Communists. The strongest advocates of utilizing the Red Army to overthrow the Tiflis Menshevik regime were the Georgian Bolsheviks, who felt betrayed by the May 1920 treaty and especially its aftermath. Stalin, Ordjonikidze and Kirov were under pressure from their Georgian comrades. The later conflict of the Tiflis Bolshevik leadership with Stalin/Ordjonikidze should not obscure their ardent support for Sovietization in 1921.

Military "export of the revolution" has been excoriated by current Soviet writers ever since Gorbachev proposed to



-UPI



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War Commissar Trotsky and First Deputy Sklyansky during Civil War (left). Stalin, shown with Voroshilov (above), led "Tsaritsyn" group opposing Trotsky leadership during Civil War.

pull out of Afghanistan in a vain attempt to appease the imperialists. In fact "export of the revolution" is simply a special case of pursuing revolution by all means. Trotsky explains:

"A workers' state, in recognizing the right of self-determination, thereby recognizes that revolutionary coercion is not an all-powerful historical factor. Soviet Russia does not by any means intend to make its military power take the place of the revolutionary efforts of the proletariats of other countries. The conquest of proletarian power must be an outcome of proletarian political experience. This does not mean that the revolutionary efforts of the workers of Georgia or any other country, must not receive any military support from outside. It is only essential that this support should come at a moment when the need for it has been created by the political development of the workers, and recognized by the class-conscious revolutionary vanguard, who have won the sympathy of the majority of the workers. There are questions of revolutionary strategy, and not a formal democratic ritual."

—Trotsky, *Between Red and White* (1922)

During the Civil War, the revolution was directly linked to the fortunes of war. In his defense of the Soviet intervention in Georgia, Trotsky pointed out that "the 'democracies' of Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and even of Poland, owe their existence to the fact that, at the critical moment of their creation, foreign military forces were supporting the bourgeoisie and oppressing the proletariat." We would add that if the October Revolution did not spread to these countries, it was also due to the weakness of the Red Army, which could not be on all fronts at the same time and several times was obliged to withdraw from a secured position in order to concentrate its forces elsewhere.

All this is of little import to Broué, who in his eagerness to present a "likable" Trotsky also claims, for example, that Trotsky's opposition to Lenin over the Red Army's march on Warsaw in 1921 was because "[Trotsky] didn't believe in 'jack-booted missionaries' nor in exporting the revolution on the point of bayonets." There were differences in the Bolshevik Party on the Polish campaign, but they were differences of evaluation concerning the maturity and the consciousness of the Polish proletariat, which Lenin had

been convinced would rise up and greet the Red Army. No one thought of objecting in principle to the military campaign. Moreover, all eyes were fixed on Germany and the impact that the Soviet campaign in Poland could have on the crucial *German* proletariat.

### The Degeneration of the October Revolution

For the International Communist League there are three decisive indications that, by the time of the 13th Party Conference and Lenin's death several days after its conclusion in January 1924, the qualitative first step of Thermidorian degeneration had occurred: the individuals that administered the workers state had changed; the means by which state power was wielded had changed; and the program that was being put into practice had changed, leading to Stalin's anti-Marxist "theory" of "socialism in one country." Trotsky himself later dated the decisive degeneration of the Soviet workers state to the 1923-24 period in his 1935 essay, "The Workers' State, Thermidor and Bonapartism": "The Thermidoreans can celebrate, approximately, the tenth anniversary of their victory."

The key to the defeat of the Left Opposition is to be found in the defeat of the German Revolution in October 1923, which reinforced the isolation of the backward and impoverished Soviet state and put wind in the sails of the conservative apparatus. But this neither explains nor justifies Trotsky's failure to follow Lenin's urgings and carry out their agreement to open a major campaign against Stalin at the 12th Party Congress in March 1923, particularly since Lenin was still alive and had directly asked him to do so. Even a partial or temporary victory over the conservative apparatus might have provided the respite needed for the accretion of revolutionary forces internationally. We addressed this question in "Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!" (*Spartacist* [English edition] No. 41-42, Winter 1987-88):

"But Trotsky pulled back from the sharp struggle which Lenin urged. He was unable to discern in advance where Stalin was going (Stalin probably didn't know either). And he was in some isolation: while now being the number two



Oxford University Press

**Trotsky addresses Second Congress of Communist International, 1920. Broué passes over Trotsky's central role in early International.**

leader in the Soviet state, he had only joined the Bolsheviks after the February Revolution (despite then having personally led the October). He feared being thought personally self-seeking. Trotsky was constrained to be too modest for too long when the necessities of maintaining a revolutionary policy required that he urgently push the Leninist policy which he espoused, and therefore push himself."

In his recent article, "Lenin and Trotsky 1922-1923" (published in English in *Marxist Monthly*, 1 May 1990), Leningrad professor V.I. Startsev also argues that Trotsky was insufficiently firm in backing Lenin against Stalin. During the Civil War there was already a polarization in the Red Army command; one grouping around the Commissar of War Trotsky and his first deputy Sklyansky, and a group around Stalin, Voroshilov and Budenny. The latter group conducted an almost continuous attempt, usually unsuccessful, to apply a different strategy during the war, their sabotage of the Polish campaign of 1920 being the best-known example. Stalin's grouping became known as the "Tsaritsyn group"; Broué notes that it crystallized as early as 1918 "around opposition to Trotsky." Broué documents how, in the aftermath of Trotsky's defeat on the trade-union question at the 10th Party Congress in 1921, many of Trotsky's political collaborators on the Central Committee were replaced by those who were already supporters of Stalin or Zinoviev (the Central Committee elections were held, on Lenin's recommendation, on the basis of proportional representation for each faction in the discussion).

There was a long history of Lenin playing the arbiter between the Stalin and Trotsky groupings. It was only at the beginning of 1923, when he was fatally ill, that Lenin, in an addendum to a letter to the upcoming Congress (now known as Lenin's Testament), took the decision to call for the elimination of Stalin and to make a bloc with Trotsky. The longstanding existence of defined groupings with separate command centers and conflicting strategies makes Lenin's final bloc with Trotsky all the more significant. It also underlines a major failing of Trotsky's. He had to know that Stalin was his enemy. Later Trotsky's close comrade and friend Adolf Joffe, on the eve of his suicide in 1927, chastised Trotsky for not being as intransigent as Lenin in fighting for what he knew was right. The rest of Trotsky's

political career showed that he had fully drawn the lessons of that failure; he underwent a personality change rarely seen in fully formed human beings.

But in 1923, when Lenin finally decided that Trotsky was better than Stalin and made a bloc with him, Trotsky flinched and made a compromise with Kamenev that he wouldn't fight Stalin. We could argue that Trotsky's friend, the commander of the Moscow military garrison, should have come with his soldiers and assisted the delegates at the Congress in arriving at the correct decision advocated by Lenin—for instance to send Stalin to Outer Mongolia, to a menial job. Trotsky himself had occasion to point out the real dangers inherent in such a situation. But in discussing his refusal to bring his extensive support in the Red Army to bear in the internal party struggle ("How Did Stalin Defeat the Opposition?", November 1935), Trotsky, while insisting that it could have been done without a single drop of blood being shed, did not take on the compelling argument in favor: it would have bought time. In the Soviet Union buying time would have permitted the implementation of a policy of rebuilding the confidence and strength of the proletariat; Germany in 1923 was in the throes of revolution and the Chinese Revolution was to come to a head only two years later. Five years might have brought revolution in several major imperialist centers. The revolutionary proletariat will never be able to win definitively until it dominates a rationally planned world market, and that means world revolution.

Yet, strikingly, Broué has no significant discussion of Trotsky's considerable role in the early Communist International (apart from Germany where he fought to oppose the conservative impulses of the German leadership on the eve of the 1923 revolutionary upsurge). This omission is all the more glaring for an author who claims to address the "French public," since Trotsky was the main Comintern polemicist vis-à-vis the French party.

As Alec Nove has noted in his hostile, pro-Bukharin review of Broué's book (*Times Literary Supplement*, 10 March 1989), there is no significant discussion of "socialism in one country" either. This is an incomprehensible omission in any biography of Trotsky, all the more so when the

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**Principal leaders of Left Opposition, 1927.**  
**Seated, left to right:**  
 Leonid Serebriakov,  
 Karl Radek, Trotsky,  
 Mikhail Boguslavsky  
 and Evgenil  
 Preobrazhensky.  
**Standing:**  
 Christian Rakovsky,  
 Yakov Drobnis,  
 Alexander  
 Beloborodov and  
 Lev Sosnovsky.

biographer is an avowed Trotskyist. It does, however, become explicable if one takes into account Broué's appeal to Soviet historiographers: in trying to find common ground with the current Gorbachevite view of Trotsky, Broué must necessarily play down this *central* focus of Trotsky's attack on Stálinism. While contemporary Soviet writers are quite willing to give Trotsky some small credit as a leader of the Revolution and opponent of Stalin, they are unanimous in their contempt for the revolutionary internationalism of *Lenin and Trotsky*, for whom overcoming the isolation of the USSR through proletarian revolutions in the major capitalist countries, first and foremost Germany, was the ABC of a revolutionary perspective. Only under Stalin did the parties of the Communist International become transformed, first essentially into simple border guards for "socialism in one country" in the Soviet Union, and then into outright social-patriots in their own countries.

### Once Again on the "Left-Right Bloc Against the Center"

Addressing the central question that no biographer can avoid—Trotsky's hesitations and failure to fight Stalin early on—Broué begins by quoting from Trotsky's autobiography:

"I have no doubt that if I had come forward on the eve of the twelfth congress in the spirit of a 'bloc of Lenin and Trotsky' against the Stalin bureaucracy, I should have been victorious even if Lenin had taken no direct part in the struggle."  
 —*My Life* (1929)

But Broué actually devotes another, separate chapter to an evaluation of Trotsky's tactics at this time (mistitled "In One Country?"), as he devotes most of a later chapter, "Critique of the Vanquished," to an evaluation of the Left Opposition's tactics at the end of the 1920s. Curiously, both of these chapters are structured around a vituperative critique of...Isaac Deutscher.

Broué rightly rejects Deutscher's interpretation of Trotsky's defeat as a "truly classical tragedy" in which the downfall of the hero/victim was perhaps inevitable. But he then attacks Deutscher and other authors, "seekers of [Trotsky's]

errors," for "carefully avoiding calling into question the personal responsibilities of Lenin" (!) for Stalin's hold on the party:

"We stress here Lenin's long blindness, the protection he accorded for so long to the 'marvelous Georgian' [Lenin said this after Stalin wrote the book on the national question in 1913, not in the '20s] and to those whom he was ultimately unable to politically crush in his last struggle, only because this attitude [of Lenin's] between November 1920 and October 1922 undoubtedly weighed heavily in Trotsky's hesitations and errors."  
 —Broué, p. 389

Broué basically alibis Trotsky's vacillations.

In "Critique of the Vanquished" Broué quotes Deutscher's accurate statement that, after the winter of 1926-27, "the whole conduct of the Opposition was to be governed by this principle: 'With Stalin against Bukharin?—Yes. With Bukharin against Stalin?—Never!'" Broué denies that this was Trotsky's position, and in the process he presents the three major factions in the Bolshevik Party in apolitical sociological terms. As for the capitalist-restorationist danger represented by the Right Opposition (the political basis for Deutscher's thumbnail sketch of the Left Opposition's strategy), Broué argues that Trotsky (and Deutscher) overestimated this danger:

"It becomes rapidly apparent to today's observer, researcher or historian, that the Right, by taking certain spectacular positions—Bukharin's famous 'enrich yourselves' or a few intellectual bravuras on the part of certain of his disciples such as Slepko—monopolized the attention of the watchful Left, whereas the reality of power, and thus that of concessions (to the kulak for example), was indisputably to be found at the head of the bureaucratic apparatus which structured and supported the Center."  
 —Broué, p. 588

Broué's plea for a left-right bloc against Stalin, where "democracy" is primary and all other questions subordinate, illuminates the political biases which color Broué's portrayal of Trotsky's struggle against Stalin. Here Broué relies on an 80-page article by J. Caillosse which has now been published in Broué's journal *Cahiers Léon Trotsky* (No. 37, March 1989). Caillosse analyzes in minute detail the



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**Stalin and Kirov. Stalin had Kirov assassinated in 1934, beginning process of purge in Stalin faction.**

development of Trotsky's analysis of the Russian Thermidor. Caillosse and Broué conclude that analogies with the French Revolution so fascinated the Russian Bolsheviks that the Left Opposition was blinded to the reality of Stalin and his faction, and gave "a too exclusively political interpretation" to the Stalinist Center. What Caillosse and Broué ignore is what Trotsky understood only too well: it was Bukharin's policies of conciliation toward the kulaks and "industrialization at a snail's pace" that posed the more immediate and dangerous threat to the nascent workers state. Stalin may have been a more sinister figure, but if Bukharin's policies had won out it is an open question whether there would even be a Soviet Union today. Today's perestroika bureaucrats understandably started out by expressing their affinity for Bukharin's program.

When the possibility of a "left-right" bloc against Stalin was raised in the 1920s and early 1930s the Left Opposition adamantly opposed it, unless narrowly confined to the question of restoring inner-party democracy. Trotsky spoke of "negotiation with Bukharin in the same way that duelists parley through their seconds over the rules and regulations by which they will abide" (cited by Deutscher in *The Prophet Unarmed*). Trotsky's opposition to a political bloc with the Right Opposition was quite simply key to the continuity of the revolutionary program of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party: "democracy" was not a program in itself but rather the circumstance in which the revolutionaries of the Left Opposition, combatting the Stalinist betrayals and usurpation of the political power of the working class, could fight to reconquer the Communist Party for Lenin's program.

For Caillosse, by the time Trotsky had corrected his analogy with the French Thermidor to locate the Russian Thermidor not in the future as a threat of capitalist counter-revolution, but as a political counterrevolution which had already taken place in 1923-24, it was... "too late." However, if Trotsky later revised his analogy between the degeneration of the Russian Revolution and the French Thermidor—in order to make it more precise—he never called into question the policy that he had previously followed. For Trotsky, the

bureaucracy was a caste with a dual nature, parasitically resting on proletarian property forms but defending its own anti-working-class interests and attempting to appease the imperialists. For Broué and all the Stalinophobic fake-Trotskyists, the Stalinist bureaucracy is supposedly "counter-revolutionary from A to Z" and thus *without contradictions*, so any and all anti-Stalinist blocs are permissible and desirable. Broué is obliged to recognize that this was not Trotsky's policy, though he clearly believes it should have been.

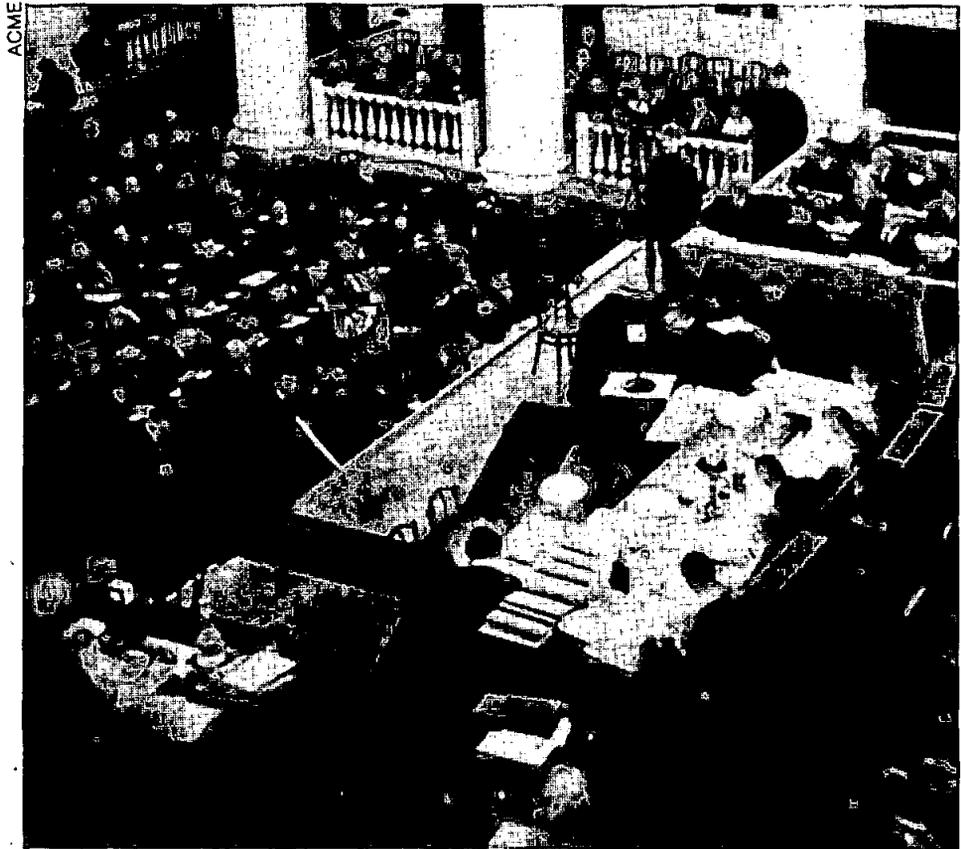
### The Left Opposition

Where Broué adds to Deutscher's account is in the chapters which deal with the Left Opposition in the Soviet Union from Trotsky's exile to Alma Ata in January 1928 to the Kirov assassination in December 1934. These chapters detail not only the membership and geographical distribution of the Left Opposition, but indicate many of the discussions and debates in the extensive correspondence which was carried on after Trotsky's exile, noting in particular the publication by the Old Bolshevik Boris Eltsin in Moscow of a substantial internal bulletin of the Left Opposition in 1928-29.

This section of the book bears witness to the power of the Left Opposition's program and runs counter to the presentation of Trotsky as a visionary with an erroneous strategy that one finds elsewhere in this biography. As Broué shows, the Left Opposition was a living political organization that cannot be reduced to Trotsky alone. While people such as Rakovsky, Preobrazhensky or Pyatakov are among the best known, there was an entire layer of younger militants, recruited around the Revolution and the Civil War, who also played important roles, as well as significant numbers of Old Bolsheviks. One of the latter was Veronica Kasparova, who joined the Bolsheviks in 1904. She had been a political commissar in the Red Army during the Civil War, and led the Communist International's work among the women of the East. As a senior member of the Left Opposition during the late 1920s, she was a co-signer with Rakovsky and other leading figures of major statements by the Left Opposition in 1929 and 1930 after she had been deported to Kurgan in 1928.

Broué reports repression against Left Opposition centers not just in Moscow and Leningrad, but also Kiev, Baku, Tiflis, Odessa, Dnepropetrovsk and a number of other cities. While the Moscow demonstration of the Left Opposition on the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution is well known as its last public appearance, Broué points out that the Left Opposition continued to issue leaflets, including in factories, opposing particular instances of repression and firings of Left Opposition sympathizers. In Moscow, 10,000 copies of a leaflet celebrating the eleventh anniversary of the October Revolution were distributed in November 1928. While capitulations increased with the deportations and jailings, significant numbers of new members also joined the Left Opposition.

In 1928, when Stalin turned against the Bukharin-led Right Opposition, forcibly collectivizing the peasantry and initiating a forced-march campaign of industrialization, there was disorientation in the Left Opposition ranks, although in different ways both Deutscher and Broué overstate the polarization at this time. There were important figures, including I.N. Smirnov and Preobrazhensky, who capitulated to Stalin, using the rationale that Stalin had, after all, "adopted" the



**Scene of the Infamous  
Moscow Trials in the  
1930s. Stalin exterminated  
almost the entire cadre  
of Old Bolsheviks.**

thrust of the Left Opposition's economic program. The effect of these capitulations was compounded after Trotsky's deportation to Turkey in January 1929, when repression increased substantially. While Trotsky estimated there were 8,000 militants arrested during 1928, deportations rose from 700 at the time of Rakovsky's "Declaration" on behalf of the Left Opposition in August 1929 to some 7,000 by November 1930. The result was the destruction of the Left Opposition in the main proletarian centers of the Soviet Union, though it remained organized in the Siberian exile camps where most of its leading members had been imprisoned.

In his chapter on Trotsky's year of exile in Alma Ata, Deutscher quotes approvingly from a letter from Radek to Sosnovsky, "I cannot believe that Lenin's entire work and the entire work of the revolution should have left behind only 5,000 Communists in all of Russia." Deutscher accepts that this should have been a cause for demoralization in the ranks of the Opposition. But if there were that many Left Oppositionists in 1928, the figure is not far from the number of real communists that Lenin thought existed in 1922:

"At the summit of the power structure we have, we do not know exactly how many, but at least a few thousand, and at most a few tens of thousands, of our own people. But at the base of the hierarchy, hundreds of thousands of former functionaries that we have inherited from the Tsar and bourgeois society are working, partly consciously, partly unconsciously, against us."

—Lenin, "Speech to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International" (1922)

Five thousand organized and experienced communists can be an immense force for social change. Stalin understood this very well when in 1924 he used the induction of hundreds of thousands of new members in the "Lenin Levy" to dilute the cadre, and therefore the consciousness, of the Bolshevik Party. The real problem in 1928 was that the

5,000 communists were all in prison or exile.

By 1931-32 Stalin's crude, brutal and ill-conceived economic policies, which resulted in the deaths of millions through a combination of repression, famine and mind-boggling economic dislocation, impelled some of the "Trotskyist capitulators" to draw a balance sheet. Smirnov clandestinely gathered a group of "ex-capitulators" around him and on a trip to Berlin in May 1931 met with Trotsky's son, Leon Sedov, establishing a communication link to Trotsky in exile.

The organization of a Left Opposition center in Moscow in 1932 took place in the context of a general resurgence of opposition to Stalin. V.V. Lominadze and Jan Sten, former "young turks" in the Stalin faction, had also organized a clandestine anti-Stalin grouping. Sten was a brilliant intellectual from whom Stalin had requested "private instruction in dialectics." After the experience, Sten is reported to have told friends that Stalin would do things that would make the Dreyfus and Beilis anti-Semitic show trials pale in comparison. In 1932 the Zinovievists were also organizing themselves, and Zinoviev reportedly told a representative of the Left Opposition that the greatest political error he ever made was the break with Trotsky in 1927. In September 1932, Sedov received information that Smirnov's group had agreed to "bloc" with Zinoviev and Sten/Lominadze. Broué thus confirms that this bloc did in fact exist, although Trotsky and Sedov had to deny it at the time of the Moscow Trials in an effort to protect comrades still in the Soviet Union.

In a letter to Sedov, Trotsky explicitly approved the bloc agreement, which for the moment simply provided for the exchange of information, but he underlined that what was involved was a bloc and not a fusion. He argued against the desire of his "allies" to include in the bloc a new anti-Stalin grouping of former Bukharin Right Oppositionists led by



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**Trotsky speaking  
at funeral of  
Adolf Joffe,  
November 1927.  
This was  
Trotsky's last  
public speech  
in the USSR.**

M. Ryutin and A.N. Slepkov. This group had issued, in August 1932, the notorious "Ryutin Manifesto."

The Manifesto announced the formation of the "Union of Marxist-Leninists" under the slogans "Down with the Dictatorship of Stalin and his Clique. Down with the Usurper of the Party's Rights. Long Live the CPSU(B)! Long Live Leninism!" Although it is doubtful that Trotsky ever saw the actual Manifesto, he did write to Sedov arguing that the Left Opposition should oppose its central thrust, the slogan "Down with Stalin." Trotsky thought that this slogan could open the door to capitalist-restorationist forces, and stressed that use of the slogan could give the impression that the Opposition in power would engage in Stalin-like repression against its opponents in the party.

Broué's entire presentation on the development of the various oppositional groupings in 1931-32 downplays their differences in an attempt to paint a Trotsky-Bukharin bloc as a realistic and principled possibility. Claiming that the "old Right" was moving toward the "old" demands for party democracy of the "old" Left Opposition, he falsely describes the Left Opposition's call for a slowing down on the economic front as "a sort of return to the NEP." Broué says that Trotsky envisaged the possibility of a joint political statement of the Soviet 1932 Opposition bloc, but he does not cite a draft 1932 letter written by Trotsky, presumably to Smirnov. In this letter Trotsky argues for the drafting of a *separate* political statement to be issued by the Left Opposition. In addition, Trotsky writes:

"Concerning the Right Oppositionists: 1. The Rights now doubtless appear as an enormous, shapeless blob. All the discontented people, in the party and outside its boundaries, must be gravitating toward the Right, including potential supporters of the Left Opposition; who find it difficult by hearsay to understand the dialectical character of our tactics. The question of the differentiation of the Rights will become one of the most serious questions of our party politics.... 3. Disagreements with the Rights will inevitably be revealed at the second stage of the turn. Just for that reason, even in the first stage—with complete honesty toward the Rights—it is intolerable to mix up the ranks and blunt the distinctions."

—Trotsky, "A Left Opposition Statement Should Be Prepared" (Autumn 1932)

Unfortunately, Trotsky was unable even to initiate a process of political differentiation within the various anti-Stalin groupings which emerged in the summer of 1932. The GPU discovered the existence of the "Ryutin Manifesto" in September and began a wave of arrests and expulsions from the

party. This wave of repression reached into the ranks of the Opposition bloc as well (Zinoviev and Kamenev were expelled from the party for reading the Manifesto and not reporting its existence to the party; Sten was exiled to Siberia; leading Left Oppositionists were arrested).

In March of 1933, in the wake of Hitler's coming to power in Germany, Trotsky wrote a secret letter to the Politburo of the CPSU offering a united front to revive the party: "The fate of the workers' state and of the international revolution for many years to come is involved." This is the appeal which Broué disingenuously says is "a serious problem" for the historian and he finds that it is "very difficult" to "interpret correctly and in a precise way this moment of Trotsky's policy toward the Soviet Union." What Broué can't accept is the idea that Trotsky still contemplated a bloc with the Stalin faction. Broué can't stand to "interpret" the fact that Trotsky continued to stand for the unconditional military defense of the Soviet Union, *including military blocs with Stalin and the bureaucracy against the imperialists and internal restorationist forces.* Broué's "difficulty" with this issue is consistent with his support, while a Lambertist, for the capitalist-restorationist Polish Solidarność, a position he reiterates in this biography.

Broué cites the possibility of a link between Trotsky's March 1933 letter and a reported meeting of Trotsky with a representative of Kirov, leader of the Stalin faction in Leningrad, though as Broué points out, the only known report of this meeting places it in the summer of 1934, long after Trotsky's letter was written and only months before Stalin had Kirov assassinated. (Kirov reportedly wanted to know under what conditions Trotsky would agree to be allowed to return to the Soviet Union and reinstated in the Communist Party.)

Whether or not this meeting ever occurred, the possibility that it might was clearly Stalin's nightmare. Almost 300 delegates voted against Stalin in the Central Committee elections at the 17th Party Congress in January 1934; soon after Stalin embarked on a bloody purge of his *own* faction, beginning with the assassination of Kirov. In his speech to the 20th Congress Khrushchev reported that of 1,966 delegates with advisory or voting rights at the 17th Congress, 1,108 were subsequently arrested. Eighty percent of the delegates to the 17th Congress had joined the party prior to 1920; by the 18th Congress in March 1939 only 19 percent of the delegates could report that they had joined prior to 1920. It appears that Stalin murdered the majority of the

delegates to his own 1934 "Congress of Victors." Current Soviet historical sources such as the two-volume *Names That Have Returned* (Moscow, 1989) do not sort out the elements of what was essentially a process of purging the Stalin faction from purges of the oppositions.

Many of the details of Trotsky's contacts with those in the Soviet Union remain murky. What Broué does demonstrate is the continued existence of a more or less organized opposition which looked to the political alternative represented by Trotsky's positions through the period up to the Kirov assassination in December 1934—even if a large percentage of it was in the camps or had been deported. It took Stalin a good ten years to fully liquidate the Opposition and consolidate the rule of his clique after the decisive degeneration of 1923-24. But the Left Opposition remained alive as the authentic communist current internationally, going on to found the Fourth International in 1938. This stands in contrast to those other Russian oppositional currents who believed that the fight against Stalinism could be reduced to the slogan "Down with Stalin."

### Forging the Fourth International

In the last third of the book, dealing with the struggle for the Fourth International, Broué goes into detailed description of Trotsky's personal life and of the personnel and organizational development of the various groupings Trotsky intersected. But Broué has by and large ignored the wealth of information in the Harvard Exile Papers on the workings of the International Secretariat and its relations with Trotsky and the individual sections, downplaying the major political and programmatic issues that were at the center of Trotsky's political battles in the last ten years of his life. Ironically, Deutscher and Broué coincide in their treatment of this question, as Tamara Deutscher reported:

"Isaac decided to concentrate exclusively on Trotsky's private correspondence and set aside the documents dealing with the Fourth International. 'As one read them, one can hear the repetitive and monotonous rolling of the Sisyphian rock,' he remarked. This material, more or less familiar to him, would be invaluable to the future historian of the Fourth International—'if there ever is one'."

—"Work in Progress," *Isaac Deutscher, the Man and His Work* (1971)

Deutscher himself writes of a mass of documents: "Of over 300 files, containing about 20,000 documents of the Closed Section of *The Archives*, approximately nine-tenths consists of Trotsky's correspondence with his followers. A very large proportion of the Open Section of *The Archives* also consists of his writings on the policy, tactics, and organization of various Trotskyist groups." A history of the Fourth International based on this material remains to be written.

Faithful to the lessons of Lenin's construction of the Bolshevik Party, Trotsky's fight for the Fourth International necessitated lengthy and repeated polemics with his own supporters, for the Left Opposition was far from being a homogeneous grouping. Trotsky's writings from this period are an indispensable textbook for revolutionaries, dealing with difficulties that will continually reassert themselves, such as how to disentangle internal disputes. While Broué repeatedly stresses that Trotsky had a "historical perspective" concerning the struggle against Stalin, and had "his eyes focused on a worldwide horizon and decades," this "historical perspective" becomes an excuse to disappear the sense of urgency Trotsky felt in the struggle to forge an



20 October 1938 issue of newspaper of American Socialist Workers Party announces founding of Fourth International. Trotsky sent recorded message to New York meeting to celebrate FI founding.

International Left Opposition and, after Hitler's rise to power, the Fourth International.

Posing his own rhetorical question as to whether Trotsky should have, "as Marx and Engels more or less did for a period of time," withdrawn from directly political activity and concentrated on literary work, Broué abstains: "I think that it is not the role of a biographer to answer such a question, but merely to note that his subject categorically rejected any such possibility." In the first place, Marx and Engels did not "voluntarily" withdraw from active political struggle in their time, as academic "Marxists" would have it, but were responding to a hiatus in the class struggle. Secondly, for Trotsky to have confined himself to literary activity in the 1930s—with the scourge of fascism threatening all of Europe, with revolution in Spain and a revolutionary situation in France—would have been *criminal irresponsibility*.

Trotsky saw the construction of the Fourth International—"rightly or wrongly," comments Broué—as "the key to a revolutionary perspective" during this period. For Deutscher to disparage the struggle for the Fourth International is understandable and, indeed, a measure of his political consistency: he opposed its foundation in 1938. Broué is ostentatiously agnostic on the question. Trotsky certainly had no doubt about the political significance of this final achievement of his life:

"For the sake of clarity I would put it this way. Had I not been present in 1917 in Petersburg, the October Revolution would still have taken place—on the condition that Lenin was present and in command.... Thus I cannot speak of the 'indispensability' of my work, even about the period from 1917 to 1921. But now my work is 'indispensable' in the



Roger Viollet

**Workers manning barricades in Barcelona, May 1937 (above). Lacking a resolute revolutionary party, workers were defeated. Bodies of POUM and anarchist militants (right).**



Historia 16

full sense of the word. There is no arrogance in this claim at all. The collapse of the two Internationals has posed a problem which none of the leaders of these Internationals is at all equipped to solve. The vicissitudes of my personal fate have confronted me with this problem and armed me with important experience in dealing with it. There is now no one except me to carry out the mission of arming a new generation with the revolutionary method over the heads of the leaders of the Second and Third International."

—Trotsky's *Diary in Exile* (1935)

## The Popular Front

For Trotsky, the popular front was "*the main question of proletarian class strategy for this epoch*" but Broué does not quote this categorical statement, made in a 1936 letter to the Central Committee of the Dutch section of the Fourth International. Appropriately the main treatment of the popular front in the book comes in reference to Spain. Yet in the mid-1930s, the popular front was a vital and central international question, including in France. It drew a sharp divide between Trotskyists and various centrists who professed to be Trotskyists but manifested either vacillation or capitulation toward the popular front. It has done so as well in contemporary France, particularly since the formation of the Union of the Left in 1972. With the exception of our party all ostensible Trotskyist tendencies have given backhanded support to class collaboration by calling for a vote to workers parties in the popular front.

It is only from the standpoint of his intransigent opposition to the popular front that Trotsky's polemics and tactical proposals in this period, such as the French Turn, can be understood. Trotsky continually tried to find a lever to act on reality, to intersect subjectively revolutionary militants of the Stalinist and social-democratic parties who were revolted by Hitler's rise to power and the abject abdication of the Stalinist leadership, in order to forge a new communist leadership capable of seizing power from the bourgeoisie.

It was in Spain that the popular front revealed its full treachery with the blood of the workers. After years of unheeded urging by Trotsky on the need for political clarity, much of the Spanish Left Opposition, led by Andrés Nin and Juan Andrade, fused with a grouping around J. Maurín on a centrist program to form the Workers Party of Marxist Unification (POUM). The POUM immediately affiliated to the centrist London Bureau and shortly thereafter entered a popular-front government in Catalonia. While quoting Trotsky's well-known statement that the "three conditions" necessary to successfully resolve a revolutionary crisis are "a party, again a party, and once again a party," Broué for the most part cites Trotsky's most "pedagogical" comments on the POUM. There is little space given to harsh polemics like the following: "As for Nin, during the whole revolution he proved to be a completely passive dilettante who does not in the slightest degree think of actually participating in the mass struggle, of winning of the masses, of leading them to the revolution, etc."

Broué, arguing that Trotsky had little possibility of reversing the course of events in Spain, minimizes the capitulation of the POUM and emphasizes instead Trotsky's attacks on the criminal role of the Stalinists in beheading the Spanish proletariat. Thus he sees in Trotsky's later writings on Spain "a sort of almost mechanical commentary on the way in which the Stalinist leadership led to defeat in the civil war and demonstrated how to lose a war." In the heated debate over the POUM, which was a debate on how to construct a revolutionary leadership in Spain, he sees:

"...an occasion for Trotsky to wage new polemics in the very ranks of the Fourth International, against Sneevliet and Vereeken, who defended the policy of the POUM against its critics, against the American ultra-leftists who, following the example of certain European ultra-lefts, called for a 'defeatist' attitude toward Republican Spain.... At the same time Trotsky had to argue discreetly against Max Shachtman who, under the pretext of fighting fascism, would have been

prepared to vote political confidence in a Negrín government by granting it military credits."

—Broué, pp. 889-890

As far as Broué is concerned, all the oppositions to Trotsky were equivalent: from the ultralefts to a variety of centrists. One would not know from this passage that Trotsky concentrated his fire on those centrists who in one form or another wanted to capitulate to the popular front by being accommodating to the POUM.

### The Left and Broué

The successive publication of the volumes of Deutscher's trilogy, as well as his *Stalin*, provoked at the time hundreds of pages of reviews and debates. It is significant that Broué's work has not elicited much commentary, either laudatory or critical. In fact, nearly all the fake-Trotskyists are fundamentally in agreement with the underlying social-democratic anti-Soviet premises of the biography, even if nuanced differences exist. There have been two major reviews to date, one by Ernest Mandel (*Critique Communiste* No. 79-80, November-December 1988) and the other by the centrist English Workers Power group (*Permanent Revolution* No. 8, Spring 1989).

Mandel's generally fulsome review of Broué's book ("a great, a very great book") could only be taken as an invitation to Broué to join forces with the United Secretariat (USec) which Mandel leads. While Mandel is constrained to point out how vindictive Broué is toward Deutscher, his only significant criticism is that Broué does not go far enough toward supporting Trotsky's left-Menshevism in the 1905-1917 period! Mandel complains that Broué should have continued his pro-Menshevik critique into the 1920s and he outrageously claims that, after the Revolution, Lenin had "corrected the excessive formulations in *What Is To Be Done?* concerning the Jacobinism of professional revolutionists."

For Mandel and the USec, the lesson to be drawn from the period of "war communism" and the NEP which followed is the need for a "general theory of working-class self-management" and "political pluralism," i.e., a multiparty system in which Mandel explicitly means to include bourgeois and petty-bourgeois (kulak) organizations! By contrast we of the ICL, following Lenin, advocate full freedom to organize for parties which defend the proletarian property forms—soviet democracy. Mandel openly tries to paint Trotsky as a crypto-Gorbachevite.

The Workers Power approach is more interesting. Like most centrists, they have a sharp eye for the faults of anyone to their right. They rightly criticize the absence of virtually any mention of centrism as well as Broué's support for Trotsky's left-Menshevik period. At the same time, their own centrism prevents them from drawing any political conclusions from the correct points they make. For example, in an otherwise comprehensive review, they fail to raise the question of Broué's treatment of the popular front in France and Spain.

In their discussion of the 1932 bloc of Russian oppositionists, Workers Power asserts that Trotsky "neither rules out cooperation with elements of the right in the struggle for the regeneration of the party nor with the Stalin faction itself against counter-revolution." If this vague statement means anything more than the permissibility of episodic and narrowly defined cooperation with the Right Opposition, then it is flatly counterposed to Trotsky's stated views. The

regeneration of the party was a matter of re-establishing the Bolshevik program at the head of the party. On this question, Trotsky wrote:

"We are prepared to conclude an agreement with any section of the party in any place, on any particular matter, for even a partial restoration of the party statutes. In relation to the rights and centrists as political factions, this means that we are ready to conclude an agreement with them about the conditions for an irreconcilable struggle. That's all."

—Trotsky, "On the Topics of the Day" (1928)

In practice, Workers Power accepts ongoing "cooperation" with outright bourgeois restorationists against the Stalinist bureaucracy and it *does* rule out a united front with the Stalinists against counterrevolution, as over the suppression of Polish Solidarność (which Workers Power acknowledged to be capitalist-restorationist) in 1981.

### Trotsky's Legacy

Broué's concluding chapter reveals most starkly his attitude toward Trotsky's position of steadfast defense of the Soviet Union coupled with the call for political revolution. For Broué, the Soviet Union since World War II has been characterized by "bureaucratic military operations of conquest and occupation," and he mentions as examples the suppression of Solidarność' incipient counterrevolutionary coup in 1981 and the Red Army's intervention in Afghanistan. While Broué acknowledges that today's East European oppositionists (many of whom are now, two years after the publication of *Trotsky*, at the head of pro-capitalist-restorationist governments) are far from being Trotskyists, he claims that they are linked up with the Left Opposition of Joffe, Rakovsky, Sedov and Trotsky in a "bond of continuity" in which "'the Trotskyists' are but a slender thread, perhaps not indispensable when all is said and done, but of which Trotsky and his ideas constitute an essential element." The kind of "oppositionists" cheered on by the fake-Trotskyists like Broué and Mandel in the last decade—from Shcharansky to Sakharov, from Walesa to most recently the Estonian Nazi "Forest Brothers," saluted by the USec in *International Viewpoint* (18 September 1989)—have not the slenderest link to the Left Opposition; they are on the other side of the barricades. Our tendency fights for real soviet democracy and this call can and will be taken up by those groups in East Europe and the Soviet Union (some of which issue from the previous Communist Party structures) that base themselves on the millions of workers who today are against Stalinism and want to defend the social gains in their countries against capitalist restoration, or who find themselves compelled to fight against the consequences of restoration.

Broué ascribes to Trotsky the following version of "political revolution":

"The demands appearing in these movements of workers and youth reconstitute those that defined the program of 'political revolution' as Trotsky sketched it: democracy, freedom for parties, destruction of the bureaucratic apparatus, 'free' trade unions, electoral freedom and the right of criticism, ending infringements on human rights, punishing those responsible for crimes, winning the democratic rights of speech, assembly, demonstration, as well as the appearance of a free—and hence stimulating—press."

—Broué, p. 943

At the core of this version of "political revolution" (which Mandel attacks as not going far enough!) is the conception: "pluralistic workers democracy." To the extent "pluralistic" is not redundant with "workers democracy," it can only



France, May 1989: International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist), formerly International Spartacist tendency, continues Trotsky's fight for revolutionary leadership.

mean the inclusion of non-working-class forces, i.e., bourgeois democracy. It is no accident that it is most often "abbreviated" as "pluralistic democracy" or just plain "democracy." It means freedom for bourgeois, counter-revolutionary forces to organize and operate. Real workers democracy would in fact enable different parties to organize *on a class basis that defends the social transformation of society which the Russian Revolution made possible*—freedom for "soviet parties," as Trotsky put it. Just contrast Broué's version with Trotsky's:

"In any case, the bureaucracy can be removed only by a revolutionary force. And, as always, there will be fewer victims the more bold and decisive is the attack. To prepare this and stand at the head of the masses in a favorable historic situation—that is the task of the Soviet section of the Fourth International....

"The revolution which the bureaucracy is preparing against itself will not be social, like the October revolution of 1917. It is not a question this time of changing the economic foundations of society, of replacing certain forms of property with other forms....

"It is not a question of substituting one ruling clique for another, but of changing the very methods of administering the economy and guiding the culture of the country. Bureaucratic autocracy must give place to Soviet democracy. A restoration of the right of criticism, and a genuine freedom of elections, are necessary conditions for the further development of the country. This assumes a revival of freedom of Soviet parties, beginning with the party of Bolsheviks, and a resurrection of the trade unions. The bringing of democracy into industry means a radical revision of plans in the interests of the toilers. Free discussion of economic problems will decrease the overhead expense of bureaucratic mistakes and zigzags. Expensive playthings—palaces of the Soviets, new theaters, show-off subways—will be crowded out in favor of workers' dwellings. 'Bourgeois norms of distribution' will be confined within the limits of strict necessity, and, in step with the growth of social wealth, will give way to socialist equality. Ranks will be immediately abolished. The tinsel of decorations will go into the melting pot. The youth will receive the opportunity to breathe freely, criticize, make mistakes, and grow up. Science and art will be freed of their chains. And, finally, foreign policy will return to the traditions of revolutionary internationalism."

—Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936)

In Broué's version, the "Trotskyist program" and legacy is reduced to moral rectitude and abstract truth, not political activity. In a 1966 essay, "Trotskyism in Our Time," Deutscher likens Trotsky to the mythological figure of Prometheus, who brought fire to mankind and was tortured by the gods for this. Deutscher's Trotsky carries the flame of revolutionary Marxism through the dark era of Stalinism and fascism. The negative side of this prophetic vision of Trotsky is Deutscher's pessimism concerning the prospects of the organized Trotskyist movement in the 1930s and subsequently. But on the other hand Deutscher tends to accentuate the differences between classical Marxism—with Trotsky as its great contemporary representative—and Stalinism, social democracy and later 1960s New Leftism.

Ultimately, despite invaluable elements, Broué's book will, in the main, pass into history as an erudite *oeuvre de circonstance* [an incidental work written for a special event or occasion]. Broué has not, and will not, be able to soft-sell Trotsky to the Gorbachevite intelligentsia. Whatever misconceptions an Afanasyev or a Tsipko has about Trotsky, they believe that Trotsky, even more than Stalin, exemplifies "dogmatism." From their own point of view, they are right. Stalin made them confess that the sun rises from the west; Trotsky never ceased insisting that it rose in the east. Bukharin vacillated. Stalin insisted it was possible to build "socialism in one country" while conciliating the imperialists, whereas Trotsky remained passionately committed to the Soviet proletarian dictatorship and world socialist revolution.

Trotsky's legacy today is precisely in those "embarrassing" areas Broué passes over as rapidly as possible: his fight to forge a genuine, Leninist, democratic-centralist Fourth International; his fight for the international party of socialist revolution, against class collaboration and the popular front, for the military defense of the Soviet Union, for political revolution in the East and social revolution in the West. This is the legacy that the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist) is proud to uphold. ■

# Japan Letter...

(continued from page 2)

conditions, however, were different. In Japan "gun control" was exercised at the point of production, whereas in England Parliament passed a law in 1523 restricting ownership to the upper class. In France the Crown declared the production of gunpowder to be a state monopoly, but regulation was difficult as production was spread out among hundreds of small mills. Of course, as soon as war was declared in 1543 all restrictions were forgotten.

There are many reasons given as to why this rare historical occurrence came about. Xenophobic isolation certainly was a factor in the Japanese feudal hierarchy's attitude toward guns; as there was no internal or external threat to Tokugawa rule from around 1600 to 1853, there was no material incentive pushing guns forward as there had been in the 16th century. Had there been a renewed outbreak of civil war or a new attempt to invade Korea or China, undoubtedly gun production would have dramatically resumed.

The effects of the "sword and gun hunt" can still be felt today in the sense that the ordinary citizen cannot conceive of operating, much less owning, a gun while in Japan. (A new, and very popular, addition to group tour packages for Japanese visiting California is a trip to a gun range.) In 1981 the official number of registered guns in private hands totaled 881,204. This figure is misleading in that it includes antiques, hunting rifles, shotguns and pneumatic construction guns. When the man on the street thinks of guns, he usually thinks of the yakuza (Japanese mafia), the "Self Defense Forces" or Narita Airport.

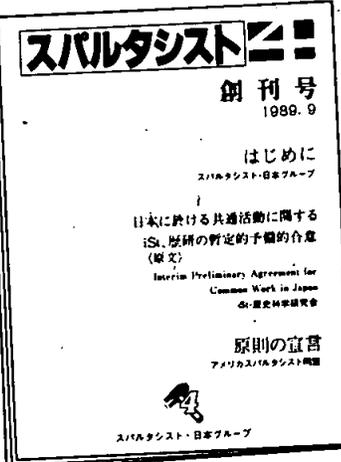
2. *Spartacist* asserted that "the shogunate itself had disarmed the old samurai caste; it was itself overthrown by a rifle-equipped conscript army." But the samurai were not disarmed, the peasants were. The shogunate was overthrown by the Choshu and Satsuma peasant conscript armies, trained in Western drill, using rifles from the American Civil War, while the shogun-loyal forces had to fight with what had

been saved from the early 1600s. The point that John Keegan (*The Mask of Command*, 1987) and Robert L. O'Connell (*Military History Quarterly*, Winter 1989) make regarding the nobleman's fear—the crossbow or gun in the hands of "commoners"—was played out in Japan in the 1860s. Militarily trained peasants with guns defeated samurai (the equivalent of feudal European knights and soldiers).

3. The article also asserted that "new and overpowering Western imperialist pressures led to the Meiji Restoration in 1868, opening the road to capitalist development." I think this statement is too narrow and ignores the internal contradictions which existed, and deepened, in the 1840s and 1850s within feudal Japan.

While the peasants were disarmed in 1587, from 1603 to 1867, 1,153 peasant uprisings were recorded, with increasing frequency as the period progressed. Life during the feudal period was just as horrendous for the Asian peasant as it was for his European brother. Natural calamities and the resulting famines were the underlying cause of many of the rebellions. Many Japanese writers of the time compared the peasant to a sesame seed, the harder you press, the more you squeeze out. With the seed it was oil, with the peasant it was blood because that was the only thing they had left to give. Abortion and infanticide (*mabiki*—literally the thinning of vegetable rows by uprooting) were so common that periodically laws had to be passed against these population control methods. E.H. Norman, in an article entitled "Japan's Emergence as a Modern State," writes that the "revolts became so endemic and may be said to have weakened the strength of the feudal regime so dangerously that they made possible to a large extent the victory of the political movement directed against the Bakufu" (*Origins of the Modern Japanese State*, 1975). Jon Halliday in his book *A Political History of Japanese Capitalism* (1975) asserts that it was the cumulative effect of the peasant revolts which led to the downfall of the Tokugawa Bakufu in 1868.

During this time, money as a medium of exchange based on mercantilism began to replace revenue in rice based on



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the land, and this led to an enormous growth in the economic power of the merchants despite their official designation at the bottom of the "four-class system" (warrior, peasant, artisan and merchant). As the power of the merchant class increased, it ate into the rigid hierarchical foundations of feudalism. However, the merchants were not strong enough to lead a revolution in their own name; they could only finance the anti-Tokugawa forces.

This weakness of the bourgeoisie allowed the reassertion of the emperor as a political force. In 1858, the emperor, in defiance of the shogun, refused to sign the Harris Treaty with the U.S. In the early 1860s the League of Court and Military was formed (an alliance of disaffected members of the imperial court—the *kuge*—and dissident *daimyo*—feudal lords). This coalition is said to be the first conscious political movement against the shogunate. The opposition was mainly angry at the concessions made by the shogun to Western powers, and their slogan was "Revere the emperor, expel the barbarians."

All of this is not to dismiss Western imperialism's appetites or influence. A number of historians note with surprise the ability (in terms of timeliness and number of reports) of the shogun, court and samurai to follow the events in China, particularly the Boxer Rebellion and the Taiping Revolt. The ruling class of Japan understood the desire of the West to expand their markets. Also, the southwest clans, particularly the Satsuma and Choshu, were heavily influenced by the West. Their territory, the southwest section of Honshu and Kagoshima on Kyushu, had the most exposure from the West. The samurai in these sections studied under the Dutch and British, mostly science and military strategy. It was these clans who were later instrumental in overthrowing the Tokugawa regime.

The internal contradictions, which I have mentioned briefly, played at least an equal role to the external pressures of Western imperialism on Japan's transformation from an isolated feudal society to a young but weak capitalist economy.

Comradely,  
Jeanne Mitchell

*Spartacist* thanks comrade Mitchell for her cogent letter. ■

## Tamara Deutscher...

(continued from page 30)

celebration of the *Missa Solemnis*, with a profusion of Polish flags fluttering overhead. Similarly the crucifix and the portrait of the Pope adorn the walls of the headquarters of the new autonomous unions in Gdansk—a sight as paradoxical and as potentially disquieting as that of Iranian demonstrators giving the clenched fist salute under a huge picture of the Ayatollah Khomeini. What is even more disturbing is the portrait of Marshal Pilsudski remembered for his invasion of the Soviet Union in May 1920, and not exactly as a friend of trade unions, socialism or democracy."

We had numerous political differences with Tamara Deutscher, not least of course on the centrality of reforging an authentically Trotskyist Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution. But she had been trained as a Marxist of the old school, who remained consistent in her political views throughout the years and appreciated that consistency in others. She will be missed. ■

## Louis Sinclair...

(continued from page 3)

yet he was completely unpretentious. What a breath of fresh air compared to others who claim the title! While Louis militantly avoided getting involved in programmatic debates among those who claim the mantle of Trotskyism today, he also militantly refused to blunt the edges when dealing with Trotsky's historic polemics. Louis's latest project, an immense and extensively cross-referenced index of Trotskyist internal bulletins to 1940, is invaluable. We in the ICL certainly hope that this will be published, or at least made available to scholars of the Trotskyist movement.

Louis retained a very keen interest in seeing Trotsky's works becoming available in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. I remember his delight when, on my return from East Germany in January, I told him we made a Russian edition of *Revolution Betrayed* available to Soviet soldiers there. He was even more pleased to discover that this edition was not one he knew about, so it was duly added to the Trotsky collection here at the University. We were also pleased to provide him with some Trotsky articles published recently in Hungary, which again were of interest to him.

Comrade Sinclair was indeed a reserve of Marxism, as reflected in his dedication to his work and in his worldview. He was a link to the past, a source of inspiration, and he left us a precious legacy for the future. I feel it is an honour to have known him, although for me personally and for our Glasgow branch this was over a very brief period of time. We will certainly miss him.

Eibhlin McDonald

On behalf of Louis Sinclair's friends in the Glasgow branch, and those many others in the Spartacist tendency internationally. ■

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Бастующие шахтеры Сибири в прошлом году выбрали забастовочные комитеты, которые провозгласили двоевластие в угольных регионах. Протесты рабочих продолжаются под лозунгами: «Требуем социальной справедливости!», «Требуем повысить жизненный уровень шахтеров!».

## За социалистическую плановую экономику, основанную на рабочей демократии!

# Советские трудящиеся: Долой план «500 дней» Ельцина-Горбачева!

*We print below a Russian translation of "Soviet Workers: Smash Yeltsin/Gorbachev 500-Day Plan," Workers Vanguard No. 510, 21 September 1990, newspaper of the Spartacist League of the U.S.*

ПЕРЕВОД ИЗ УОРКЕРС ВАНГАРД № 510,  
21 СЕНТЯБРЯ 1990 Г.

Одновременно с самым большим урожаем пшеницы в советской истории из московских магазинов исчез хлеб. Курильщики бунтуют из-за отсутствия сигарет. Традиционное празднование Больше-вистской революции 7-го ноября хотят отменить. Джордж Буш воображает, что Советский Союз

станет младшим партнером в империалистическом «новом мировом сообществе». Однако, это означает смерть Советского Союза как рабочего государства, пусть и управляемого коррумпированной и националистической бюрократией. В самом деле, доминирующие политические силы в Советском Союзе открыто стремятся к реставрации капитализма — что означает перспективу гражданской войны в самом недалеком будущем. Социальные завоевания Октябрьской революции — величайшей победы в истории мирового рабочего класса — в смертельной опасности!

В конце августа было объявлено, что президент Российской республики Б. Ельцин и президент СССР М. С. Горбачев пришли к соглашению по



Новости

Борис Ельцин и Михаил Горбачев планируют реставрацию капитализма, в то время как перестройка порождает экономический хаос, растущее неравенство. Внизу, возмущенная толпа осаждает пустой сигаретный ларек в Москве.

Der Spiegel



программе введения законченной рыночной экономики в СССР за 500 дней. Жилье перейдет в личное владение, земля будет продана крестьянским мелким собственникам, и как минимум 70 процентов государственных предприятий — денационализировано. Реальная власть принятия экономических решений будет передана центральным правительством республиканским органам. Это практически означает конец Советского Союза. Ельцин — бывший сподвижник Горбачева, превращенный в псевдопопулистского демагога, — хочет исключить слово «социалистических» из названия СССР и переименовать страну в «Союз Суверенных Советских Республик».

Главный автор программы «500 дней» — горбачевский советник по экономике Станислав Шаталин, который на вопрос о том, приведет ли его план к повышению уровня жизни и эффективности экономики, ответил: «С нами бог!». Сам Горбачев колебался, предлагая объединить шаталинский план с более «умеренной» программой советского премьера Н. Рыжкова. Рыжков был главным вдохновителем отвергнутого плана утроения цены на

хлеб прошлым летом и удвоения потребительских цен к началу 1991 г. Однако, этого не было достаточно для крайних «свободно-рыночников», требовавших политической смерти Рыжкова.

С целью оказания давления на Горбачева проельцинский парламент Российской республики утвердил программу «500 дней до капитализма». Сейчас советский президент более или менее поддерживает ее, требуя, между прочим, созыва народного референдума о денационализации земли. В борьбе за выживание Рыжков выступил по телевидению, обвиняя шаталинский план как ведущий к «хаосу» и массовой безработице. Такая обстановка быстро поляризуется. 17-го сентября 50 тысяч прокапиталистов демонстрировали в Москве, требуя отставки не только Рыжкова, но и Горбачева. В свою очередь, рабочие сопротивляются воздействию перестройки. Официальные профсоюзы организовали забастовки против «свободно-рыночного» городского правительства Москвы.

### Смертельный кризис советского сталинизма

Всесторонний кризис, охвативший Советский Союз происходит от бюрократического вырождения страны при Сталине в 20-х гг. Под националистическим лозунгом «социализма в отдельной стране» бюрократия отказалась от ленинской программы мировой революции. В 30-х гг. Л. Д. Троцкий предсказал, что если советский рабочий класс не прогонит сталинистскую бюрократию, последняя, вместо строительства социализма, будет создавать условия для капиталистической реставрации.

«Либеральный» сталинист Горбачев и его апологеты утверждали, что перестройка означает обновление и модернизацию социализма. С самого начала мы предупреждали, что эти ориентированные на рынок «реформы» были задуманы для увеличения привилегий мелкобуржуазных бюрократов и интеллектуалов за счет рабочего класса и заложения основы для реставрации капитализма. Теперь вопрос стоит уже не о заложении основы, а о прямом возрождении власти капитала.

10 сентября в радиointerview с Джеймсом Кливом, комментатором новостей «Пасифика радио», Джозеф Симор, представитель «Спартасист Лиг» (Лиги Спартаковцев США — американской секции Интернациональной Коммунистической Лиги), указал, что «программа так называемых радикальных „свободно-рыночников“ типа Ельцина (кто, кстати, похвалил Рейгана за якобы оздоровление американской экономики) приведет к массовому обнищанию советских трудящихся в угоду тем, кто рассчитывает стать новым классом капиталистов и их прихлебателей — советских яппи.»

Ясно, что основная масса советских трудящихся враждебна капиталистической рыночной экономике по существу. Идеолог «свободного рынка» Гавриил Попов, сегодняшний мэр Москвы, заявляет, что «массы стремятся к справедливости и экономическому равенству». Он обеспокоен усилением «левого народничества», вызванным «политикой, ведущей к денационализации и неравенству». Самый презрен-

ный класс в СССР — мелко-капиталистические предприниматели, так называемые «кооператоры». Даже *Уолл стрит джорнэл* признает: «репутация кооператоров резко упала, и сегодня они раскритикованы как спекулянты, которые наживаются за счет нации».

Бесспорно, однако, что Ельцин очень популярен среди советских трудящихся. Опросы общественного мнения показывают, что он уважаем гораздо больше Горбачева. Как понять это противоречие? Дело в том, что Ельцин *маскирует* свою поддержку экономики «свободного рынка» демоagogическими атаками на привилегии бюрократии и требует увеличения производства потребительских товаров за счет снижения военных расходов и вложений в тяжелую промышленность. Однако, теперь, когда Ельцин присоединяется к программе откровенной реставрации капитализма, маска падает.

Адвокаты программы «500 дней» утверждают, что продажа жилья, земли и заводов уничтожит излишек рублей, наводнивших советскую экономику за многие годы. Таким образом, рост цен на потребительские товары будет менее значительным, чем в противном случае. Это — ложь! Когда предприятия окажутся в руках частных, цены поднимутся настолько высоко, как только рынок позволит. Советские рабочие потеряют всякую возможность контролировать стоимость жизни. Далее, миллионы рабочих будут выброшены на улицу, когда убыточные и непродажные предприятия закроют свои двери, а остальные резко снизят потребность в рабочей силе. Это точно то, что уже происходит в Польше.

Денационализация жилья была задумана для принесения непосредственной прибыли тем членам элиты, которые имеют хорошие квартиры. Однако, это будет настоящим бедствием для советских трудящихся, особенно, если учитывать острую нехватку жилья в СССР. Советские офицеры и их



Der Spiegel

Несмотря на рекордный урожай, хлеб исчез с прилавков государственных магазинов, поскольку крестьяне придерживают зерно, чтобы поднять закупочные цены.

семьи, которые должны быть вскоре выведены из Восточной Германии, недавно провели демонстрацию против плана поселения их в *палаточном городке* на Северном Кавказе! После денационализации квартирная плата на немногие незанятые квартиры взлетит до небес. Молодым семьям из рабочей среды никогда невозможно будет позволить себе иметь собственные квартиры или дома, и те станут имуществом исключительно нового класса капиталистов и управленческой элиты.

Программа «500 дней» обещает своим гражданам своего рода «народный капитализм», утверждая, что «имущество в руках каждого человека — гарантия устойчивого общества» (*Файненшел таймс*, Лондон, 6 сентября 1990 г.). Но имущество *отнюдь не будет* в руках каждого человека. Невозможно иметь капиталистов без капитала. Даже у мелких предпринимателей в Советском Союзе, имеющих фруктовые ларьки и ремонтные лавки, нет денег на то, чтобы скупать сталелитейные заводы и угольные шахты. У кого есть? Новые владельцы — русские или нет — будут из рядов бюрократической элиты, имеющей доступ к государственным займам и западным банкам.

Многие из самых выгодных предприятий будут проданы — целиком или частично — западным мультинациональным корпорациям. Горбачевский советник по экономике Николай Петраков, один из главных авторов плана «500 дней», желает «создать условия, при которых наши западные партнеры смогут обходить систему снабжения и распределения, скупая сырье и оборудование на внутреннем рынке, и переводить их долю доходов на Запад» (*Проблемы экономики*, март 1990 г.). Если Горбачев и Ельцин добьются своего, то богатство, пришедшее советскими рабочими за десятилетия, будет распродано воротилам с Уолл-стрит, франкфуртским банкирам и японским промышленникам за бесценок.

## Women and Revolution

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Новое Русское Слово



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Опасность контрреволюции: демонстрация в Ленинграде 3-го сентября. Плакат: «Хватит экспериментировать — пора переходить к капитализму!» «Свободные рыночные» мэры — Анатолий Собчак (Ленинград) и Гавриил Попов (Москва).

Растущий экономический хаос и крушение авторитета центрального правительства и лично Горбачева породили *политический вакуум*. Этот вакуум заполнили правые всех мастей: от российских рейганистов и монархистов до фашистов и других реакционных националистов. Усиливается антисемитизм, и советские евреи живут в страхе погромов. Ходят слухи о военном перевороте с целью восстановления порядка. Всем понятно, что существовать как раньше Советский Союз не может.

Сегодня троцкизм — продолжатель большевистской революции — единственное политическое течение, имеющее программу сохранения Советского Союза как многонациональное государство коллективной экономики. Советские трудящиеся должны смести горбачевых, ельциных и поповых и основать правительство демократически выбранных рабочих советов подобных тем, что взяли власть в октябре 1917 г.

Многие советские трудящиеся сегодня отождествляют централизованное планирование и управление как таковые со сталинизмом и бюрократическим управленчеством. Это ошибочно. Централизованное управление экономикой правительством Советов — *единственный* путь к тому, чтобы рабочий класс смог *демократично* управлять распределением общественных средств и обеспечивать справедливое и уравнивающее обращение производственных фондов. В то же время, центральное планирование может быть эффективным в стимулировании самоотверженного и творческого труда, только когда рабочие *управляют* обществом для того, чтобы построить социалистическое будущее для себя и своих детей.

### Что скрыто за хлебным дефицитом

Когда режим Горбачева и Рыжкова предложил утроить цену на хлеб прошлым летом, делегат Верховного Совета от Таджикистана сердито сказал: «Хлеб — это социализм!» Внезапное исчезновение хлеба из московских государственных магазинов

— величайшее доказательство крушения экономики. И это при том, что предсказывали рекордный урожай. Что же случилось?

В отличие от США, в Советском Союзе нет многочисленной армии сезонных сельскохозяйственных рабочих. Поэтому, чтобы собрать урожай, нужно мобилизовать горожан, временно оторвав их от работы и службы. Однако, с развенчанием централизованного управления экономикой при перестройке, руководители предприятий не предоставляют своих рабочих для этой цели. Председатель целинного колхоза в Казахстане Жазит Кудайкулов воскликнул:

«Во времена застоя мы собирали хлеб без проблем. Горожане нам помогали, правительство и районные партработники нам помогали, а сейчас — нет. Я не знаю, почему. Это и есть перестройка.»

*Филадельфия инкуайпер,*  
7 сентября 1990 г.

Но это только часть причин хлебного дефицита и не самая важная. В конце концов, сбор зерна в этом году оценивается на том же уровне, что и в прошлом. Однако, на государственные заготовительные пункты хлеба сдается меньше. Сам Горбачев пожаловался: «Многие колхозы и совхозы неоправданно сокращают продажу хлеба государству; нарушая этим договорную дисциплину». Вместо этого зерно идет на корм скоту, продажа которого более выгодна. Килограмм говядины на московском колхозном рынке стоит 20 рублей, на 50 процентов выше, чем полтора года тому назад. Это приблизительно равно дневной зарплате среднего промышленного рабочего!

Советские земледельцы придерживают зерно с целью поднятия закупочных цен. Прошлой весной американский информационный бюллетень, специализирующийся на экономике Восточной Европы, написал:

«Удержание больших количеств зерна советскими земледельцами приводит к тому, что режим вынужден с ущербом для своей внешней торговли импортировать западный хлеб вместо того, чтобы использовать то, что уже доступно внутри страны.

Чтобы заставить крестьян продавать зерно, нужно резко поднять закупочные цены. Однако, поскольку режим не хочет повышать магазинные цены на хлеб, продовольственные субсидии должны существенно превысить уровень, запланированный на 1990 г.»

*ПланЭкон рипорт*, 21 апреля 1990 г.

Однако, программа «500 дней» Горбачева-Ельцина требует снижения продовольственных субсидий и резкого роста цен на хлеб и другие продукты.

Сегодняшний хлебный дефицит заставляет вспомнить зерновую забастовку крестьян в 1928 г., обозначившую конечный кризис НЭПа. Идеологи перестройки, по крайней мере те, кто не призывает к откровенной реставрации капитализма, представляют НЭП как экономический образец. А ведь еще в 1923 г. Троцкий указывал на противоречивую и нестабильную природу НЭПа. Если советская промышленность не будет развиваться достаточно быстро для того, чтобы обеспечить крестьян в избытке дешевыми товарами, предсказывал Троцкий, последние начнут уменьшать поставки зерна на государственные заготовительные пункты с тем, чтобы взвинтить цены на зерно. Это как раз то, что случилось в 1928 г. На грани экономического краха Сталин отреагировал проведением коллективизации жестоким и бюрократическим образом.

В 20-х гг. главной внутренней социальной силой реставрации капитализма были кулаки. Сегодня это роль отводится части бюрократии и интелли-

генции, многие из которых — привилегированные дети сталинских аппаратчиков. Таким образом, хлебная забастовка — только один из аспектов общего саботажа коллективной экономики своекорыстными управленцами и чиновниками.

## Только пролетарская политическая революция может спасти Советский Союз

Советскому Союзу сегодня угрожает кровавая братоубийственная война посреди экономической разрухи. Практически все республики объявили независимость или экономический суверенитет. Правительство Украины, второй по величине республики, хочет выпустить собственную валюту и сформировать отдельную армию. Чиновники нефтеразрабатывающих районов Сибири требуют львиную долю прибылей от экспорта нефти. Лондонская *Independent* (31 августа 1990 г.) написала об «опасности, что Советский Союз разлетится на набор соревнующихся республик, разделенных таможенными барьерами, игрушечными валютами, этнической враждебностью, ведущих торговые войны друг против друга».

Только советский рабочий класс имеет социальную власть и заинтересованность в сохранении и перестройке Советского Союза на социалистическом базисе справедливости и равенства всех национальностей. Для достижения этой цели необходимо организовать рабочий класс в подлинно

## Бюллетень Спартаковцев № 1

### Russian-Language Spartacist Bulletin No. 1

#### Содержание:

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Что хотят Спартаковцы.....	11	В защиту маршала Тухачевского.....	40
Интернационалистический привет нашим товарищам: советским солдатам и офицерам!.....	12	Когда произошел советский термидор?.....	44
Письмо нашим товарищам: советским солдатам.....	13	Письмо в посольство СССР Имperialистического военного окружения — угроза СССР!.....	55

#### Из Льва Троцкого:

Из Переходной программы: «Положение СССР и задачи переходной эпохи».....	52
Что такое СССР и куда он идет? Глава V: «Советский термидор».....	56

**Снова на путь Ленина и Троцкого!**

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всесоюзную интернационалистическую коммунистическую партию по образцу большевистской партии Ленина и Троцкого.

Сегодня, однако, советский рабочий класс политически эксплуатируется борющимися группами бюрократии и мелкобуржуазной интеллигенции. Из-за ненависти к прежним сталинистским аппаратчикам — угнетающим, паразитическим, коррумпированным — многие рабочие активисты поддерживают адвокатов «демократии» западного типа и «регулируемой рыночной экономики». Другие, обвиняющие перестройку во всех нынешних несчастьях, группируются с консервативными аппаратчиками, объединившимися с реакционными русскими националистами. На съезде Российской коммунистической партии нефтяник из Тюмени воскликнул: «Несмотря на то, какой лозунг используется, политика, ведущая к снижению уровня жизни и кровопролитию, противоречит интересам народа». Он призвал «вернуть страну к 1985 г.» — году прихода к власти Горбачева.

Однако, невозможно вернуть Советский Союз в 1985 г., да это и не желательно. В свои последние годы брежневский режим попытался создать иллюзию повышения уровня жизни, увеличивая заработную плату быстрее прироста продукции, одновременно замораживая цены в государственных магазинах. Часть избыточных рублей утекла в подпольную, «теневую» экономику. Большая же часть осела в сберегательных кассах или оказалась зашитой в матрасы. По оценке 1985 г., средняя советская семья не смогла истратить до 80-ти процентов своего годового дохода. Таким образом, сегодняшняя скрытая сверхинфляция коренится в склеротическом сталинизме брежневского режима.

Основная причина политического и экономического разрушения Советского Союза — мощное и безжалостное давление мирового империализма. Чтобы соответствовать усилению американской военной мощи при Картере, а затем при Рейгане, без снижения уровня жизни, администрация Брежнева уменьшала вложения в новые заводы и оборудование. В результате производительность труда на устаревших и технологически отсталых заводах постоянно снижалась. В большой степени горбачевская перестройка явилась реакционным ответом на объективный кризис советской экономики после десятилетий разорительного управления во имя построения «социализма в отдельной стране». Но полумеры только ухудшили положение.

Сейчас паразитическая бюрократия Кремля сдастся западному империализму на всех уровнях. Горбачев и Ельцин хотят продать индустриальное и природное богатство Советского Союза Уолл-стрит и Франкфурту, одновременно помогая американскому империализму развезать войну против арабских народов на Ближнем Востоке. Советский рабочий класс должен укреплять и возрождать коллективную экономику Советского Союза в перспективе социалистических революций по всему миру.

Само капиталистическое развитие породило международное разделение труда. Таким образом, борьба за предоставление советским массам всех жизненных благ — как материальных, так и культурных — предполагает участие в мировой экономике. И это означает, что необходимо заменить империалистический мировой рынок — деформированный монополиями и национальным протекционизмом — интернациональной социалистической экономикой. путем пролетарских революций во всем империалистическом мире. ■

## Читайте Ленина!

Сталин превратил Ленина в икону, чтобы вернее похоронить его революционный интернационализм. Однако, эти основные ленинские работы должны быть прочитаны для понимания насущных задач коммунистов сегодня!

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# For a Trotskyist Party in USSR...

(continued from page 64)

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It took several generations of unbroken political struggle within the intelligentsia of the tsarist empire to produce the basis for Lenin's Bolshevik Party. The revolutionary component of the Marxist intelligentsia, drawing on the experience of the Western European workers movement, brought the mass working class of Russia to consciousness of its historic role, winning over the politically advanced layer of worker militants and organizing them into a vanguard party. This party uniquely withstood the chauvinist frenzy of World War I, and its leadership of the October Revolution—the first successful proletarian seizure of power—showed the working masses of the entire world the road

forward to put an end to immiserization and carnage.

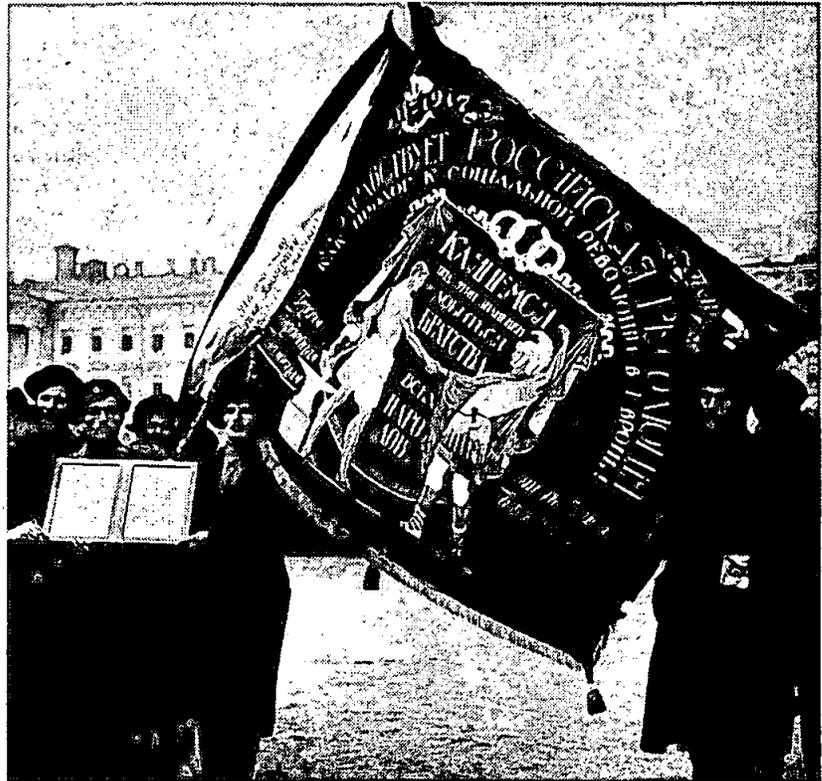
Stalin annihilated the core of Lenin's party, and he went on to destroy almost the entire Soviet intelligentsia of the 1920s and 1930s. Today their places are taken by the sons and daughters of those who came to the fore by supporting Stalin—those whose privileges were in turn safeguarded by Stalin and his apparat. This social layer is Gorbachev's base and the leading edge of support for the policy of market-oriented perestroika. The mass of this intelligentsia contemptuously dismiss the internationalist and democratic ideals which animated their forebears, and similarly disdain the idea that the proletariat can lead society. Many of this layer have now passed over to championing a capitalist market as key to their own economic advancement, consciously defining their interests as counterposed to those of the Soviet working masses.

Today, 73 years after the first successful proletarian seizure of power, the working masses in the Soviet Union are no longer driven by the vision of communism. This is the true and terrible legacy of the Stalinist regime, which clogged the pores of Soviet society with corruption, waste and inefficiency, enforced a stifling social, cultural and

## Bolshevik Internationalist Tradition

Bolshevik perspective of the October Revolution as beginning of Europe-wide revolution is counterposed to the national isolationist outlook of Stalinism. Right: Banner of "Red Putilov" presented to Pavlovsky Regiment on eve of October Revolution reads: "Long Live All-Russian Revolution as Prologue to Social Revolution in Europe."

Willy Römer



VAAP

Europe erupted in a revolutionary wave of solidarity with October. Left: Karl Liebknecht rallies workers to the cause of world revolution; January 1919. Lack of a tempered Bolshevik party in Germany prevented working class from coming to power.



Richards/Magnum



Der Spiegel

Many Soviet workers discount misery under capitalism as just another lie pushed by the Stalinist bureaucracy. Left: Destitute family in Washington, D.C. "Market reforms" lead to impoverishment for the masses as in Poland where many now depend on soup kitchens for their daily bread (above).

political conformity through organized, sometimes very bloody repression, and turned the liberating ideals of communism into empty slogans and outright lies to cover their own privileges and crimes.

### For a New Internationalist Communist Party!

Half a century ago, Trotsky urgently warned of the dangers of *capitalist restoration* in the USSR. He incisively described the myriad ways in which "all the old crap" of capitalist society reinfuses the workers state under bureaucratic misleadership. He concretely described how bureaucratic commandism deforms the economy and makes the question of *quality* in consumer goods an insoluble one; he analyzed the ways in which the Stalinists' policies—and even more rapidly those of the Bukharinites, the direct ideological progenitors of today's perestroika "reformers"—would generate increased class inequalities and build up the forces for capitalist restoration. He warned that the ultimate survival of the workers state was in jeopardy without a new *political revolution* to oust the bureaucratic caste and re-establish the political rule of the working class under revolutionary leadership.

Emphasizing throughout the rest of his life that the conscious factor of a revolutionary party was the crucial element lacking for international revolution and for defense of the Soviet workers state, Trotsky wrote in "The Workers' State, Thermidor and Bonapartism" (February 1935):

"Once liberated from the fetters of feudalism, bourgeois relations develop automatically.... It is altogether otherwise with the development of socialist relations. The proletarian revolution not only frees the productive forces from the fetters of private ownership but also transfers them to the direct disposal of the state that it itself creates. While the bourgeois state, after the revolution, confines itself to a police role, leaving the market to its own laws, the workers' state assumes the direct role of economist and organizer. The replacement of one political regime by another exerts only an indirect and superficial influence upon market economy. On the contrary, the replacement of a workers' government by a bourgeois or petty-bourgeois government—

would inevitably lead to the liquidation of the planned beginnings and, subsequently, to the restoration of private property. *In contradistinction to capitalism, socialism is built not automatically but consciously.*" (emphasis in original)

In response to Trotsky's warnings (in countries where they couldn't respond by murdering the Trotskyists), the Stalinists pointed to the unquestionable achievements of the Five Year Plans, the provision of social welfare for the masses (e.g., education and medical care), the extension of a non-capitalist "Soviet bloc" in the years following World War II, and their own continued caste rule in the USSR, as evidence that Stalinism was a stable system. But who could claim that today? Throughout Eastern Europe and increasingly within the USSR itself, the Stalinist system is visibly collapsing under the weight of its inherent contradictions and limitations. Now visibly, Trotskyism provides the only political answers for those who still want to be communists.

After decades of extracting self-sacrifice from the proletariat in the name of building "socialism in a single country," Gorbachev and the restorationists of various stripes have switched over to praising the imperialist system as "the developed world." The new generation of Soviet bureaucrats seems—inexplicably to some observers—to have made a decision to open the road to "market socialism," fostering increased social inequality, and to have become converted to the purported superiority of capitalism or "capitalist methods" as a means of economic revitalization. They seem to have decided to let capitalism be restored in the nations of the former Warsaw Pact. They even appear reconciled to the ripping apart along national lines of the multinational USSR itself. But what we are seeing is not a case of deliberate "new thinking" by Gorbachev & Co.—it is rather a response to the crashing down of the shattered pieces of a brittle and unstable Stalinist edifice which over the course of decades was generating its present spectacular downfall.

Stalinism—a monstrous edifice of lies to justify the privileged bureaucracy's usurpation of the political power of a working class which was nominally the ruler of soci-

ety—required a monstrous apparatus of repressive control. The cancerous growth of the institutions of state repression in Stalin's hands held down the Soviet working people—and it drove underground every kind of reactionary social force as well. But repression, no matter how vastly murderous, cannot solve the underlying problems. Stalin merely handed the problems forward to his successors. For today's generation of Stalinist "leaders" it is not a "failure of will" but an exhaustion of options. Any leadership less willing than Stalin to go down in history as a mass murderer of one's "own" people would have found itself unable to contain the explosions of pent-up dissatisfaction with what has wrongly become known as "communism." This process has reached critical mass under Gorbachev.

Gorbachev's perestroika is not the USSR's first "experiment" with decentralization of the economy, nor is glasnost the first thaw. But Khrushchev, for example, went about as far as he could go in seeking to turn away from the edifice of lies comprising official history—for he and his generation of Stalinist top hacks were themselves directly complicit in Stalin's crimes. (From among that layer, Khrushchev was personally one of the least involved.) Gorbachev represents a new generation which is not personally soaked in the blood of Stalin's victims, nor does he possess the huge and socially pervasive apparatus of mass repression which Stalin had at his fingertips. In the 45 years since the end of World War II, Soviet society has changed—the working masses are no longer willing to endure the privations which were visibly unavoidable in the years of devastation during and following the war, while a new middle class has come into existence. This latter layer—unashamedly the "vanguard" of pro-capitalist ideology in the USSR—feel far closer in spirit to the most privileged layer of yuppie academics in "the West" than to the scared grey bureaucrats who were their fathers, to say nothing of their felt alienation from the working people. They have been big boosters of glasnost,

not only as part of the "revitalization" of the economy which promises them chances at personal accumulation, but even just out of embarrassment: as they chat urbane to snotty Western professors over glasses of good French wine at international colloquiums, they do not want to be mocked about the "blank spaces" and ludicrous lies of erstwhile official Soviet history.

Their apparent foes within the framework of the bureaucracy, the old-line bureaucrats, seek ineffectually to counter the Gorbachevite myth that the capitalist market mechanism provides a "rational" means of economic organization. No less than the "new thinkers" do the hardliners accept the continued existence of capitalism and the imperialist world market, while they lack the moral authority to convince the disgruntled working people of anything. When they correctly describe the reality of the capitalist world—poverty, racism, violence and crime, massive unemployment, homelessness amidst luxury, neocolonial exploitation of the "Third World," militarism and the danger of war—Soviet workers hear in this only an apologia for their own continuing hardships. The enormous wealth that would put any Soviet bureaucrat to shame, displayed by the few who comprise the vicious and arrogant imperialist ruling classes, seems remote as compared to the cold reality of empty Soviet shelves.

But Soviet workers must take warning: for the overwhelming mass of the toilers of even the richest capitalist nation, the motor force of the system is not "the profit motive" but naked *fear*—what drives the West German, Japanese or American worker to work and work hard is not any expectation of moving up into the ranks of the big exploiters, but the intimate knowledge that should his sweat and skills cease to be of value to those who own everything, he and his family could be sleeping on sidewalks and eating out of garbage cans. Look around you now: the mass unemployment and starvation faced by the Polish working class as the Solidarność government attempts to sell the country

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Der Bankrott des Jugoslawischen Modells ..... 13

Hungarn: „Gulasch-Kommunismus“ geht pleite ..... 20

Für zentrale Planung durch Sowjetdemokratie ..... 27

Sowjetische Arbeiter: Eine Barrikade ist mehr ..... 36

Werte Jochen Popowitsch: Der Weg ..... 37

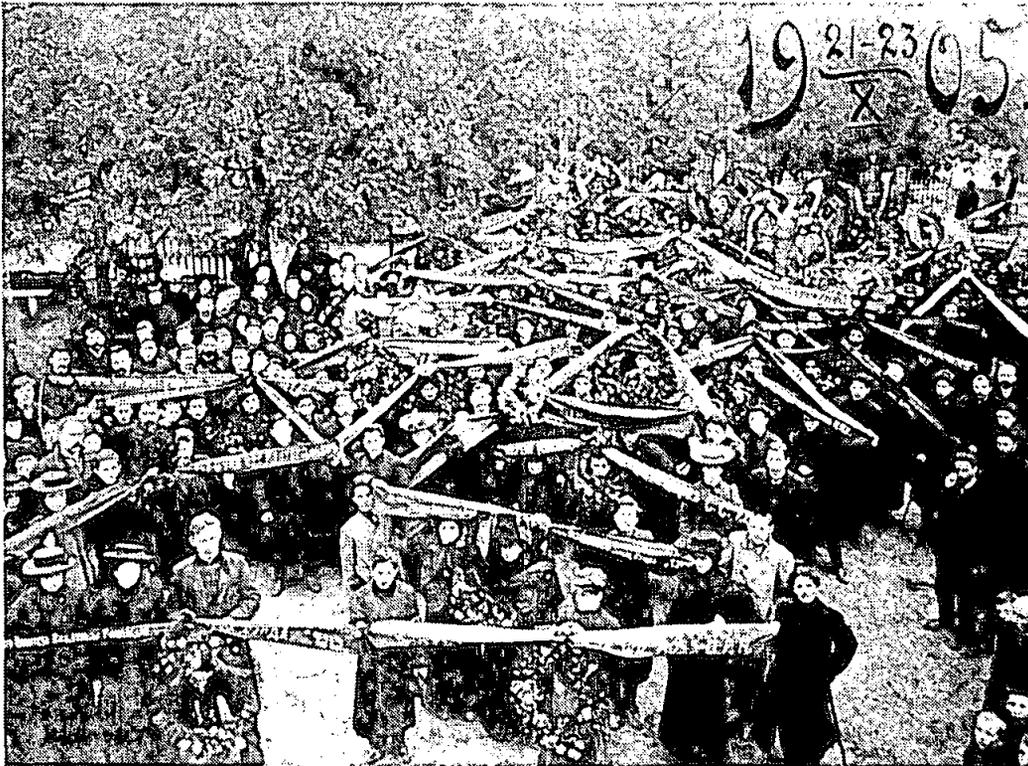
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**Vilna, Poland, 1905. In demonstration of proletarian internationalism, Polish and Russian Social Democrats and the Jewish Bund honor victims of tsarist pogroms. Workers of all Soviet nationalities must organize against Black Hundreds/ Pamyat anti-Semitism and Great Russian chauvinism!**

to the Western bankers and capitalists is the reality of the world marketplace. Witness the skyrocketing unemployment and misery in united, capitalist Germany. The imperialists would reduce the standard of living of the East European masses to Third World levels. And the suffering that capitalist mastery would have to inflict on the vast, multinational Soviet Union would be far worse.

The foundation of the planned, collectivized Soviet economy laid the basis for a historic advance over the system of imperialist wage slavery and market chaos. Such initial achievements as the unprecedented industrial growth under the first Five Year Plans, the buildup of Soviet Central Asia, the right to guaranteed employment, health care, education, all gave concrete expression to the vastly superior potential of the planned economy over capitalism. They were built by the Soviet working people through great sacrifices. A planned economy, implemented on the scale of the world productive forces and under the control of democratic worker soviets, would have spared mankind the wars, Holocaust, misery and hunger of the last 50 years. Instead the successive generations of Stalinist misrulers have run the Soviet economy into an isolated nationalist dead end. Now descent into capitalist chaos threatens.

Stalinism may have destroyed the good name of communism in the Soviet Union, but the October Revolution's egalitarian ideals still live in the consciousness of millions of Soviet workers, soldiers and collective farmers. They are deeply indignant at the rise of a new layer of wealthy co-operativists and entrepreneurs who outdo the nomenklatura in aping the lifestyle of a capitalist ruling class. The parasites, exploiters and their ideologues need to be driven out of the soviets. Soviet workers have shown themselves ready to strike in support of their demands for a better life, against bureaucratic corruption and inefficiency. But restorationist demagogues like Yeltsin have tried to use this to stampede the workers into supporting a capitalist market system.

Lacking a viable, authentic communist current as a felt

pole of attraction in Soviet political life, the present struggles of the working class do not surpass the defensive plane and point in sometimes contradictory directions. But when strikers raise for example the demand to sell a share of their product themselves on the world market, this reflects an effort to obtain desperately needed and otherwise unobtainable goods, and an understandable attitude that "the big boys are surely going to get theirs, how do we get ours?" It does not represent a hard ideological choice for capitalist competition and the destruction of the state monopoly of foreign trade, as it does in the mouths of the petty-bourgeois aspiring "restructuringers." Given the leaven of a genuinely Marxist intellectual current, the present upsurge of militancy and elemental class consciousness among sections of the proletariat could be the basis for a new mass revolutionary communist party. Such a genuinely communist party would lead the struggle for the democratic reorganization of the Soviet Union; for democratic-centralist planning through soviets of the workers and their allies, such as that section of the bureaucracy, especially in the officer corps, which explicitly renounces in word and life their privileges; the collective peasantry and other oppressed; and that wing of the intelligentsia which finds its way out of the maze of corrupt appetites.

### **Down with Great Russian Chauvinism!**

In the absence of a revolutionary party, a good deal of working-class discontent over the immiserization caused by the market-oriented perestroika of Gorbachev is being channeled into Great Russian chauvinism and anti-Semitism (which August Bebel rightly labeled the "socialism of fools"). Outright native fascists like Pamyat and its ilk, who have been protected and promoted by sections of the bureaucracy, have now burst upon the scene to carry out their attacks with impunity in Soviet cities. These are not "isolated extremists" but the bellwethers of social crisis. These scum have been able to surface on a flood tide of Great

Russian nationalism that has been promoted by *both* the so-called "democratic" restorationists like Yeltsin and the old-line Stalinists who are prominent in the United Front of Toilers.

A reformed, internationalist communist party can be built in the USSR only by relentless political combat against Great Russian chauvinism. This means in the first place defending Jews against the rising tide of anti-Semitic terror and sweeping the new Black Hundreds of Pamyat off the streets through direct working-class action. Those who hide behind even the most "sophisticated, refined" Russian nationalism are a deadly roadblock to a proletarian and democratic solution to the national antagonisms which now threaten to rip apart the multinational Soviet workers state. Only a leadership possessing the authority of intransigent combat against the chauvinism of the dominant Russian nationality can be effective in exposing the restorationist program lurking beneath the current agitation for separation of the minority nationalities.

A critical element in unlocking the cycle of mistrust, insisted upon by Lenin, is *the right of any nationality with an anti-counterrevolutionary leadership to disaffiliate to the extent they see fit from the rest of the Soviet Union*. This right was incorporated into the founding constitution of the USSR. But in the guise of national separation, the Baltic nationalist independence movements seek not merely separation with full protection of all peoples within these borders, but a vicious capitalist restoration, rapidly producing a new and ethnically pure ruling class, and the degradation or exclusion of all other Soviet peoples. These nationalists, no less than the Great Russian chauvinists, are the implacable enemies of the Soviet working class.

### Return to the Road of Lenin and Trotsky!

Over twenty million Soviet citizens died to defeat Hitler's attempt to bring fascist capitalism to the territory of the USSR. The workers and oppressed the world over owe a great debt to the heroic defenders of Leningrad and Stalin-grad, and the countless others who fought to smash Nazism. But the Stalinist bureaucracy infused the struggle against Hitler with backward and divisive Russian nationalism, disappearing the internationalist banner of the Red Army's founding. Nonetheless the victims of Hitler in postwar

Europe looked to the Red Army. But Stalin had divided Europe with the "democratic" imperialists, and his apparatus feared the rise of a socialist Europe, which would have meant the end of the privileged Kremlin oligarchy. The machinery of the Western European Communist parties was put to work helping to restabilize a shattered West Europe for the national imperialist ruling classes. The results of this service were no more fruitful for the defense of the Soviet Union than the Hitler-Stalin pact. By 1948 renewed and implacable imperialist hostility, the "Cold War," propelled Stalin to create Eastern European states in the USSR's image.

Now Gorbachev's abject capitulation before imperialist military and diplomatic pressure, beginning with the Soviet pullout of Afghanistan, has pulled the rug out from under the post-World War II order. The Afghanistan intervention, although undertaken by Brezhnev for narrow defensive military reasons on the border of the USSR, opened the possibility to extend the gains of October to the peoples of hideously backward Afghanistan. For this reason, the Trotskyists of the International Communist League hailed the Red Army intervention; we condemned the withdrawal as a deadly danger to the Afghan masses, first and foremost the unveiled women, and to the USSR itself. Far from appeasing imperialism, the withdrawal from Afghanistan signaled to the NATO capitals that the Soviet government had lost its will to fight. Far better to have fought imperialism through an honorable fight in Afghanistan than to have to now fight it within the borders of the Soviet Union!

For what are the fruits of appeasement? Today the pro-capitalist Baltic separatists openly appeal to the imperialists for assistance against the rest of the USSR. Soviet forces are being pulled out across East Europe and Gorbachev has agreed to a reunified imperialist Germany—a Fourth Reich, which poses a mortal danger not only to the Soviet Union, but to all the European working people. The German imperialists expect to make Eastern Europe and most of the Soviet Union what Latin America is to the U.S. imperialists—a source of raw material and cheap labor, and a market for cheap goods. Interimperialist rivalry grows more bitter each day, as each ruling class jockey with the others for the spoils of East Europe while anticipating that disintegration of the Soviet Union itself will soon follow.

Newsweek



Ogonyok



Left: Fascist Pamyat organization führer Dmitri Vasilyev surrounded by black-shirted stormtroopers. Right: Pamyat goons attacked "April" writers association meeting in Moscow on January 18, spewed anti-Semitic filth, threatened pogroms.



Helena Hermes

**Stalinist-led demonstration of workers in Paris, May 1968, when France stood on the brink of revolution. The treacherous French Communist Party leadership abetted the bourgeoisie in restraining the workers' and students' upheaval.**

With the Soviet leadership's withdrawal from Afghanistan and acceptance of German reunification, American imperialism is emboldened and is already moving to assert itself from Liberia to the Persian Gulf. The ink was scarcely dry on the pompous proclamations of a new "peace dividend" before the U.S. plunged into military action attempting to grab the major portion of the world's oil supply for itself. So Gorbachev's "new thinking" leads straight to the escalation of that old imperialist behavior as America moves to take over Britain's old mandate for plunder "east of Suez."

All wings of the fracturing Soviet bureaucracy remain true to their Stalinist heritage—having derailed or destroyed every revolutionary proletarian opportunity since 1924 they seek to prove *by the results of their own betrayal* that revolutionary working-class struggle is a historic impossibility.

The commonplace "wisdom" of contemporary Soviet intellectuals maintains that the international proletariat's capacity for revolutionary struggle is at best a romantic myth. These people are the natural descendants of the Stalinists who rivaled and surpassed social democracy in organizing defeat after defeat for the world proletariat. Trotsky rightly labeled Stalin the "Great Organizer of Defeats," and he chronicled the history of Stalin's crimes, from subordinating the Communists to the bourgeois-nationalist Kuomintang in the Chinese Revolution of 1927, to the passive surrender to Hitler's rise to power in 1933, to the NKVD terror unleashed on the forces for proletarian revolution in the Spanish Civil War. This treachery did not stop with

World War II. The single example of the French bourgeoisie's handling of the 1968 general strike gives a measure of the importance of the Stalinist parties to maintaining capitalist rule. De Gaulle had no need to bring the French army back from Germany—the Communist Party did the counter-revolutionary work to head off the workers' general strike, while the police crushed the left-Stalinist revolutionary-minded students.

The October Revolution was carried out and the Communist International founded on the perspective of world revolution. Lenin and the Bolsheviks understood that an international revolutionary struggle was required not only to defeat the imperialist encirclement of the first workers state, but as the only means to open the road to socialist development. Capitalist development itself had brought into being an *international division of labor*. Thus, the struggle to secure for the Soviet masses the good things of life—both material and cultural—presupposes participation in the world market. This means the replacement of the imperialist-dominated world market by an international socialist economy through proletarian revolutions throughout the capitalist world.

The perspective of "world revolution" does not mean that every country is ripe for the proletarian seizure of power at every moment. It does mean that revolutionary crises do occur when the old order manifestly cannot continue to rule in the old way, when the ruling class is bankrupt, paralyzed and split, and the oppressed and intermediate layers can be won to the side of a working class which puts itself forward with the confidence and the program to take leadership of society. At such exceptional moments of history, like for example the prerevolutionary situation of France in 1968, what is essential is a pre-existing vanguard party rooted in the proletariat. A leadership which hesitates or stops short of the struggle for power merely serves to frighten the bourgeoisie into moving to bloodily behead the workers movement, leading to such phenomena as Hitler's Third Reich or more recently the Pinochet repression in Chile. Such a defeat decisively forestalls for a generation the prospects for revolution in that country, while striking a blow at the morale of working people and oppressed around the globe.

Stalin and his heirs in the Kremlin, having usurped the authority of the October Revolution, refuse to conduct revolutionary struggle when opportunities present themselves. In South Africa today, millions of black workers consider themselves communists, but the "Communist" Party refuses to place the struggle for socialism on the agenda, and instead chains the masses to another group of exploiters through the popular-front policy of unity with the "progressive" bourgeoisie. Once again, the SACP is positioned to play an indispensable role in seeking to *deflect* the intense mass struggles of the South African oppressed masses into reformist swindles. Thanks to the identification of Communism with uncompromising anti-racism gained through decades of courageous struggle under underground conditions by Communist militants, the SACP can be a far more effective obstacle to revolution than open social democrats could ever be.

Without the military and industrial might of the Soviet Union, the peasant-based, anti-capitalist revolutions in China, Cuba and Vietnam would long ago have been crushed by the imperialists. It is the duty of the world proletariat to militarily defend against imperialism the Soviet Union and the other states where capitalism has been abolished. But

elimination of imperialism from the globe through extension of the October Revolution is the only lasting defense.

In a letter to Soviet workers written in April 1940, Trotsky noted that the cowardice that Stalin's clique displayed before the world bourgeoisie was matched only by the brutality that the Kremlin usurpers meted out to the Soviet toilers. Today the brutal rule of the Thermidorians is coming undone. But the same arrogant ideologues of yesterday who preached the infallibility of Stalin's "socialism in one country" are now just as mendaciously seeking to lull the Soviet people with the lie of "planned capitalism" and supposedly civilized social democracy. They hasten to pass over in silence that there was a communist opposition to Stalin's political counterrevolution. An opposition which did not wait until it was safe and profitable to denounce Stalin. An opposition which did not fear to turn to the workers. They do not mention this opposition because it was Trotsky's Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition, and it was made up of cadres who had been leaders of October. Today millions hunger to fill the blank pages of history left by the Stalinists, and the multinational Soviet proletariat has started to come forward in defense of itself against the ravages of the current economic chaos. It is crucial that the workers movement arm itself first and foremost with the program of its class forebears: the Left Opposition. Soviet militants who want to fight to recover the revolutionary heritage of Lenin must begin now to construct a Trotskyist party across the Soviet Union based firmly on the program of proletarian, revolutionary internationalism.

\* \* \*

Much of the material which appears in *Spartacist Bulletin* No. 1 was written by the International Communist League (ICL) to intersect the unfolding political situation in the



Syigma

**Fidel Castro rubs shoulders with Augusto Pinochet, then "constitutionalist officer" in Salvador Allende's popular-front government, later Chile's bloody dictator. Stalinist lie of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism disarms world's working masses.**

German Democratic Republic (DDR) earlier this year. With the mass demonstrations which led to the fall of the Honecker regime, the Trotskyists of the ICL sought to intervene in the developing working-class political revolution. "What the Spartacists Want," a short programmatic statement which clearly defines the goals of the ICL, appeared in the first and many subsequent issues of the journal *Arbeiterpressekorrespondenz* (*Arprekorr*), which was begun in order to address the intense political ferment

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**Oppressed black masses of South Africa see red flag of communism as symbol of fight for freedom and social equality. But South African Communist Party's reformism is deadly obstacle to revolution.**

within the East German population and which for a period appeared daily. At that time (December 1989), the German ICL section was the Troztkistische Liga Deutschlands. It fused with the Spartakist Gruppen of the DDR to form the Spartakist Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands (SpAD) on 21 January 1990.

From the beginning the ICL took the lead in calling for solidarity with the 380,000 Soviet troops stationed in the DDR, seeing them as a key element in the situation there and as a bridge to the working masses of the USSR. *Spartacist Bulletin* No. 1 reprints two items which were written for the Soviet soldiers, "Internationalist Greetings to our Soviet Soldier Comrades," distributed widely in leaflet form to the troops in December and January, and "Letter to Our Comrade Soviet Soldiers," published in both Russian and German in *Arprekorr* in March 1990 and also distributed widely as a leaflet.

The masses of the DDR had been kept as ignorant of Trotskyism as the Soviet population. "Trotskyism: What It Isn't and What It Is!"—first published in *Spartacist* (German edition) and now published in the new *Spartacist Bulletin*—was written by the ICL to answer the problem: how is anyone whose acquaintance with Trotskyism is the myths and slanders perpetrated by the Stalinist bureaucracy now supposed to recognize Trotskyism, the real thing? The article explains the historical basis for the various revisionist currents claiming the mantle of Trotskyism in Europe today. Immediately following the fall of Honecker the East German masses, sick and tired of hackneyed Stalinist lies, eagerly bought tens of thousands of copies of this and other ICL publications. And on January 3, a quarter of a million people participated in a protest against the desecration of the Treptow Park memorial to the Soviet soldiers who died liberating Germany from the fascist plague. This protest had been initiated by the Trotskyists of the ICL and supported by the Stalinist SED/PDS.

But in the aftermath of this massive pro-working-class demonstration in Treptow, the imperialists stepped up their campaign of destabilization of the DDR and the Stalinists caved in. The anti-bureaucratic revolution, which had lacked organized working-class participation from the beginning,

rapidly slid over into social counterrevolution. The SED/PDS, which never sought to mobilize the working class to defend the collectivized property of the DDR, today simply seeks to be another toadying social-democratic parliamentary "opposition" in an expanded German imperialist state. The SpAD uniquely sought to mobilize the German working people against the destruction of the East German workers state, including running candidates in the Volkskammer elections who unambiguously opposed capitalist reunification. Today we are taking the lead in supporting the defensive struggles of the East German workers, in defending foreign-born workers and women, in denouncing and defying the present witchhunting measures aimed principally against the SED/PDS, in calling for sharp class struggle against a Fourth Reich.

Among the lies used to alibi Stalin's treacherous beheading of the Soviet officer corps on the eve of World War II is the slander against the brilliant Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky of anti-Semitism and "right socialism." For the interest of our Russian-speaking readers, we have translated for the *Bulletin* an article originally printed in *Workers Vanguard* No. 321 (14 January 1983), newspaper of the Spartacist League/U.S., which refutes these slanders.

The current disintegration of the ruling bureaucracies in East Europe powerfully confirms Trotsky's analysis of the brittle and contradictory nature of the regimes they headed, as exemplified especially by Trotsky's major work on the degeneration of the Russian Revolution, *What Is the USSR and Where Is It Going?* (written in 1936 and known in other languages as *The Revolution Betrayed*). We reprint in the *Spartacist Bulletin* one chapter from this work, "The Soviet Thermidor," in which Trotsky details the reasons for the degeneration of the Russian Revolution. But this chapter is only a small part of this work. It is high time that this and Trotsky's other major works be published in full in the Soviet Union!

The ICL has sought to intersect the political ferment unleashed by Gorbachev's glasnost from the beginning, despite limited resources and rudimentary Russian-language capacity. Two recent issues of our English-language international theoretical journal *Spartacist* have been devoted to the current developments in the Soviet Union and they both included small bilingual English-Russian sections, which we tried to distribute as widely as possible to Soviet citizens. *Spartacist Bulletin* No. 1 reprints the Russian sections from both these issues of *Spartacist*. "The USSR and the Problems of the Transitional Epoch" is an excerpt from *The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, a programmatic statement written by Trotsky and adopted by the founding conference of the Fourth International in 1938. The introduction to this piece was written by the ICL especially for *Spartacist*, as was "When Was the Soviet Thermidor?" which details the decisive events leading to the degeneration of the October Revolution in 1923-24.

We have also translated for the *Spartacist Bulletin* a letter to the Soviet Embassy written in early August as American imperialism began moving its military might massively into Saudi Arabia in an open provocation and oil grab (published in English in *WV* No. 509, 7 September 1990). Soviet cooperation with U.S., British and other world imperialist powers in this adventure poses imminent danger particularly to the Soviet Union itself and to all the world's working masses.

—August 1990

7 November 1990

# ICL Raises the Banner of Trotskyism in Leningrad, Moscow



Spartacist

For the first time in six decades, the revolutionary internationalist program of Lenin and Trotsky was raised in the Soviet Union on 7 November 1990, anniversary of the October Revolution. In Leningrad comrades of the International Communist League, working with a group of young militants who consider themselves Trotskyists, and who are examining various ostensible Trotskyist currents, distrib-

uted the leaflet which we reprint and translate below, and rallied at Palace Square (see photo). Over 1,000 copies of the Russian-language *Spartacist Bulletin* No. 1 were also sold; in Moscow, ICL comrades marched in the parade and sold over 350 copies of *Spartacist Bulletin* No. 1. Thousands more copies of the *Spartacist Bulletin*, as well as other ICL Russian-language literature, are now circulating in the USSR.

**Hail the Celebration of the October Revolution!  
Defend the Gains of the October Revolution!  
Down With the Restoration of Capitalism!  
For Power to Soviets of the Working People!**

- Create an anti-Stalinist Leninist-Trotskyist party from workers and those sections of the army who have the fewest privileges and the most responsibilities!
- For genuine equality on the basis of abundance!
- All power to the Soviets of the working people! Oust the parasites, exploiters and their ideologues from the Soviets!
- "Socialism in one country" is a defeatist myth! For proletarian revolutionary internationalism!
- For military defense of the USSR against the imperialist vise tightening around it! Against the dismemberment of the USSR!
- For democratic-centralist planning through Soviets of the workers and their allies—peasants, the working intelligentsia and those of the military who voluntarily renounce their privileges! Stalin's heirs are selling out our Motherland.
- For workers mobilizations against chauvinism, Pamyat and anti-Semitism!
- For democratic reorganization of the Soviet Union and the right of every nation with an anti-counterrevolutionary leadership to whatever self-determination it considers necessary.
- For government of the Lenin-Sverdlov type on the basis of workers democracy!
- For the formation of an all-Union Trotskyist party!

INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST LEAGUE  
(IV Internationalist)

**Да здравствует годовщина  
Октябрьской революции!**

**Защитим завоевания Октябрьской революции!  
Долой реставрацию капитализма!  
За власть Советов трудящихся!**

- Создать антисталинистскую ленинистско-троцкистскую партию из рабочих и тех слоев армии, которые имеют меньше привилегий и больше обязанностей!
- За подлинное равенство на базе изобилия!
- Вся власть Советам трудящихся! Изгнать паразитов, эксплуататоров и их идеологов из Советов!
- «Социализм в отдельной стране» — пораженческий миф! За пролетарский революционный интернационализм!
- За военную защиту СССР от стягивающихся вокруг него тисков империализма! Против расчленения СССР!
- За демократически-централизованное планирование через Советы рабочих и их союзников — колхозников, трудовой интеллигенции и военных, которые добровольно отказались от своих привилегий! Сталинские наследники продают нашу родину.
- За мобилизацию рабочих против шовинизма, «Памяти» и антисемитизма!
- За демократическую реорганизацию Советского Союза и право каждой нации с анти-контрреволюционным руководством на такое самоопределение, какое она считает нужным.
- За правительство типа Ленина-Свердлова на основе рабочей демократии!
- За образование всесоюзной троцкистской партии!

ИНТЕРНАЦИОНАЛЬНАЯ КОММУНИСТИЧЕСКАЯ ЛИГА  
(IV Интернациональная)

**SPARTACIST**

## From Russian-Language Spartacist Bulletin No. 1

# For a Trotskyist Party in the USSR!



Films Art et Science

Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the Russian Revolution, addresses May Day rally in Red Square, Moscow, in the early 1920s. Banner salutes workers struggling against the "old world" of capitalist exploitation. Return to the road of Lenin and Trotsky!

We publish below a translation of the introduction to the first Russian-language Spartacist Bulletin, published in October 1990.

Who in truth was Leon Trotsky? Why did Stalin fear, above all else, to allow even a single word of Trotsky's to be published in the Soviet Union after 1928? For decades the truth about Trotsky, known by the world to be one of Lenin's closest comrades in the Russian Revolution, has lain buried in the Soviet Union under a mountain of lies and corpses. Virtually the entire generation which achieved October, triumphed in the Civil War and heroically toiled to lay the foundations of Soviet industry was exiled and murdered—"Trotskyism" was often the only charge. Trotsky's words, "The October Revolution was accomplished for the sake of the toilers, not for the sake of new parasites," haunted Stalin's bureaucracy. They feared that the Soviet working class would again become infused with the internationalist program of the October Revolution, linking the cause of the Soviet masses with the class struggle abroad.

Today, glasnost has come to Gorbachev's Soviet Union. No longer can Trotsky be ludicrously portrayed as an agent of the Japanese emperor and the Third Reich—now the Soviet people are permitted to know that Trotsky was the founder of the Red Army. Yet all major political currents continue to vilify Trotsky and the political program he fought for. The social democrats and outright capitalist restorationists of the Democratic Platform of the CPSU write pages of new demonology, portraying Trotsky as Stalin's

power-hungry twin. This view finds favor in Gorbachev's camp. Meanwhile, old-line bureaucrats like Polozkov of the Nina Andreyeva school prefer Stalin's *Short Course*; obscenely, they claim the mantle of Lenin while praising the "wisdom" of his antipode—Stalin.

In their hatred of Trotsky these different wings of the fracturing Soviet bureaucracy reveal their acceptance of Stalinism's biggest lie: the identification of October with the nationalist, anti-working-class program of "socialism in a single country" and its corollary, the search for an impossible permanent "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. In slandering Trotsky, Stalin's various heirs renounce anew the revolutionary internationalism of the founding cadre of Soviet communism, who saw the October Revolution which gave birth to the Soviet state as *the first step of the world proletarian revolution*, and founded the Communist International in this spirit.

Trotsky and his supporters, organized in the Left Opposition, were living proof that Stalinism does not flow from Leninism—they were persecuted, exiled and finally murdered by Stalin because they continued to fight for Lenin's program. But Trotskyism lived on as an organized political current outside the Soviet Union. Over sixty years ago, from exile, Trotsky outlined the fundamental economic and social contradictions of Soviet society following the *political counterrevolution* in which Stalin and his henchmen usurped power against the Bolshevik internationalists. The material

*continued on page 55*