

J. Posadas

**From the
Third World War
to the End of Capitalism**

Selection of texts from 1970 to 1981



The Russian people commemorates the 9th May 1945, victory day against Nazism, and renders homage to the "Regiment of the Immortals" with the portraits of their relatives.

Leon Trotsky

The USSR in War

25.9.1939



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INDEX

TEXTS BY J POSADAS

From the Third World War to the End of Capitalism ()*

- **Chapter 1. The growth of the inter-capitalist divergencies, 22.3.1981, page 6**
- **Chapter 2. War preparations and the function of the socialist countries, 22.3.1981, page 9**
- **Chapter 3. War is not the end of the world, it is an “atomic charco”, 20.9.1972, page 16**
- **Chapter 4. Workers State and Socialist Society, (extract from a Conference) 1968, page 21**
 - . The bureaucracy cannot destroy the Workers State, page 25
 - . The bureaucracy is not a new social class, page 31
 - . Bureaucratic tendencies are breaking with the Workers State’s social aim, page 34

TEXT BY LEON TROTSKY

The USSR in War, 25.9.1939, page 36

- **The German-Soviet Pact, page 36**
 - . Notes on Trotsky’s book by the Marxist Internet Archive, page 54

WHO IS POSADAS, page 55

J POSADAS’ TITLES IN ENGLISH, page 56

Additional information: The vast majority of J Posadas’ writings is drawn from the transcription of his speeches in Spanish. This explains the unusual form of the texts which the author elaborated at the same time as he gave conferences, travelled, intervened in the class struggle and organised the Trotskyist-Posadist IV International.

Trotsky wrote ‘The USSR in War’ on 25.9.39, 8 days after the USSR entered Poland from the East (17.9.39). The ‘occupied territories’ he mentions are those in the Eastern part of Poland that the USSR occupied. But this was in answer to Hitler who had started the invasion of Poland from the West on 1.9.39, on the first day of WW2. The Comintern often referred to in this text, is the Third International that the Bolsheviks founded on 2 March 1919, now led by Stalin since Lenin’s death..

The Editors, ISCPE, February-March 2024.

() Title by the Editorial Board.*

FROM THE THIRD WORLD WAR TO THE END OF CAPITALISM*

(A selection of texts 1970-1981)

Presentation

This book's title *From the Third World War to the End of Capitalism* was created by the Editorial Board. The book contains a selection of texts by J Posadas from 1970 to 1981, as well as Trotsky's text "The USSR in War" of 25.9.1939.

The texts we present by J. Posadas bear on the fundamental question of the inevitability of war on the part of the capitalist regime, and in consequence the inevitability of the Third World War. It is vital for humanity to put an end to the capitalist regime therefore. The selected texts are drawn from a number of conferences, publications and books by J Posadas with titles like "The Soviet Union", "Workers' State and Socialist Society", "The Crisis of Capitalism, War and Socialism". The dates of these texts range from 1970 to when he died in 1981.

We publish also the text by León Trotsky "The USSR in War". He wrote it only 24 days after the outbreak of WW2 itself on 1st September, same day when Hitler invaded Poland from the West. In defence of the USSR, the Soviet army entered Poland from the East on 17 September, 8 days before Trotsky wrote this text. His reference to the Russian 'occupied territories' relates to Poland therefore, seeing that the Soviet army entered Finland only in November, 2 months after this writing by Trotsky.

In his text "The USSR in War", Trotsky has no doubt that in this war (WW2), the tide of revolutionary expansion is going to return, to consolidate the Soviet Workers State, to sap at the factors that had caused the rise of bureaucratic power in the USSR. Trotsky demonstrates here his great confidence in the role of the proletariat as the class that can lead the transition from bourgeois society to socialism, and the impossibility for the bureaucracy to transform into class.

Although Trotsky was murdered in August 1940 and could not see the end of the war, the bulk of his analyses and forecasts turned out fundamentally true: the expansion of world revolution returned and sapped at the power of the bureaucracy as a result. This did not bring the end of the capitalist system, but the class struggle acquired new forms on account of force relations once again favourable to socialism in the world, and changed force relations in the capitalists. J Posadas retook this train of thought to demonstrate how WW2 had hastened the formation of new Workers States and Revolutionary States.

With these publications, our aim is to understand, contribute and intervene in the actual revolutionary processes, particularly now in the context of the current war in Ukraine. For this war is not between two countries, as in *Russia vs Ukraine*. It is *NATO vs Russia* instead, in a war that is increasingly implicating the masses of the whole world. Russia's *Special Military Operation* (SMO) on 22 February 2022 did not start that particular war either, but following up on the dissolution of the USSR, it expressed a new departure in a socialist direction.

Many factors took Russia to the extreme decision of its SMO in Ukraine. To profit from the crisis and enfeeblement consequent on USSR dissolution, Nato decided upon the imposition of a sanguinary course of expansion, course marked by wars of occupation and rapine, in Europe (Yugoslavia), the Middle East (Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan) and Africa (Libya). It encouraged internal conflicts in the former Soviet Republics to bring its Nato's "frontiers" closer to Russia, to throttle it. In effect, this 'Atlantic Alliance' has appropriated a chunk of Ukraine to make it a 'special' military base for attack on Russia, to destroy it.

Russia's SMO in Ukraine has been a legitimate response. It stands before the world as the powerful announcement that the times of unpunished imperialist wars are drawing to a close. It stands also as a call on the world's peoples to trust in the perspective of a global front, now that it becomes possible to break the hegemony that imperialism can only maintain through NATO.

In Europe, there are no more "neutral" countries; directly or indirectly, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland have joined the NATO military alliance. It has become essential to discuss with clarity, and join together against a NATO that prepares war on the scale of the world, nuclear weapons' utilisation included.

All the nations are becoming implicated in this process. The masses of the world do not want to pay the costs of the crisis of the capitalist system. They do not want to participate in its war preparations against Russia or China. In all the communist parties, the socialist parties, the progressive and revolutionary nationalist movements, in all the peace movements and the environmentalists, there grows the need to discuss thoroughly, and to unite worldwide.

We salute all the initiatives to build an anti-war world front. Our Editorial participates in it with the publication of these important texts by J. Posadas and León Trotsky.

The Editors, Feb 2024.

** Title by the Editorial Board*

THE GROWTH IN THE INTERCAPITALIST DIVERGENCES

J POSADAS

22.3.1981

Big Yankee capital looks for the ways to bring the entire world of capitalism into confrontation with the Workers States. It wants to cut the development of revolution, get ready for war, and create the conditions to best decide when to launch it.

Capitalism wants all its internal contradictions raised onto a higher plane of incorporation between the capitalist powers. Many capitalist sectors realise that confrontation with the Soviet Union means the end of them. They feel they will disappear if they confront the Soviet Union. The feeling of capitalist perpetuation and conservation makes them wish to confront the Workers States. This happens in high finance and in economic circles of the war industry. Because they live off war, they cannot think outside war. But another capitalist sector clashes with this and says: "If you make war on the Soviets, we will all die - perhaps not quite die, but instead of becoming slaves of the Soviets, we will be the slaves of the Yanquis". Since the different capitalist sectors always tend to mutual exclusion, they never achieve any higher plane of incorporation. What comes to them instead is disintegration.

US President Donald Reagan believes that he can stop history. But he does not say how. A part of the North American bourgeoisie asks him: "But where are you taking us, exactly?". This happens because there are bourgeois sectors for whom any war with the Soviets is lost in advance. Big capital does not agree with that, but it has no notion of anything else. The doubters are in the other sector, the one with a certain freedom to think in bourgeois terms, like a JF Kennedy or even a Jimmy Carter. If there is fear in the cautiousness of Carter's policy, there is also the realisation that the alternative means disappearance.

Big capital has no option but to crush the world, which it does, with the blindness of the bull that sees bulls in every corner of the porcelain shop. The other capitalist sector realises that this is the end of them. They are aware, they understand, that this means their elimination as capitalists. Some react to this by quitting their bourgeois origins and joining the revolutionary camp. Children of the big bourgeoisie become revolutionaries and the parents do not oppose. You see this everywhere. Among the British Labourites, some are even from the aristocracy; these people

reckon that to have a life, they must send nobility to the devil¹, along with this appalling queen most of all, who has no idea about anything.

As far as the Yankees are concerned, the French bourgeoisie is a centre of contention. The French bourgeois are not anti-capitalist of course, but they see the Yankees drawing France to its death. In the war that is coming, they know that they have lost. The Soviets have already warned the European bourgeoisie: 'if you deploy the US missiles in Europe, lamentably we will have no choice but to destroy them. It will be a matter of minutes'. The European bourgeoisie knows that the Soviets will destroy them at the very start of the war, and that in the minutes following that, the workers of every country will charge forward to take power.

There was a declaration from leaders of the German Worker State (RDA). They posed that 'the two Germanys will be one when we can make a single socialist Germany'. This did not stop Willy Brandt (the social-democratic prime minister in West Germany) from continuing to talk of 'the unification of the two Germanys.' This is a capitalist leader with nowhere to turn.

Cuba is encircled by air and by sea, but the Cubans respond with complete security. This disarms layers in the Yankees' officials and top brass. They witnessed the stupidity of the Vietnam war. At its core, imperialism no longer impresses, not even with "the defence of the homeland". A level of knowledge tells people that 'the homeland' does not stop at the US border, because its limit is the world, through culture and through science that unify the world. In our epoch, it is the revolution that teaches this particular lesson. It teaches this lesson through the Workers State and through the Workers State's measures that unify the world like statisation² and socialization.

The concept of the homeland continues, but infinitely diminished. The proof is in Angola and Mozambique, where solidarity as a necessity secures a high level of integration between the human being and the highest form of progress, which is the Workers State. Angola and Mozambique have made a leap from the most indigent form of life, over to the process of the construction of the Worker State. This is culture today, the social culture of humanity, with its expression in politics.

In the top capitalist circles, there is disorientation regarding the events of the world. They feel with no answer, because their only answer is war, and because they have not been able to do it yet! They know they should have done it some 20 years ago, but they have kept postponing. Truman's foreign minister, Foster Dulles, had been in favour of launching the war; but the (1960) American U-2 spy plane incident³ derailed

¹ In 1963, Tony Benn renounced his peerage. In 1991, he proposed a Bill to end the monarchy and make a Republic. Elisabeth II was the queen then.

² In Trotsky and Posadas, 'statisation' or 'statification' is the form of State ownership aimed at economic planning for human need, and not a nationalisation for capitalist purpose.

³ A North American U-2 spy plane was shot down on 1st May 1960 by the Soviet air force.

the entire Yankee strategy. The Soviets let the US plane cross the USSR's territory, and then shot it down. In provoking the Soviets in this way, the Yankees had wanted to stop Eisenhower and Khrushchev communicating: an early intimation of what was to come with Kennedy's assassination (1963). If Eisenhower was not killed, it is because the provocation had been insufficiently organised and planned.

When capitalism has to assassinate its own leaders, it is because it cannot cope with both its internal competition and its antagonism towards the Workers States. Capitalism is a walking dead. It survives, nothing more. Its survival is particularly murderous, seeing the way it kills people, and prepares to kill so many more. We cannot prevent this. People themselves know that they cannot prevent the war. They know that the war is an "atomic charco"⁴, as we call it. They stay confident and optimistic. Far from preparing to drown in the 'charco', they prepare to build socialism.

At the core of Central America, the Yankees must put up with the situation caused by an El Salvador⁵ that they cannot even invade. They already invaded Nicaragua four times⁶, they occupied the whole of Nicaragua⁷. Today they must invent all sorts of provocations to authorise themselves to interfere. Capitalism is reduced to running behind events. It used to send its orders to the world at the press of a button. Now all that it gets from the button is water.

History has pulled the rug from under capitalism, and from under the Soviet bureaucracy too. This is why the "red phone" does not work⁸.

Khrushchev believed in the possibility of infinite accords and alliances with imperialism, as in some form of sharing the world. Capitalism was not prepared to accept life in that situation - the revolution was. The revolution is dialectical; it has logic on its side, while capitalism has no logic at all.

J. POSADAS

22.3.1981

⁴ J Posadas gives to the atomic war the name of 'charco' to evoke a pit of violent destruction but of short duration.

⁵ In Sept 1980, five left wing revolutionary groups merged to form the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), which itself sprouted a Marxist guerrilla movement. The assassination of Archbishop Romero and the \$6 billion the US granted to the Salvadoran military only accelerated the drive to national liberation.

⁶ 1898-1909, 1911-12, 1933-34, let alone 1978-1990.

⁷ Constant interference and regime change operations from 1978 onwards. (Editorial, 2023).

⁸ In many films, books and videos, the 'hotline' between Washington and Moscow is represented by a red phone.

WAR PREPARATIONS AND THE FUNCTION OF THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

J POSADAS

22.3.1981

War is the consequence of the development of capitalist society, not of the arms' production. As a cause of war, the act of producing weapons is secondary. It is capitalism itself that needs war. The great splendour of the capitalist world has ended. It is now in retreat, but what you see more clearly than anything is the uninterrupted and uncontrollable advance of the revolutionary processes. These are happening in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Countries emerge from nothingness to announce their determination to make progress. This happens in the middle of wars, but the triumphant wars are those that break capitalist oppression. They are those that end up with the economy serving the needs of the populations.

What used to dominate in the past was private ownership. Today, countries emancipate themselves through the 'statised' form of property⁹ where the State oversees the economy. In those countries, the emancipating populations are said to be economically 'backward' - and in a general way they are, as well as culturally. But between the social, economic and cultural aspects in their lives, it is in the cultural aspect that they leap forward quickest. They have no food to eat, or not more than before, but they observe and identify in the world the best road to progress.

War is a consequence of the system of private property. It is private property that leads to the crises that themselves lead to wars between the capitalist countries. It was like this above all in the past. With the existence of Workers States nowadays, this has turned into a system against system confrontation. The wars of 1870-71, and 1914-39 are examples of inter-capitalist wars. And not only of wars, but of occupations: Zones of Germany passed over to France and others from France to Germany. The same happened with Belgium. These were inter-capitalist wars, in times when there were no Workers States; or the USSR was still alone. That is to say, it is not because the Workers States exist that capitalism makes wars. There have always been wars in capitalism.

Inter-capitalist war is driven by the contradictions of capitalism, where there always comes a time when production is too large for what the consumers can buy, particularly if there are not enough outside markets to absorb it all. This is a

⁹ See note 2

consequence of capitalist production. The capitalists compete. They make wars between themselves to eliminate each other. They form huge business trusts worldwide. Even though Germany, Britain and the United States have important consortiums in common, the confrontation between them continues because the competition continues between the countries.

For capitalism, war preparations and arms production are a vital necessity

The capitalists use their war preparations and weapons production for wars which are both between themselves and against the world masses. This happened between France and Germany in 1871, when in middle of that inter-capitalist war, the French bourgeoisie decided to let the Germans competitors enter France, to liquidate the Paris Commune together.

Mind that war does not come from bad will, or bad people. These things exist, but do not determine. What decides war is the logic of production based on private property.

The world war that capitalism prepares today is not incidental. It has been long in coming. It emanates from the nature of the capitalist system itself. To have that war which is in its system, it must develop its competitiveness to the maximum possible. Produce in less time than the competitors, accumulate more money and the technical means to eliminate its competitors. When the other capitalists see that they cannot eliminate a rival through economic competition, they resort to war. This is how there have been three major wars between the capitalists, 1871, 1914 and 1939.

On top of their major wars, there have been any number of their "small" major wars. One instance is the intervention of imperialism in Indonesia in 1945. When the social-democratic government of Sukarno took a series of measures to develop the economy¹⁰, world capitalism first supported Dutch imperialism to bring Sukarno down, and then it threw out the Dutch as well. So that world capitalism had removed the government of Indonesia - whose measures were favourable to the economic development of the country and to the masses - and thrown out a major competitor as well. If the removal of the Dutch was never quite completed, it was to keep Dutch imperialism on side against a new rising. This is another example of capitalist war.

A further sample of their wars is the Yankees in Cuba. Spain dominated Cuba until 1898, the year it had to grant independence. As the Spanish left, the Yankees entered. The masses continued the struggle, against the Yankees this time. The latter annexed the Guantanamo part of Cuba, and Guantanamo is still under Yankee occupation today. This is a most brutal, murderous and criminal way of keeping human under-development. Yankee military deployment in Guantanamo, aims at crippling the progress of the place. It is of no value to the US otherwise, economic or military. In an atomic confrontation, one small bomb will suffice to get rid of that base. And the Yankees know it. They do not leave however, lest this shows weakness.

¹⁰ Sukarno was president of the Republic of Indonesia 1945-1967.

The Yankees do not leave Guantanamo for fear that this would stimulate revolutions across Latin America. They need this base therefore, to intervene elsewhere, as in Latin America. Guantanamo has no value from the strategic-military point of view of the United States. They hold on to it to keep the pressure on Cuba, and to send imperialist armies and soldiers to other parts.

Sites like Guantanamo used to be strategically important, but not so much today. The same goes for the navies, which decline in importance generally speaking. The navy is useful as a means of transport and to carry atomic weapons, but even this is relative. The air force has kept its importance. But the factor that is going to be more important than all the future means of war is the relationship between populations and armies of occupation. This has more importance than all the navies and air forces combined. The Soviets know that their army will be welcomed by the populations of the world. They know they will get food and water, whilst the Yankees will be on the receiving end of bullets and buckets of shit.

Capitalist production leads to crises, and the crises make some imperialist sectors look for a way out against their capitalist rivals. When their rivalries cannot be resolved through the economy, they start war between themselves. War is inherent to the capitalist system. But it is not inherent to the Workers States! And the new world war today, which capitalism prepares once again, is against the Workers States. It wants to stop the progress of history. War is the result of capitalism.

There is no war between the Workers States

The invasion of Vietnam by China has not been a war between Workers States. It has been the action of a counter-revolutionary clique, the one in China, against the Vietnamese Workers State. Note how, as it invaded, China sent only a limited number of soldiers. Its action remained limited and it was soon put a stop to. China retreated, but not because it had achieved its aim or 'taught' Vietnam any 'lesson'. China left before it was thrown out and before internal opposition could develop more fully inside China. The Chinese leaders feared the opposition their war was creating in the Chinese people. And they feared above all that the Soviets might intervene. Had the Soviets done so, they would have been supporting, strengthening and developing a revolutionary opposition inside China, against the counter-revolutionary leadership of the Chinese Workers State.

The capitalist system is driven to war by the logical necessity of its production regime. But in this stage of history, even the nature of war between the capitalist countries has changed. See how one capitalism can attack another without the use of weapons, and still obtain complete economic and commercial dismemberment. This can happen between the capitalists because, standing in front them, there are the Workers states holding them back from fuller and more direct military confrontations between them. The crisis of capitalism is ceaseless at production level, at financial level, at capital accumulation and export level, and all this as part of the never stopping concentration of capitals through the multinationals.

But the Workers States, have no need of this. They have no need of war. The war of the Chinese against Vietnam was the tentative action of a counter-revolutionary clique. It was not a war between Workers States.

Take Yugoslavia for instance. Although it seriously confronted the Stalin's leadership, the Soviet Union never invaded Yugoslavia. If the Soviet Union did not invade, it was not for fear of so-called guarantees that capitalism was said to have given to Yugoslavia. In the whole structure of the Soviet Workers State, there is not one part that requires such a war. It is not true that Yugoslavia accepted Western guarantees, and guarantees or not, the Soviets would have gone in, had they chosen to do so.

It was the Yankees and the English who pledged support to Hitler, should he invade the USSR at the start of WW2. In 1941, Churchill proposed to let the German imperialists invade the USSR. The plan was that the British would follow behind, and then arrange for both sides to be smashed. Before the end of WW2, Churchill proposed to continue the war against the USSR. Only, the Yankees disagreed. They saw the madness: The whole world and the working class would stand opposed. Europe would turn itself into an anti-US bastion.

The Workers State does not need war

The advent of a warmongering counter-revolutionary leadership like the one in China (Deng) is not the product of the Workers State. It is a counter-revolutionary leadership, not unlike that of Stalin when he took to murdering the Bolsheviks who had made the revolution. This action on the part of Stalin did not emanate from the Workers State. The structure of the Workers State has no need for war, or assassinations. This occurs when a political leadership usurps the power to go assassinating and warmongering on its own account.

For the Workers State to live and progress, it has positively no need for war. To the exact opposite, and for its own development, the Workers State requires a logical relation between the peoples. This is all to the reverse of capitalism, with its system based on profit-making. The Worker State is not based on profit-making. In the USSR, there is an immense development, not only economic, but also scientific and cultural.

The Workers States cannot make headway by competing or even by opposing each other. The exact reverse is the case. The logical need of their economic, social, scientific and cultural relations is to unify. The fact that they still do not unify sufficiently comes from the limitations of the leaderships. But even this considered, the progress they have made since 1945 is immense. You find no unemployment or hunger in the Workers States, far from it. And let us not forget that they had to start from the structures that capitalist production left behind. They had to start from capitalist science and technology. They will eventually change this, but they cannot do so now due to this ready-made structure they still depend upon.

As they build socialism, the Workers States change the social relations

The Workers States have no choice but to start building themselves from the economic and social structures left by the capitalist system. They can improve their social structures because these are more dependent on the relations between the Workers States' masses and leaderships. But more than this is needed when it comes to the economic structure of the Workers State. The material base of the State, its productive base, was put in place long ago, and world capitalism still holds the technology of production. The Workers States are having to start from all this. The conditions exist for them to create a superior technology certainly, but this is now dependent on a higher level of relations and development between the Workers States themselves.

The Workers States are the inheritors of this capitalist structure. Their task is to change everything capitalist that comes from before. Their production systems, for example, must be made to serve the needs of the population. They must bring the human concern to production, care for the populations, identify with their lives. The system of capitalist production used to rest on profit-making. Although the system of the Workers State is now resting on social development, the task of transformation remains. Sixty years is not long enough to supersede capitalism in this way, particularly with capitalism still around. Up to 50% of Workers State expenditure must go on defence, instead of on development. Had capitalism been defeated already, development in the field of production would have become immense.

The Workers States have to set up their own technical structures of production. But when it started, capitalism already had this, having developed it inside Feudalism. In the Workers States today, everything like this remains to be done; and be done under bureaucratic and murderous leaderships, like Stalin first and then Khrushchev, inclined to want it all limited or undone. Khrushchev tried to block the development of China for instance. He did not mind China as a buffer against capitalism, but he wanted China's development thwarted to stop it competing with him. He was less concerned about China's economic or commercial competition, but he feared the social competition of China. He did not want China to become a centre of revolutionary ferment, lest this should start influencing back inside the USSR.

If the Workers States do not advance more than they do, it is because the leadership necessary to achieve this is lacking. In terms of production capacity, the USSR is second in the world, and first in many aspects. The USSR is superior even to capitalist Germany. In the last two years, the Soviets' Space Missions and the interchanges of Soyuz' cosmonauts have pointed to Russia's high level of industrial production. Not production for consumer goods, but production for human intelligence which, in due time, is bound to supersede the other type of production.

Capitalism continued with the structures that had come from Feudalism, but the Workers State has to acquire its own. The Soviets' capacity in space shows the level of attention, and the importance that it gives to the problems of human development.

Through this conduct, the Soviet Union shows itself confident and secure that for life on earth to continue, it has to link up with the Cosmos. The Workers States are forced to live alongside capitalism. This holds back their own development therefore, their own technical preparedness. They must all at once create a new leadership in history, overcome the legacy of Stalin, and rebuild themselves from the last war (WW2) that destroyed half of the world.

Capitalism is war, socialism is peace

Capitalism is war, socialism is peace - this phrase is not a declaration, a maxim or a slogan. It is a logical conclusion. Capitalism must engender war just in order to live. But the Workers State, just to live, must engender peace. The leaderships of the Workers States put limitations on this conclusion, but this is not decisive: see how the Chinese leadership had to get out of Vietnam! And the Vietnamese Workers State had no incentive to use this invasion to start killing Chinese people, inland or in China. But there had been nothing to stop Vietnam bombing the retreating Chinese soldiers. Vietnam let them go, not for fear of attacking them, but because no Workers State needs to make war on another. The Chinese leaders themselves did not play the criminal role that imperialism would have done in their stead. China withdrew from Vietnam due to opposition inside China. China feared that the USSR might get involved, but it was even more afraid of the USSR starting to give support to a revolutionary opposition inside China. The last thing China wanted was the USSR starting to influence an opposition inside China.

It is only recently in history that Workers States have become established. The capitalist system has had hundreds of years of experience. The system of private property has thousands of years of existence. To get to capitalism, one mode of production followed the other, but the regime of property stayed the same. Slavery, Feudalism and capitalism all share in the same property regime, differing between them only in the system of production. When it first appeared, the Workers State marked the start of another society, a superior one. Its leadership was not the fairest or the best able to represent this necessity - and it still lacks in capacity and policy - but what counts is that the working class is trying to direct society for the first time in history.

The USSR is a fine example of confident security in the matter of building socialism. The Soviet masses got the better of both Stalin and Hitler. When Hitler was on the rise, world capitalism tried to have the USSR resisting Hitler in hope of each exhausting the other. Hitler expected the Soviet workers to rise against Stalin, but the Soviet workers said: First Hitler has to be liquidated, we will deal with Stalin afterwards. The Soviet workers developed a consciousness that can only be created by a Worker State. Hitler lost because of this, and not because the North Americans intervened! Hitler lost because the Soviet workers, and the masses of the whole world, focused on defending the USSR against Nazism. Stalin was removed in due course and the USSR progressed. The USSR passed from zero to its present ability.

The Soviet Union achieved this feat thanks to its form of society, its stasised form of property, production planned, its development of science and culture, and the general elevation of the political level of society.

The USSR is not a contradictory society. It is a society of uninterrupted progress learning to lead itself. In the USSR, the base of society is not 'democratic liberty'. The base is the stasised form of property, the planning of production and the expansion of the anti-capitalist struggle in the world. This is the base of Soviet society, and to raise it further at most elevated level, Soviet democracy is necessary. This the finality of Soviet democracy. Even Brezhnev said so¹¹.

If capitalist Germany grew after WW2, it was not through its own economic ability. Where would Germany have found the capital to grow as it did after the war? The capital came from imperialism which placed a wager of millions of dollars on German development. This was done through the Marshall Plan, with the aim of turning Germany into a bastion of opposition, of obstruction to the development of the Workers States.

Germany today is a country occupied by the British, the French and the North Americans. It does not have democratic rights and it does not have a military power of its own. It depends on French and English imperialism, above all Yanqui. It is a subordinated country that was granted the force not only to confront the Workers States, but to impede within itself the independent economic development that confers military and social rights. Had Germany been allowed to have its own military, there would have been another war by now, with France and with England. Not with the German Workers State mind - with France or England.

The key to ending all wars, unemployment, hunger, the exploitation of the foreign workers, and the exploitation of the workers of every country, is the elimination of the capitalist system.

The way to avoid war is to eliminate the capitalist system.

J. POSADAS

22 March 1981.

¹¹ The author often made jokes.

THE WAR IS NOT THE END OF THE WORLD, IT IS AN ATOMIC "CHARCO"

J POSADAS

20.9.1972

The question of the atomic war is one of the essential questions that dominate the human concern nowadays. But concern is not the same thing as fear. The 'concern' poses the question: How are we going to face this? What will happen before, during and after it? How will the people behave?

In this case of the atomic war, as in any other case involving conflict and class struggle, one must value the positions and the class conclusions once derived from experiences about the way the proletariat and humanity behave.

Although the bourgeoisie is petrified by the atomic war, it has no option but to make it. It recoils in horror at the idea that the atomic war is the end of itself. In the United States and some other countries, the capitalists build shelters several hundred meters underground - complete with cinemas, electricity, bathrooms, quarters for the servants, the employees, the domestics. This is prepared by bourgeois people who think that they are going to be able to continue to live that way.

Even if imperialism were to win the atomic war, it would not be capitalist power continuing afterwards. The military would have imposed itself and taken the power; introducing in history a new condition. A social sector would have taken over from the political leadership of private property in an enormous retrogression reaching further back down below the Middle Ages. The new class to emerge would not be able to make a new form of property, being itself of no property; except that - as in the Middle Ages - it would be a political leadership and an inferior system of production blocking the way to any new layer wanting to turf them out. But if only for them to continue to exist, these people would need to fall back on science and technology, recreating again all the same problems. This has no perspective. Even in the case of them winning the nuclear war, they have no perspective.

**We reiterate that we do not want the atomic war.
The program of the Bolsheviks was against war.**

To the question: 'but why do you make war, then?' the Bolsheviks answered: 'because the capitalists make war. If you want to end the massacre and the oppression, you have to make war against the war'. Indeed, there is no other way.

Should someone invent a new way to replace the war and the revolutionary war, we would adopt it. But there is no such possibility. The atomic war is inevitable because imperialism is going to resort to it. And so, we prepare ourselves as a result, feeling strong of the force brought to life by the triumph of 14 Workers States and the ongoing development of 16 Revolutionary States.

Secure in history, the proletariat does not fear the atomic war

The revolutionary action of the proletariat is determined by its trade union and political preparation; but it is determined above all by its role in the economy and in society. In its activity, it learns that capitalism is unnecessary to society, unnecessary to the human relations. The proletariat knows that it can produce and reproduce, meet the production levels and raise them, without any need for the capitalist. The proletariat knows itself to be the product of the capacity and effort of the human mind; product of intelligence; product of the unification between the intelligence that elaborates science and technique on a one hand, and human labour on the other.

Although the proletariat feels that society depends upon it, it develops no attitude of exceptionalism or arrogance - like the other classes do. It does not get carried away by the fads, the crazes or the social fears you see pouring out of conservatism and egoism. What makes it immune in this way, is the knowledge that production depends on the function which it plays in it. It sees the technicians and the scientists as part of an elaboration built on human labour, and not on the capitalists who use technology, science and human labour for themselves.

The proletariat knows that without the capitalist, production would continue all the same. This is why, when trade unions make proposals and assert themselves, the power dualities that arise tend in the direction of eliminating the capitalist. Due to the fact that production is collective, the proletariat moves with confidence. As it becomes more aware, it acquires the basics of communist consciousness.

There used to be a proletarian layer in the Roman epoch, but not as class. It is capitalist society that brought the consciousness of production being collective. With big industry, which is a collective endeavour, collective participation became necessary in order to produce. What then developed the proletariat *as a class* is big industrial production, itself the result of capitalist development. There was a proletariat in historic times, but not as class. It is capitalist industry that has originated the proletariat as class.

The proletariat realises how fundamental a part of society it is. In its development as class, it passed from acquiring consciousness, to Party political membership and all the way to the Bolshevik party. Within limits, the *First International* and the *Second International* contributed to imparting some of this consciousness.

With the triumph of the Russian Revolution and the creation of the Communist Party, the proletariat became certain in the knowledge that progress can only be made with the transformation of society.

The structure of actual society, the present relations of production and of exchange, preclude the creation of a new form of property. The concentration of production and the centralization of property guarantee a great technical capacity, whilst the superior concentration enables a constant increase in productivity. But in their turn however, the huge concentration and the huge centralisation need planning! They could yield a hundred times more than they do, if the distortion created by private property and competition was removed, these being just manifestations of the market.

The proletariat develops in this context. The Party based on Marxism gives it the consciousness that it amounts to more than the role assigned to it by society. The Party feeds on the collective consciousness of the class itself imparted by the form of production. When the Party does this, it transmits back the consciousness and the historic grasp that any further progress now needs to start from the level and structure of large and centralised capitalist production. One must start from that level of concentration and centralization, and give it a new form. Question: 'What new form?'. Answer: 'The Workers State; and from the Workers State to socialism!'. The proletariat is conscious and confident. It does not live in fear of catastrophes, of economic mayhem or of the destruction of the riches produced by humanity.

Capitalist society has concentrated the means of production. It sparked off great industrial development, wholesale technification, high productivity. With the same initial expense, it learnt to increase production and shorten the production-time. With collective property, you will triplicate production in the blink of an eye.

The concentration of property is determined by competition, by the anxiety of the capitalist to accumulate. The latter is driven by the inexorable need to accumulate, or perish. Capitalism must keep the of *Money-Commodity-Money* (M-C-M) cycle rolling or its whole system dies. Capital has no choice but to reproduce in the existing social and economic conditions where its ability to expand has stopped. It is now falling in upon itself internally. Its financial centralization continues to rise, but the number of the capitalists keeps going down.

Over time, it is the Workers States that have grown. The Soviet Workers State gave demonstration that short of means, short of precedents, short of preparation, it still resolved in 20 years what capitalism never did in 200. With the Workers State as template, the proletariat blazes the trail that will be followed when the bureaucratic yoke is broken. The proletariat knows it can rebuild a whole of society integrally. In making it dependent on everyone else, its central position in production insulates it from the feelings of appropriation, competition, vanity and egoism oozing from private property. Once private property is eliminated, all these evils will go.

The proletariat enters the atomic war with the already-made historic experience of 14 Workers States and 16 Revolutionary States¹². In their various ways, the latter receive the influence of the proletariat through the proven model of the Workers State: the statised¹³ form of property and the collective form of the economy. The peoples of the world have their eyes fixed on this template of the Workers State. And the proletariat draws its unbeatable confidence from knowing itself to be irreplaceable. The proletariat is unafraid because it has nothing to lose. As Marx says: "The proletariat has nothing to lose but its chains".

The proletariat feels itself committed to its class role of historic organiser

Although it still needs a world Party, the proletariat has been exercising its class role for quite some time already. Witness its very elevated political conduct in the Workers States where it always took care to oppose bureaucracy without endangering the State. This is how it behaved in Poland in 1953, in Hungary in 1956 and in the rebellions of Stettin and Dantzig in the 1970's¹⁴. The proletariat enters the atomic war in the same spirit: aware of nothing to lose and everything to gain. It is animated by the certainty, the force and the centrality of its role in history and the economy, a role through which it leads the rest of the population.

The atomic war is going to produce disarray, horror, uproar and the loss of reasoning. Many will suffer those effects, but the least affected will be the proletariat. The class to suffer the most will be the one without future or perspective, the bourgeois class, already dying a death. It will rush to its shelters, meters below the ground – never to come out again! In its effort to have secured its future, it will have secured its place of burial. It is the proletariat that shows how to enter the atomic war. Human behaviour in Vietnam, in the Middle East, offered to the world the irrefutable and conclusive example of proletarian conduct. It is with full vigour that the proletariat always enters the class struggle. It does not let itself be intimidated, annulled or debilitated. Despite all the threats of Yankee imperialism to drop the atomic bomb, the proletariat goes on supporting Vietnam and encourages it to continue.

There will be the bewilderment caused by the atomic war and all the further crimes to expect from capitalism. But these will soon be followed by the action of the proletariat everywhere. The proletariat will take the stage, having become the class to lead and reorganise society. It will draw to itself the rest of the world populations. After the atomic war, it will move to liquidate what remains, if anything, of capitalism and bureaucracy.

¹² Page 118 - <https://en.quatrieme-internationale-posadiste.org/book/the-revolutionary-state/>

¹³ See note 2.

¹⁴ There was a Polish anti-communist insurrection in Poland from 1944 to 1953. There were 12 days uprising in Hungary against the USSR in 1956 - <https://en.quatrieme-internationale-posadiste.org/book/poland-soviet-democracy-and-the-actual-form-of-the-political-revolution-vol-2/> and <https://en.quatrieme-internationale-posadiste.org/book/the-role-of-ussr-in-the-socialist-transformation-of-humanity-second-volume/>

The First World War resulted in the Soviet Union. In spite of Stalin who did everything to stop the spread of new revolutions and Workers States, the Second World War brought in its wake 14 more Workers States and 16 Revolutionary States.

The third world war is the end of the capitalist system

The third world war is the end of the capitalist system. Such is history. We position ourselves in it with a view to making the revolution benefit from every opportunity history has on offer. Our aim is to progress the conclusions required by the construction of socialism.

We are not resigned or impassive in front of the atomic war. We grasp with all our communist emotion the ghastly consequence for millions of human beings. But our feeling is that we are not culpable or responsible for such inhuman decisions. It is capitalism the one who is responsible! This explains the resoluteness of the proletariat in not letting itself feel intimidated. We are left stricken by commotion and deep pain at the thought of the atomic war crushing millions and millions of human beings. But the way we feel is that we are neither responsible nor culpable in this.

Far from this, we feel with the responsibility of building of socialism and the having to pass through this 'charco'* of atomic war. Immediately, and during the atomic war, the collective sentiment of the proletariat is going to seize hold of humanity. The proletariat is going to stand tall, unafraid of the atomic war, unafraid of the consequences of capitalist barbarism. The behaviour of humanity is already very elevated considering how it lacks the revolutionary Party of the class and of the mass. It has a class party** mind, but it is not revolutionary.

Humanity is going to behave as required to face that war down. If atomic war could be avoided by delaying the socialist revolution by 20, 30, 50 years, we would sign up to it. It is not a problem of years however, but of a historic necessity for capitalism. The atomic war is inevitable and it will be followed by the world triumph of the socialist revolution.

J POSADAS

20.9.1972

* In various documents, J Posadas defines the 'charco atómico' as deep pit of heart-wrenching events, but of a short duration. [Translator note, May 2023].

** The Communist Party.

WORKERS STATE AND SOCIALIST SOCIETY

Extracts from a conference given by

J POSADAS

1968

The bureaucracy cannot destroy the Workers State

The Soviet bureaucracy is not a class. It is a social stratum with its origins in the revolution. It is only later, after the revolution, that other layers and sectors joined and developed within it. The origins of these new comers were no longer in the revolution. They had formed and developed in the ebbing of the revolution, when the revolutionary leadership was being amputated and the communist parties were being stifled. The sense of fusion or affinity of these new comers for socialism had always been very slight. Some of them had even been downright against; not against the rewards to be had from the usufruct of the statified property, but against the very communist objective of statified property.

If this retreat in the revolution did not overwhelm the Soviet Union, it was thanks to the strong structures put in place during the first 7 years of the Russian Revolution. During those years, the *Soviet functioning* of the Workers State curbed the development and the reincorporation of important layers of social enemies. Trotsky cites examples of such attempts on the part of layers directly from the enemy camp.

In Yugoslavia on the other hand - and above all in Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Hungary - entire layers of class enemies were allowed back. There never was in the Soviet Union the case of sectors of the Church forming alliances with the Workers State; but this happened in Hungary and Poland. In Poland, the rotten Catholic party had parliamentarians and representatives in the Workers State's government, and this up to recent times. The same goes for Hungary and Bulgaria, and Rumania too.

The Russian Revolution refused to have capitalist sectors incorporated into the Soviet Union. But this happened in most of the other Workers States. During the first seven years of Soviet functioning, the Soviet proletariat and the workers' vanguard were those taking the decisions. They set out the norms and established the traditions. But as *Soviets* were never made in the other Workers States, the penetration of those with capitalist origins was made much easier.

But in the Soviet Union included, this sort of people did not fail to come forward. They would not come directly as bourgeois, or to defend the capitalist system, only in search of a career. There were others however, generals, economists, engineers, who came forward to take a genuine part in the revolution. Had the revolution continued on ascending curve, these people would have been won by history, likely become communists. But this being the 1930s, and the revolution paralysed or in retreat, these people did not join the Soviet regime as its builders. They joined as its usufructuaries. Although it had been incumbent upon them to support the guiding principles of the Soviet Union, they formed a milieu where the bureaucracy could forge the nucleus and the tools to liquidate the revolution with. This was not the only factor in this matter, but it was one of the factors that contributed in this way.

Among the sectors of capitalist origin that became incorporated into the Soviet Union, - as in the other Workers States - some were actually won, and others were not. Yet others came with the capitalist sentiment, the capitalist conception, the capitalist turn of mind. As they could not speak in the name of capitalist interests or accumulation, they sought to subdue the measures that reproduce communism. These measures were essentially as follows: defence of proletarian democracy, extension of the revolution, unification of the Russian Revolution with the revolutions elsewhere. Those people with the capitalist sentiments were also after subduing the economy, by not letting it operate in the interests of the world revolution, by stimulating the national interests of the revolution in the name of socialism.

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The reproduction of communism elevates, extends and generalizes the power of the masses. The reproduction of communism comes with the social measures that let the masses intervene, judge, decide and resolve. In such conditions, communism reproduces incessantly, but not as in the capitalist system. In the economy of capitalism, this reproduction can only come from capital accumulation, and it serves only the interests of groups. Far from this, when the power of the masses rises, society creates the phases, the forms and the centres essential to its progression from the capitalist stage over to the Workers State, and from the Workers State to the socialist society. When the social measures empower the masses, society starts reproducing the norms and forms of communism. These norms and forms have a base in the economy, but instead of being of an economic order, they are fundamentally of a socio-historical order. They include the social organs in which the masses can speak publicly, think, judge and decide. Through these organs, the whole of society intervenes. And when power has only just been taken, these organs can start leading and administering directly by replacing the former and professional organs of power. All the previous organs of capitalist power and administration must be replaced, by organs sprung up directly from the workplaces. It is not just that militias must replace the army. All the official organs of power must be replaced!

Justice must no longer be imposed by courts and jurisprudences. It must be the logical and normal reasoning derived from the discussion of all the problems that arise. All the problems must be discussed, not just the economic and social ones. There must be people's courts, neighbourhood's courts, factory's courts, family's courts. What is pompously called "Courts" are just organs of decision, and nothing more. The habit to call a place "Court of Justice" is inherited; it comes from the capitalist language and imaginary. In practice, it is just an organ of direction. When the masses operate through organs of decision that they have built, any economic or military problem will be as simply resolved as the one down at the factory.

Those mass organs of communist power are transitory, not permanent. Permanent are the structures, like the *workers' militias*. Permanent are the *peoples' tribunals* too; but the composition of the actual organs is bound to vary. The important is: Down with the functions of professional power! This is the first measure any new Workers State must take. All this happened in the Soviet Workers State! It did away with all sorts of accreditations and certifications. Many doctors, engineers, medics, lawyers, jurists, scientists were removed and replaced by others who had been in the revolution. This drew to the revolution the genuine professionals who really wanted their ability to serve everyone. But this could only happen in the Soviet Union because it had had organs of functioning mass power. The latter were trusted and attracted the population. They incorporated people and gave people a role.

Remember this was the first such revolution. It still had to demonstrate its worth, its authority, its historical legitimacy. It had to prove its superiority over capitalism. It had to show able to solve all the problems of the economy and of the social relations. It had to defend itself against the capitalist system. It had to generate and spread sentiments superior to those in the capitalist system. It had to create and stimulate in the world the revolutionary sentiment of world solidarity, to organise life with examples and impulses superior to those in the capitalist system.

**To pass from capitalism over to the Workers State,
and from the Workers State to socialism,
the essential condition is the functioning of the whole population.**

Let the population weigh and intervene in the administration of its own interests! In what motivates the masses, there is always more than the distribution and the wage. What answers to the interests of people is the construction of the mass organs, of the measures and of the plans that develop the Workers State.

Capitalism never had, and cannot have any need for the participation of the masses. It saw to its interests by means of the private initiative, with its balancing acts of competition. Capitalism saw to its development by giving access to the most capable, this meaning the most competitive. Since it is the private interest that cares the most for power, the private interest always ends up underpinning the capitalist regime.

One of the abilities of capitalism is to win, attract and concentrate finances in one capitalist sector or the other. There, it brings the best brains, best inventors, organisers, technicians and scientists, all in the service of capitalist private production, with its war policies, its war productions, etc. This concentrates them all.

It is on this basis that human progress has been made. This is why capitalist progress is so limited. Between the formulation of a necessity, the measure decided in answer to it, and the measure carried out, whole historic stages can be passing. In any response to any social need, the greatest cause of delay comes from the capitalists having to decide how much this is in their interests or not. In capitalism, everything is contingent on competition, on capital investment, on the profits to be made. It is all decided by whether the capitalist is interested or not. The capitalists could invest in building houses: in less developed countries, there are no houses, no running water, no electricity. Or the electricity is poor and the running water is scarce. It should be in the interests of the capitalists to invest there, to make profits. But they do not invest there; they are not interested. The return on the capital outlay there is too slow; the profit is too small and too long-term. The investment will go elsewhere, where the return is rapid and capital reproduces.

Competition and the 'average rate of profit' are determinant in the circulation and the orientation of capital investment. The 'progressive' function of the capitalists depends on whether they will be interested in producing what is needed. They have two conditions: a pre-existing market to consume the product, and larger profits to be made in relation to the so-called 'average rate of profit', whether local or global.

Although capitalism was originally dynamic - and it still is - its circulation and development are constantly diminishing. Investments become concentrated in spheres less and less responsive to the needs of people, of consumption, of hygiene, of health, and even of life. Investments focus increasingly on rapid returns and big profits, in the production of industrial-military goods mostly, atomic and cybernetic that form the base of automation which replaces thousands and thousands of jobs.

This illustrates the capitalist mentality. There is a direct correlation between capital concentration and the murder of five or ten persons in North America. And it could have been forty or fifty dead, all the same, for the same reason¹⁵. This atrocity connects with this mentality. More, the frequency of this bloodthirstiness goes up in leaps; not dialectical leaps, leaps into the void of cynicism, desperation and chaos. As it develops, the sanguinary sentiment of capitalism creates the sanguinary vocation. We say 'creates' because with their preparation of the nuclear war, the capitalists proliferate feelings of mayhem void of human sentiment, void of human concern.

¹⁵ The author may be referring to the Glenville shoot-out of July 1968 in Ohio. Or to the February one in Orangeburg, South Carolina, when police opened fire on a peaceful student protest at Voorhees College. 28 students injured and 3 killed. One by-stander was arrested for inciting a riot and sentenced to a year in prison. No one else was ever imprisoned regarding this. That year of the Tet Offensive, US imperialism was losing its barbaric war of aggression in Vietnam. Editorial.

As a class, the capitalists do this even to each other. Their supreme mission being just survival, to survive individually.

The capitalists resolve their political disputes through assassinations. They do not reserve this for the important occasions where the interests of big capital are concerned. They kill each other for reasons that would have been overlooked in the past. Their feelings of sanguinary chaos and bloodthirsty desperation causes them to drop every humanitarian concept, every sentiment that is human. They visit this even upon each other. If the capitalists were confident, if they counted on the continuation of the human race, they would come up with plans for the future. But they have no such plans! In previous wars, their contingency plans looked ahead in the expectation of them still being around at the end. Now they see themselves facing the Soviets with enough bombs to wipe out the entire United States.

The Soviet bureaucracy is not moved by such pessimistic sentiments. With its origins is the Workers State, it still has reasons and conditions to be optimistic. In being a bureaucracy, it cannot have the thought-method and the dialectical conception to understand history; but from 1940 when the USSR was the only Workers State, through its Workers State revolutionary development afterwards, and all the way to today, the bureaucracy has seen the rise of 16 new Workers States from the only one that there used to be. Among Indonesia, Ghana, Laos, Cambodia, Burma, Congo-Brazzaville and others, none of them went back all the way to capitalism. They experienced periods of slowing down in their development towards the Workers State, or they have retreated on particular statisations, but none of them went back to square one. Instead, they have remained fairly disposed to receiving progressive influences as in Mali, Ghana, Congo-Brazzaville. These are simple examples. In other countries, and if only to sustain their own power, revolutionary nationalists have had to adopt measures that impair the capitalist system. In some of the smaller countries, such measures break the consensus that these countries had previously established with the capitalist system. There, the leaders look increasingly favourably in the direction of the Workers States.

The difference between the Soviet bureaucracy and capitalism

The Soviet bureaucracy is not a class because it does not reproduce itself. And it does not reproduce itself because it is not the owner of the means of production. The role of bureaucracy in the economy is that of the administrator, not of the owner. And for a bureaucracy to exist at all, there has to be a stasised economy that it depends upon. Bureaucracy uses the stasised amenities for itself, but it cannot pass them on through inheritance. This leaves it in the incapacity of reproducing itself.

The bureaucracy is not a class. It is a sector of society.

It is a stratum of administrators that usurps the State by appropriating the power of the masses. Here you have 'bureaucracy' fairly summarised.

The difference is that capitalism is a class. Capitalism constantly transmits and reproduces the capitalist interests. The dynamism of its reproduction declines as times passes. It becomes compressed into smaller spheres. It is already stripped of much of its original initiative, dynamism and room for expansion. The world revolution has done this to it. It is the world revolution that shortens, curtails and narrows the scope of capitalist development¹⁶. The revolution does this to capitalism historically, geographically and socially. Capitalism has now lost almost all the dynamism it entered history with.

In a way similar to the bourgeois class, the Soviet bureaucracy ends up with little capacity, dynamism or initiative. Mind that it never really had these, having never represented the interests of the Workers State. In being a stratum of society that lives off usurping the power of the Workers State, each of its initiatives, functions and world views is subject to contradiction. The contradiction is between its usurping social role, and its need to have society developing in order to justify itself; this need is foisted upon it by the structure of the Workers State, a structure the bureaucracy has no choice but to sustain, seeing that its very existence depends upon it.

This contradiction explains how, at some particular moments or stages, the bureaucracy can play some functions necessary to the Workers State. Not revolutionary functions, but some necessary ones: acts of passive defence of the Workers State, some measures of economic, political or social expediency. When the bureaucracy sees itself obliged to act in this way, it is because it depends on the structure of the Workers State. And since it is the usurper of the Workers State, it in a passive way that it resorts to measures that defend or support of the Workers State. It prefers the actions with no revolutionary consequences.

Among the Workers States' critics, quite a number are from the bureaucracy of the communist parties. Someone like Togliatti¹⁷ deals with the matter of the Soviet bureaucracy without a historic understanding of the role and function of it. This is why him and others organise no theoretical discussions on those subjects in public, or even between themselves. They have not produced a single theoretical text on bureaucracy. Apart from Trotsky and ourselves, you will find no theoretical literature on the nature of the power of the Soviet government and the construction of socialism.

Because socialism is a society that eliminates the social differences, and not just the economic ones, it had to be deliberately opted for, animated and guided by socialist fraternity. The way to think has to be schooled by socialist fraternity. It is socialist fraternity that has full confidence in the human being, in the capacity to reason and to judge. Socialist fraternity works with reasoning, not with the private motive. In the socialist society, discussion is based on reasoning, addressing the capacity to reason.

¹⁶ It can be easy to overlook the continuing and completing colonial revolutions. Palestinian included, the new Revolutionary States, the formation of anti-imperialist army leaderships, the drawing closer together of China and Russia, etc. Editorial.

¹⁷ Palmiro Togliatti, leader of the Italian Communist Party 1927-1964.

Bureaucracy aside, the dissensions happening in the Workers State have roots in commercial rivalries and the appropriation of the social usufruct. But of itself and in its functioning, the Workers State favours the improvement of the social relations. It still lacks the means to satisfy all the human needs, but it already demonstrates that it can do this; that it has generally resolved this question in principle. Indeed, the Soviet Workers State achieves a higher level of fraternal socialist relations. At a certain point, reason itself takes over the task of eliminate the private interests; reason becomes able to assess individuals, society and the organs of society in the light of consciousness, and no longer of interests.

What we call the 'individual interest' gets superseded by consciousness. You see some of this in general strikes, in solidarity strikes. This example is limited, but it conveys some of the historic significance. The intervention of the masses is not for wages, percentages or for a particular raise. The masses intervene to help bring victory to the movements and the actions that they support, and which they recognise as necessary also in a historical sense. People are not out to live better tomorrow, but to increase their power to bring capitalism down where they are.

This socialist behaviour (observed in strikes) is a norm in the social relations of the Workers States, as well as internally between the Workers State and its economy. The economy of the Workers State is still not able to satisfy all the human needs, but if the masses have a say in the functioning and the structure of the State, they come to feel and understand. They learn how to lead, and soon they give their mutual trust to the mutual interests. Here you have the finality of socialism.

The bureaucracy is not a new social class.

In all the above considerations and analyses that we have made, nothing has pointed in the direction of bureaucracy having ever been, or being necessary. Nothing shows that a power raised above the Party and the Trade Unions is required, or that a small clique or group must take the decisions. Nothing like this! But then, how come such a bureaucracy in the Workers States?

The bureaucracy is not a body that turned up, and then installed itself. It is a group that developed in the struggle for power. A group that, through historic conditions, managed to develop within, instal itself as a power and contain the revolution. It was never a previously constituted group that had been waiting in the wings for its moment, as the Chinese would say. This is a conclusion of the Chinese leaders based on a lack of theoretical analysis and on a lack of theoretical instruments.

The bureaucracy is an apparatus-based group which developed in specific historic conditions. There are two angles in the analysis to be made of the bureaucracy. We have seen the first above, about its *emergence and origins*. The second is about its *potential and future*; but it does not have a future. Should it have one, its behaviour would be different. The proof that bureaucracy has no future is that it is not a class.

And it is not a class because it does not have the specific historic interests of a class. It cannot be therefore any factor, function or instrument necessary to history. The social classes demonstrate their necessity in what they incorporate into history of economic, social, and political ideas. They bring to history the organisation of science, art and technique that corresponds to their function. The bureaucracy brings nothing to history. It brings no ideas because it does not have any. It has nothing to incorporate.

Trotsky is exactly right when he qualifies the bureaucracy as a "*detritus of history*". 'Detritus' because it is the result of a stage in the history of the revolution, and of conditions previous to it. And instead of being an instrument and a necessity for the revolution, it only presents as an expression of the contention of the revolution. The fact that the revolution could not be destroyed is what generated a bureaucracy; the latter attending therefore, not as an instrument of progress but of contention. Hence a 'detritus', but one inside the Workers State, not alien to, or outside of it.

The bureaucracy did not prevail through any ability, intelligence, preparation or foresight of its own. It acquired its structures in an empirical way, and it then supported itself on the objective conditions of history. But at the same time, one has to note the essential aspect of this process: The bureaucracy was never able to extend its world power. It failed to contain the world revolution, and it even became obliged to support it. This is not the behaviour of a class. Its position, its function is not of a class. Its historic stance is not that of a class either. And to be a class it would have to be reproducing itself with capital investment, property, the accumulation of property. It has become able to accumulate certain things these days, but not in the form of capital. It can have houses, cars, and can even dabble in small transfers of land plots, but it cannot accumulate capital to invest.

The bureaucracy cannot foresee the course of history. This is why it does not prepare for the course of history. It is a power-usurper. It could become able to usurp the power from its origins in the same centre that had taken power in the Soviet Union. Since it had never been extraneous to that centre, and the circumstances having been propitious, it never needed either revolution or counter-revolution to take the power. It would eventually make a counter-revolution, but that was later. Before that, and even when it was taking power for itself, it had had no idea that it was going to make a counter-revolution later on. See here a historic conduct determined by fear; the fear of the advance of the world socialist revolution. When the fear hardened, it sought the adhesion and support of sectors who shared in it, uninterested in the extension of the revolution, conceiving of no such thing as the triumph of the revolution. And yet, and at the same time, still able to feel the force of the revolution.

Trotsky explains very well in various texts, the origins, the functioning of the Soviet bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is an instrument of history. It is not an opposition of history. Had it triumphed, then yes, it would be an opposition, a form of being opposed to the revolution. But as Trotsky foresaw, it was an accident of history which

explained the contradiction, the lack of identification between the decision of the Party to take power, and the objective conditions still immature for the continuation of the task. The conditions had not been 'immature' in the sense of any lack of social and proletarian bases, but due to the lack of prepared leaderships. In Europe, power could have been taken in France, in Italy and in Germany. Had that happened, no capitalist power would exist now. With the German, Italian and English socialist parties having taken the power then, there would be no capitalism today.

The bureaucracy is an accident of history

Bureaucracy is not the product of any ability, intelligence or organization on its part. It is not the product either of some weakness, poverty or inadequacy in the revolution. Where there had been such deficiencies, they were not the cause. Bureaucracy is not the result of the formation of a Bolshevik Party. It has no origins in the structure, in the functioning, or in the life of the Bolshevik Party. It has been an accident of history. It made no progress with the passing of time, or very little, because it is an accident and not a necessity.

The bureaucracy was never imposed. It stepped forward as the result of errors, failures, weaknesses and inabilities. It was an accident with dire consequences, undoubtedly, but an accident that did not detain the course of history. Had it done so, it would have expressed a necessity, the stage of socialism having not yet arrived. But not only did the bureaucracy fail to contain the revolution, it became dragged by it, forced and made to accept it. For all of its initial fierceness, the bureaucracy did not end up deciding the course of history. It is an accident. With legitimacy and preparation, it might have prevailed and developed. But it must bend down instead and run behind the course of history, to keep a place and not be left out.

We are not saying this to downplay the hugely nefarious role of the bureaucracy. Trotsky's assassination is one of the most abominable actions ever taken, but it did not stop the course of history. Had the function of the bureaucracy been a logical emanation of the Workers State, had it been some logical consequence of the Workers State, this assassination would have suspended the course of revolutionary thought. It would have deprived of spirit any further formulation of the revolutionary ideas.

One of the roles performed by 'class' - or by any leading social organ - rests on it having a necessary function to perform on its own behalf in history. Where this is the case, the class presents itself as the centre that receives, energises and propels ideas. Along with ruling castes and groups, the ruling classes have created this role for themselves in history. But when you consider the bureaucracy, you observe that it created nothing of the sort. Its only creation having been horrendous paintings, horrendous music, horrendous politics!

In the productions of the bureaucracy of the Soviet Union and of the other Workers States, you find not one idea, not one thought, not one concern expressed in support of any revolutionary judgment or observation. Nothing! The artistic and literary works, which are bourgeois, give no sign of anything having germinated there in the form of the socialist sentiment. Yet what better way was there, other than doing this, for the bureaucracy to demonstrate the necessity of its function in history?

If bureaucracy is *a necessity of history*, good bye to the revolutions. *Necessity* has locked itself up in the USSR, codified all the systems of politics, the alliances, the accords, the economic and the political interventions, and all in opposition to the Marxist conception, alien and inimical to Marxism. The necessity of history can now change its political line and concepts 20 times in one week, with 20 changes of analysis and interpretation about a single event. It has wandered constantly and still does, interpreting events to justify itself and its own existence. *As a necessity of history*, bureaucracy should tend to be systematising at least a minimum of its policies, applications and conclusions. But as bureaucracy, it lurches from an alliance with Hitler, to the Popular Front, to the crushing of the revolution in Greece and Germany, to the surrender of the revolution in the Middle East, to the surrender of the Spanish revolution.

Actions like these described above are not just the product of insecurity, as happens in some communist parties. On the part of the bureaucracy, they are the product of incoherence, product of the lack of a necessary aim in history, a lack that does not permit coherence. In the end, it is one's aim that calls for coherence. In showing the pathway to it, the aim, the objective, imposes coherence. The lack of a scientific political instrument leads to imprecision. The instrument of Marxism leads to coherence. The aim determines what measures, what policies to take. One can make mistakes, but if the objective is solid, the required changes help to understand. When it comes to the bureaucracy, it contributes no ideas, judgments, programs or orientations of any necessary sort.

Bureaucratic tendencies are breaking with the social objective of the Workers State

The bureaucratic changes in programs and economic policies followed one another in the Workers States, and still do. A difference came (after WW2) when the Soviet bureaucracy had to confront a new process that it had not prepared for. A crisis came to it with the advent of new Workers States and the development of new leaderships in them competing with the Soviet bureaucracy. In the first stages, the Soviet bureaucracy reacted by suppressing, looting and robbing them. But the world revolution developed and the masses of the new Workers States as well. Their rising competitive capacity was economic, but it rested on a growing confidence and mass support in each Workers State as it formed its structures. Today, the bureaucratic sectors in the new Workers States count on this internal mass support to wrest from the Soviet bureaucracy a better deal for each national bureaucracy.

Between Yugoslavia, China, Poland, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, there is a process of differentiation and of bureaucratisation. This leads to the organisation of bureaucratic tendencies less and less keen on the Workers State, moving at a distance from them. They do not actually break, but the structure and the functioning of the Workers State no longer interests them. As they are still dependent on the Workers State, they do not jettison every concern for it. But the economic, political and social schemes that catch their interests are already in rupture with the historic objective of the Workers State.

The orientation of these tendencies leans in the direction of something outside the socialist objective of the Workers State. They adopt measures and positions in search of a form of economy between capitalism and the Workers State. So far, they only envisage new economic structures, having no project beyond the economic one. But in this, they already express the strangulation of the socialist thought, and the incorporation of a purpose alien to socialist thought.

Since these bureaucratic tendencies cannot return purely, simply and fully to the capitalist regime, they look for an orientation in accord with the interests, the choices and the roles of these new sectors of the bureaucracy. They are people like Ota Sík¹⁸ in Czechoslovakia, who have remained prisoners in the ambiguity of the positions that escape the Workers State.

Take the books written by this Ota Sik. They break from the form, the structure and the objectives of the Workers State. They reject statised property, the monopoly of foreign trade, the planning of the economy. Nothing less! Although they maintain the statised property in the form, the use of property is reserved for these people. As they do not have the social authority to face the resistance and rejection, they do not advance the view of stripping the Workers State of all property. They want to invent a new form of property, and use of, in keeping with their socialist desertion.

It was on the basis of circumstantial historic conditions that bureaucratic power built its structures. These conditions were created by the ebbing of the world proletarian revolution. There was also the exhaustion of the Bolshevik Party and its enfeeblement after the war; the imperialist siege (1918-21), the defeat and the retrogression¹⁹, the economic penury and the insufficient means to develop the Soviet economy internally. Add to this the necessity for the Bolshevik Party to dedicate all its forces to the development of the economy.

The above conditions as a whole, and over a short period of time, allowed for *the conservative forces of the revolution* to raise their heads. Mind that these forces had existed before the revolution, as they do in every revolutionary Party to this day.

¹⁸ Some titles by Ota Sik are: *The Third Way* (1972) and *For a Humane Economic Democracy* (1979). Ota Sik became vice-premier and economic minister under Alexander Dubcek. His line was for 'a third way' between free-market capitalism and the planned economy. He referred to his wish for a 'socialism with a human face'.

¹⁹ The imperialist siege of the USSR 1918-192. The defeat refers to the treaty of Brest Litovsk, March 1918.

They are conservative in relation to the revolution, but not in relation to the historic necessity of socialism. They combat the possibilities that may bring the extension and the deepening of the revolution. They oppose its advance. They try to subordinate it, and contain its reaches. Such are the *conservative forces of the revolution*.

The vacillating currents and tendencies of society become progressive when society goes forward. This is when the working class energises the population, and the population stands up. But when the social rising declines, or the massive popular participation wanes, these insecure currents crumple into a centre, an intermediate group, that the conservative forces of the revolution can use as base of support and source of representatives. It is in comparable ways that bureaucratic power acquires its structures.

**Bureaucratic structures drew strength also from insufficient development in
the world authority of the Bolshevik Party
and the insufficient development of the Communist International**

All this allowed for pressure and contention to start weighing against the forces that had belonged to the revolutionary team, or had been in the Bolshevik Party. Pressure was also being applied against those who had been won to the revolution or had collaborated with it. With bureaucracy, the new conjuncture was allowing vacillating and insecure layers to start weighing in the Party, to restrict revolutionary activity. These people were not advocating a return to capitalism. They were not expressing disillusion with the revolution. They wanted the Party satisfied with the advances made to date, and no delay in advancing the socialist revolution inside the Soviet Union. Outside would be for later. This was completely contrary to the thought of Lenin, contrary to the program of Lenin, to the program of the Communist International and to that of the Bolshevik Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

These insecure layers were now finding support in the objective situation; a situation of retreat of the proletarian vanguard from the front line, inside and outside the Party, inside and outside the world process of the revolution. With these retreats, fields of action opened for vacillating and timid sectors to enter. The latter were not counterrevolutionary or conservative. They were hesitant and timid. Many had cooperated with the revolution, some in the front ranks, some had been lynchpins and pillars of the revolution. They had been all this because Lenin and the workers' vanguard had been there, impelling them, drawing them into the class.

At any peak of difficulty, the political centre vacillates and holds back. The *conservative forces* grab hold of that centre, they jostle it and pull it towards their conservative side. In our case, the political centre did not propose to destroy Trotsky or contain the revolution, but the conservative forces yes, they wanted to do that. Under the influence of the *conservative forces* - which they had supported and been a bridge for - the centrist forces started calling for a momentary pause in order to be able to progress the revolution again afterwards.

But the conservative forces were not interested in the revolution being progressed again. When power was taken, they had stayed away, manifesting no desires and finding no opportunity to manifest these. In truth however, they had been partially swayed and encouraged. They had felt stimulated to make some progress, to take some steps forward. Had the revolution continued ascending, all of them would have been won. Every revolution wins a part of the bourgeoisie. *When a part of the bourgeoisie is won*, it does not come over to the revolution as bourgeois; it comes as individuals intellectually convinced by the progress of, and need for socialism.

Such were the *conservative forces*. They had participated in the revolution where they had been in the rear-guard. And although they had had a certain weight, it had not prevailed during the period when power was being taken. This changed immediately after the revolution however. The Bolsheviks had to build the apparatus of State. The tasks were now in need of a superior team, more capable, more knowledgeable, ready with immediate responses in the building of the new State's structures, able to respond to necessities at the level of State. The Bolshevik Party had had such leaders, but the vast majority of them had perished in the civil war. Some of the conservative forces had to be incorporated into the leading apparatus of the Workers State.

The Bolsheviks never had a chance to preserve their cadres. In the preceding years, they had had to take on all the tasks, just as Lenin had done. Then came the time when the Bolshevik Party had to dedicate all its cadres to the task of winning the revolution. The Party could not hold back on account of sparing its cadres for the future. It could not be detained by the notion that its main leaders, or a large layer of Bolshevism might be wiped out, leaving them short. The revolution had to be won!

The future tasks would be faced on the march, but the tasks of the revolution had to be faced now. A triumphant revolution was going to inspire the will, the consciousness and the resolve of new layers and cadres. New people would come to the Party and those who had been less involved would join the leading teams. And so, the revolution had to be won first, without being able to spare its leaders, because the revolution could be defeated otherwise.

The way Stalin emerged and developed had not been inevitable. Stalin came out of the circumstances that we analysed above, amongst the which the major cause was the death of Lenin. Had Lenin not died in 1924, the process would have been other. This would not have stopped a bureaucracy from forming, but its political power might have been restrained.

Every revolution and every State need a bureaucracy. It becomes created as a natural condition. The function of administration is passive. It does not create and it does not produce. It is an intermediary in charge of inventories. It plays a necessary function, but there is no reason why it should acquire political power. As the State of the Soviet Union was being built, it was inevitably going to need a bureaucracy.

But there was no reason for bureaucracy to rule society, or wield a power based on its ability to usufruct the power of the proletariat through governmental functions.

This bureaucracy cancelled all assemblies and Soviets. It eliminated everything like conferences, rallies, meetings, discussions. It did away with Party life and congresses, so that one could no longer hold debates, adopt positions or programmatic resolutions, elaborate tactics, propose measures or aims.

All this was replaced by the decisions of the government, sometimes proffered as if the working class and the Party had intervened. The government would take the decisions and communicate them to the Party. The party would pronounce the pronouncements of the leading team, deciding what the government had already decided. Government and Party had become one. It was the same bureaucracy, the same apparatus. There was no Party, it was an apparatus. The apparatus of the Party was the apparatus of the government.

Bureaucracy is not needed to run of a country.

As a function, any office employee is a bureaucrat whose function is required. It is inevitable. But this, as a function, has no business deciding the policy, the tactics and the economic plans. When this happens, the bureaucratic function is not even working as a bureaucracy. It is a political power exercised bureaucratically. It is not legitimate. It does not base itself on the will of the Party and of the masses. It does not respond to their programmes, their discussions, their political life, their exchange of views, their evaluation of experiences. This kind of leadership cannot respond to the need to raise the standard of living of the masses. It cannot replace the political power of the masses, the intervention of the masses, the proletarian, socialist and democratic rights of the masses. It is just bureaucracy self-erected into power.

Such has been Stalin's function. He made of bureaucracy a power structure. When Lenin and Trotsky were in the Soviet leadership, the Party played the leading role in society, and the government supported its measures. When its leading role was suppressed, the Party went on functioning, but as an apparatus. And what the Soviet government responded to, was the apparatus of the Bolshevik Party.

'Party' means programmatic discussions, assemblies, congresses

'Party' means cell meetings, the life of the cell, exchange of opinions, of documents, exchange of the experiences made in revolutionary and economic activities. 'Party' means the discussion of the tactics and measures to be adopted by the State. Discussions involving all the Soviet peoples, the cells, the regional committees, the demonstrations, meetings, congresses. All matters to be discussed, like the independence of the trade union movement, the adoption of trade union resolutions, and meetings between the Soviets of the neighbourhoods and the Soviets of regions.

In the Workers State, one needs to organise discussions and programs, particularly those proposed or elaborated by the Soviets. One thing is sure: no bureaucracy is going to develop if you have this sort of direct, daily and permanent control by the masses. With such functioning in the factory, there will be no opportunity for the development of usurpation, usufruct, robbery, negligence and waste. What you have is daily control.

The same goes for the Party, except that in the Party, the equivalent of control is exercised through the dependability of everyone's political concern. There are no organisms of control in the Party as happen in society. In the Party, control is assured by the awareness already existing in each member that nothing prejudicial must be done to the Party. The militant develops this understanding not through someone laying down a moral law, but through the awareness that the Party is needed and that one must use one's life in this way. Party functioning is not an imposition, a rule, or a method. Dignified Party behaviour does not come from regimentation. It is an acquired consciousness.

This is what 'the Party' is about. The conceptions guiding its actions are imbued with a normal and common restraint. The Party does not develop through acts of mutual imposition or of surveillance, because these do not establish mutual trust. In the Party, fraternity and confidence are the products of communist consciousness, and not just the comfort of togetherness. For it is communist consciousness that grasps the necessity and the relations of life. Communist consciousness imposes nothing; it suppresses imposition instead. And consciousness is its guide.

For all the matters that we have seen above, capacity, political preparation and discussion are required. Political activity is wanted in the cell, in the factory, along with the discussion of all the problems, the texts, the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, the teachings of history, the experience of the Russian Revolution. One needs the discussion of the world process of the revolution, and the intervention of the Soviet Union to impel the world revolution. These are the bases from where human thought springs, on its way to be applied without any imposition.

J. POSADAS

Extracts of a Conference given by J Posadas in 1968

THE USSR IN WAR

LEON TROTSKY

25.9.1939

On the German-soviet pact and the character of the USSR

Is it possible after the conclusion of the German-Soviet Pact to consider the USSR a workers' state? The future of the Soviet State has again and again aroused discussion in our midst. Small wonder; we have before us the first experiment in the workers' state in history. Never before and nowhere else has this phenomenon been available for analysis. In the question of the social character of the USSR, mistakes commonly flow, as we have previously stated, from replacing the historical fact by the programmatic norm. Concrete fact departs from the norm. This does not signify, however, that it has overthrown the norm; on the contrary, it has reaffirmed it, from the negative side. The degeneration of the first workers' state, ascertained and explained by us, has only the more graphically shown what the workers' state should be, what it could and would be under certain historical conditions. The contradiction between the concrete fact and the norm constrains us not to reject the norm but, on the contrary, to fight for it by means of the revolutionary road. The program of the approaching revolution in the USSR is determined on the one hand by our appraisal of the USSR, as an objective historical *fact*, and on the other hand, by a *norm* of the workers' state. We do not say: "Everything is lost, we must begin all over again." We clearly indicate those elements of the workers' state which at the given stage can be salvaged, preserved, and further developed.

Those who seek nowadays to prove that the Soviet-German Pact changes our appraisal of the Soviet State take their stand, in essence, on the position of the Comintern – to put it more correctly, on yesterday's position of the Comintern. According to this logic, the historical mission of the workers' state is the struggle for imperialist democracy. The "betrayal" of the democracies in favour of fascism divests the USSR of its being considered a workers' state. In point of fact, the signing of the treaty with Hitler supplies only an extra gauge with which to measure the degree of degeneration of the Soviet bureaucracy, and its contempt for the international working class,

including the Comintern, but it does not provide any basis whatsoever for a re-evaluation of the sociological appraisal of the USSR.

Are the Differences Political or Terminological?

Let us begin by posing the question of the nature of the Soviet state not on the abstract sociological plane but on the plane of concrete political tasks. Let us concede for the moment that the bureaucracy is a new "class" and that the present regime in the USSR is a special system of class exploitation. What new political conclusions follow for us from these definitions? The Fourth International long ago recognized the necessity of overthrowing the bureaucracy by means of a revolutionary uprising of the toilers. Nothing else is proposed or can be proposed by those who proclaim the bureaucracy to be an exploiting "class." The goal to be attained by the overthrow of the bureaucracy is the reestablishment of the rule of the Soviets, expelling from them the present bureaucracy. Nothing different can be proposed or is proposed by the Leftist critics.^[1] It is the task of the regenerated Soviets to collaborate with the world revolution and the building of a socialist society. The overthrow of the bureaucracy therefore presupposes the preservation of state property and of planned economy. Herein is the nub of the whole problem.

Needless to say, the distribution of productive forces among the various branches of economy and generally the entire content of the plan will be drastically changed when this plan is determined by the interests not of the bureaucracy but of the producers themselves. But inasmuch as the question of overthrowing the parasitic oligarchy still remains linked with that of preserving the nationalized (state) property, we called the future revolution *political*. Certain of our critics (Ciliga, Bruno, and others) want, come what may, to call the future revolution *social*. Let us grant this definition. What does it alter in essence? To those tasks of the revolution which we have enumerated it adds nothing whatsoever.

Our critics as a rule take the facts as we long ago established them. They add absolutely nothing essential to the appraisal either of the position of the bureaucracy and the toilers, or of the role of the Kremlin on the international arena. In all these spheres, not only do they fail to challenge our analysis, but on the contrary, they base themselves completely upon it and even restrict themselves entirely to it. The sole accusation they bring against us is that we do not draw the necessary "conclusions." Upon analysis it turns out, however, that these conclusions are of a purely terminological character. Our critics refuse to call the degenerated workers' state – a workers' state. They

demand that the totalitarian bureaucracy be called a ruling class. The revolution against this bureaucracy they propose to consider not political but social. Were we to make them these terminological concessions, we would place our critics in a very difficult position, inasmuch as they themselves would not know what to do with their purely verbal victory.

Let Us Check Ourselves Once Again

It would therefore be a piece of monstrous nonsense to split with comrades who on the question of the sociological nature of the USSR have an opinion different from ours, insofar as they solidarize with us in regard to the political tasks. But on the other hand, it would be blindness on our part to ignore purely theoretical and even terminological differences, because in the course of further development they may acquire flesh and blood and lead to diametrically opposite political conclusions. Just as a tidy housewife never permits an accumulation of cobwebs and garbage, just so a revolutionary party cannot tolerate lack of clarity, confusion and equivocation. Our house must be kept clean!

Let me recall for the sake of illustration, the question of Thermidor. For a long time, we asserted that Thermidor in the USSR was only being prepared but had not yet been consummated. Later, investing the analogy to Thermidor with a more precise and well deliberated character, we came to the conclusion that Thermidor had already taken place long ago. This open rectification of our own mistake did not introduce the slightest consternation in our ranks. Why? Because the *essence* of the processes in the Soviet Union was appraised identically by all of us, as we jointly studied day by day the growth of reaction. For us it was only a question of rendering more precise an historical analogy, nothing more. I hope that still today despite the attempt of some comrades to uncover differences on the question of the "defence of the USSR" – with which we shall deal presently – we shall succeed by means of simply rendering our own ideas more precise to preserve unanimity on the basis of the program of the Fourth International.

Is It a Cancerous Growth or a New Organ?

Our critics have more than once argued that the present Soviet bureaucracy bears very little resemblance to either the bourgeois or labour bureaucracy in capitalist society; that to a far greater degree than fascist bureaucracy it represents a new and much more powerful social formation. This is quite correct and we have never closed our eyes to it. But if we consider the Soviet bureaucracy a "class," then

we are compelled to state immediately that this class does not at all resemble any of those propertied classes known to us in the past: our gain consequently is not great. We frequently call the Soviet bureaucracy a caste, underscoring thereby its shut-in character, its arbitrary rule, and the haughtiness of the ruling stratum who consider that their progenitors issued from the divine lips of Brahma whereas the popular masses originated from the grosser portions of his anatomy. But even this definition does not of course possess a strictly scientific character. Its relative superiority lies in this, that the makeshift character of the term is clear to everybody, since it would enter nobody's mind to identify the Moscow oligarchy with the Hindu caste of Brahmins. The old sociological terminology did not and could not prepare a name for a new social event which is in process of evolution (degeneration) and which has not assumed stable forms. All of us, however, continue to call the Soviet bureaucracy a bureaucracy, not being unmindful of its historical peculiarities. In our opinion this should suffice for the time being.

Scientifically and politically – and not purely terminologically – the question poses itself as follows: does the bureaucracy represent a temporary growth on a social organism, or has this growth already become transformed into an historically indispensable organ? Social excrescences can be the product of an “accidental” (*i.e.* temporary and extraordinary) enmeshing of historical circumstances. A social organ (and such is every class, including an exploiting class) can take shape only as a result of the deeply rooted inner needs of production itself. If we do not answer this question, then the entire controversy will degenerate into sterile toying with words.

The Early Degeneration of the Bureaucracy

The historical justification for every ruling class consisted in this – that the system of exploitation it headed raised the development of the productive forces to a new level. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, the Soviet regime gave a mighty impulse to economy. But the source of this impulse was the nationalization of the means of production and the planned beginnings, and by no means the fact that the bureaucracy usurped command over the economy. On the contrary, bureaucratism, as a system, became the worst brake on the technical and cultural development of the country. This was veiled for a certain time by the fact that Soviet economy was occupied for two decades with transplanting and assimilating the technology and organization of production in advanced capitalist countries. The period of borrowing and imitation still could, for better or for worse, be accommodated to bureaucratic automatism, *i.e.*, the suffocation of all initiative and all

creative urge. But the higher the economy rose, the more complex its requirements became, all the more unbearable became the obstacle of the bureaucratic régime. The constantly sharpening contradiction between them leads to uninterrupted political convulsions, to systematic annihilation of the most outstanding creative elements in all spheres of activity. Thus, before the bureaucracy could succeed in exuding from itself a "ruling class," it came into irreconcilable contradiction with the demands of development. The explanation for this is to be found precisely in the fact that the bureaucracy is not the bearer of a new system of economy peculiar to itself and impossible without itself, but is a parasitic growth on a workers' state.

The Conditions for the Omnipotence and Fall of the Bureaucracy

The Soviet oligarchy possesses all the vices of the old ruling classes but lacks their historical mission. In the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet State, it is not the general laws of modern society from capitalism to socialism which find expression but a special exceptional and temporary refraction of these laws under the conditions of a backward revolutionary country in a capitalist environment. The scarcity in consumers' goods and the universal struggle to obtain them generate a policeman who arrogates to himself the function of distribution. Hostile pressure from without imposes on the policeman the role of "defender" of the country, endows him with national authority, and permits him doubly to plunder the country.

Both conditions for the omnipotence of the bureaucracy – the backwardness of the country and the imperialist environment – bear, however, a temporary and transitional character and must disappear with the victory of the world revolution. Even bourgeois economists have calculated that with a planned economy it would be possible to raise the national income of the United States rapidly to 200 billion dollars a year and thus assure the entire population not only the satisfaction of its primary needs but real comforts. On the other hand, the world revolution would do away with the danger from without as the supplementary cause of bureaucratization. The elimination of the need to expend an enormous share of the national income on armaments would raise even higher the living and cultural level of the masses. In these conditions the need for a policeman distributor would fall away by itself. Administration as a gigantic cooperative would very quickly supplant state power. There would be no room for a new ruling class or for a new exploiting regime, located between capitalism and socialism.

And What if the Socialist Revolution Is Not Accomplished?

The disintegration of capitalism has reached extreme limits, likewise the disintegration of the old ruling class. The further existence of this system is impossible. The productive forces must be organized in accordance with a plan. But who will accomplish this task – the proletariat, or a new ruling class of “commissars” – politicians, administrators and technicians? Historical experience bears witness, in the opinion of certain rationalizers that one cannot entertain hope in the proletariat. The proletariat proved “incapable” of averting the last imperialist war although the material prerequisites for a socialist revolution already existed at that time. The successes of Fascism after the war were once again the consequence of the “incapacity” of the proletariat to lead capitalist society out of the blind alley. The bureaucratization of the Soviet State was in its turn the consequence of the “incapacity” of the proletariat itself to regulate society through the democratic mechanism. The Spanish revolution was strangled by the Fascist and Stalinist bureaucracies before the very eyes of the world proletariat. Finally, last link in this chain is the new imperialist war, the preparation of which took place quite openly, with complete impotence on the part of the world proletariat. If this conception is adopted, that is, if it is acknowledged that the proletariat does not have the forces to accomplish the socialist revolution, then the urgent task of the statification of the productive forces will obviously be accomplished by somebody else. By whom? By a new bureaucracy, which will replace the decayed bourgeoisie as a new ruling class on a world scale. That is how the question is beginning to be posed by those “leftists” who do not rest content with debating over words.

The Present War and the Fate of Modern Society

By the very march of events this question is now posed very concretely. 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.

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. In that case the question as to whether the Stalinist bureaucracy was a “class” or a growth on the workers’ state will be automatically solved. To every single person it will become clear that in the process of the development of the world revolution the Soviet bureaucracy was only an *episodic* relapse.

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. This would be, according to all indications, a regime of decline, signaling the eclipse of civilization.

An analogous result might occur in the event that the proletariat of advanced capitalist countries, having conquered power, should prove incapable of holding it and surrender it, as in the USSR, to a privileged bureaucracy. Then we would be compelled to acknowledge that the reason for the bureaucratic relapse is rooted not in the backwardness of the country and not in the imperialist environment but in the congenital incapacity of the proletariat to become a ruling class. Then it would be necessary in retrospect to establish that in its fundamental traits the present USSR was the precursor of a new exploiting régime on an international scale.

We have diverged very far from the terminological controversy over the nomenclature of the Soviet state. But let our critics not protest: only by taking the necessary historical perspective can one provide himself with a correct judgment upon such a question as the replacement of one social régime by another. The historic alternative, carried to the end, is as follows: either the Stalin régime is an abhorrent relapse in the process of transforming bourgeois society into a socialist society, or the Stalin régime is the first stage of a new exploiting society. If the second prognosis proves to be correct, then, of course, the bureaucracy will become a new exploiting class. However onerous the second perspective may be, if the world proletariat should actually prove incapable of fulfilling the mission placed upon it by the course of development, nothing else would remain except openly to recognize that the socialist program based on the internal contradictions of capitalist society, ended as a Utopia. It is self-evident that a new "minimum" program would be required for the defence of the interests of the slaves of the totalitarian bureaucratic society.

But are there such incontrovertible or even impressive objective data as would compel us today to renounce the prospect of the socialist revolution? That is the whole question.

The Theory of "Bureaucratic Collectivism"

Shortly after the assumption of power by Hitler, a German "left communist," Hugo Urbahns, came to the conclusion that in place of capitalism a new historical era of "state capitalism" was impending. The first examples of this regime he named as Italy, the USSR, Germany. Urbahns, however, did not draw the political conclusions of his theory. Recently, an Italian "left communist," Bruno R., who formerly adhered to the Fourth International, came to the conclusion that "bureaucratic collectivism" was about to replace capitalism. (Bruno R. – *Le bureaucratisme du monde*, Paris 1939): the new bureaucracy is a class, its relations to the toilers is collective exploitation, the proletarians are transformed into the slaves of totalitarian exploiters.

Bruno R. brackets together planned economy in the USSR, Fascism, National Socialism, and Roosevelt's "New Deal." All these regimes undoubtedly possess common traits, which in the last analysis are determined by the collectivist tendencies of modern economy. Lenin even prior to the October Revolution formulated the main peculiarities of imperialist capitalism as follows: Gigantic concentration of productive forces, the heightening fusion of monopoly capitalism with the state, an organic tendency toward naked dictatorship as a result of this fusion. The traits of centralization and collectivization determine both the politics of revolution and the politics of counter revolution; but this by no means signifies that it is possible to equate revolution, Thermidor, fascism, and American "reformism." Bruno has caught on to the fact that the tendencies of collectivization assume, as a result of the political prostration of the working class, the form of "bureaucratic collectivism." The phenomenon in itself is incontestable. But where are its limits, and what is its historical weight? What we accept as the deformity of a transitional period, the result of the unequal development of multiple factors in the social process, is taken by Bruno R. for an independent social formation in which the bureaucracy is the ruling class. Bruno R. in any case has the merit of seeking to transfer the question from the charmed circle of terminological copy book exercises to the plane of major historical generalizations. This makes it all the easier to disclose his mistake.

Like many ultra-lefts, Bruno R. identifies in essence Stalinism with Fascism. On the one side, the Soviet bureaucracy has adopted the political methods of fascism; on the other side the Fascist bureaucracy, which still confines itself to "partial" measures of state intervention, is heading toward and will soon reach complete statification of economy. The first assertion is absolutely correct. But Bruno's assertion that fascist "anti-capitalism" is capable of arriving at the expropriation of the bourgeoisie is completely erroneous. "Partial"

measures of state intervention and of nationalization in reality differ from planned state economy just as reforms differ from revolution. Mussolini and Hitler are only "coordinating" the interests of the property owners and "regulating" capitalist economy, and, moreover, primarily for war purposes. The Kremlin oligarchy is something else again: it has the opportunity of directing economy as a body only owing to the fact that the working class of Russia accomplished the greatest overturn of property relations in history. This difference must not be lost sight of.

But even if we grant that Stalinism and Fascism, from opposite poles, will someday arrive at one and the same type of exploitative society ("Bureaucratic Collectivism" according to Bruno R.'s terminology) this still will not lead humanity out of the blind alley. The crisis of the capitalist system is produced not only by the reactionary role of private property but also by the no less reactionary role of the national state. Even if the various fascist governments did succeed in establishing a system of planned economy at home, then - aside from the (in the long run) inevitable revolutionary movements of the proletariat unforeseen by any plan - the struggle between the totalitarian states for world domination would be continued and even intensified. Wars would devour the fruits of planned economy and destroy the bases of civilization. Bertrand Russell thinks, it is true, that some victorious state may, as a result of the war, unify the entire world in a totalitarian vice. But even if such a hypothesis should be realized, which is highly doubtful, military "unification" would have no greater stability than the Versailles treaty. National uprisings and pacifications would culminate in a new world war, which would be the grave of civilization. Not our subjective wishes but the objective reality speaks for it, that the only way out for humanity is the world socialist revolution. The alternative to it is the relapse into barbarism.

Proletariat and its Leadership

We shall very soon devote a separate article to the question of the relation between the class and its leadership. We shall confine ourselves here to the most indispensable. Only vulgar "Marxists" who take it that politics is a mere and direct "reflection" of economics, are capable of thinking that leadership reflects the class directly and simply. In reality leadership, having risen above the oppressed class, inevitably succumbs to the pressure of the ruling class. The leadership of the American trade unions, for instance, "reflects" not so much the proletariat, as the bourgeoisie. The selection and education of a truly revolutionary leadership, capable of withstanding the pressure of the bourgeoisie, is an extraordinarily difficult task. The dialectics of the

historic process expressed itself most brilliantly in the fact that the proletariat of the most backward country, Russia, under certain historic conditions, has put forward the most farsighted and courageous leadership. On the contrary, the proletariat in the country of the oldest capitalist culture, Great Britain, has even today the most dull-witted and servile leadership.

The crisis of capitalist society which assumed an open character in July, 1914, from the very first day of the war produced a sharp crisis in the proletarian leadership. During the 25 years that have elapsed since that time, the proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries has not yet created a leadership that could rise to the level of the tasks of our epoch. The experience of Russia testifies, however, that such a leadership can be created. (This does not mean, of course, that it will be immune to degeneration.) The question consequently stands as follows: Will objective historical necessity in the long run cut a path for itself in the consciousness of the vanguard of the working class; that is, in the process of this war and those profound shocks which it must engender will a genuine revolutionary leadership be formed capable of leading the proletariat to the conquest of power?

The Fourth International has replied in the affirmative to this question, not only through the text of its program, but also through the very fact of its existence. All the various types of disillusioned and frightened representatives of pseudo-Marxism proceed *on the contrary* from the assumption that the bankruptcy of the leadership only "reflects" the incapacity of the proletariat to fulfil its revolutionary mission. Not all our opponents express this thought clearly, but all of them – ultra-lefts, centrists, anarchists, not to mention Stalinists and social democrats – shift the responsibility for the defeats from themselves to the shoulders of the proletariat. None of them indicate under precisely what conditions the proletariat will be capable of accomplishing the socialist overturn.

If we grant as true that the cause of the defeats is rooted in the social qualities of the proletariat itself then the position of modern society will have to be acknowledged as hopeless. Under conditions of decaying capitalism, the proletariat grows neither numerically nor culturally. There are no grounds, therefore, for expecting that it will sometime rise to the level of the revolutionary tasks. Altogether differently does the case present itself to him who has clarified in his mind the profound antagonism between the organic, deep going, insurmountable urge of the toiling masses to tear themselves free from the bloody capitalist chaos, and the conservative, patriotic,

utterly bourgeois character of the outlived labour leadership. We must choose one of these two irreconcilable conceptions.

***Totalitarian Dictatorship –
A Condition of Acute Crisis and Not a Stable Regime***

The October Revolution was not an accident. It was forecast long in advance. Events confirmed this forecast. The degeneration does not refute the forecast, because Marxists never believed that an isolated workers' state in Russia could maintain itself indefinitely. True enough, we expected the wrecking of the Soviet State, rather than its degeneration; to put it more correctly, we did not sharply differentiate between those two possibilities. But they do not at all contradict each other. Degeneration must inescapably end at a certain stage in downfall.

A totalitarian régime, whether of Stalinist or Fascist type, by its very essence can be only a temporary transitional régime. Naked dictatorship in history has generally been the product and the symptom of an especially severe social crisis, and not at all of a stable régime. Severe crisis cannot be a permanent condition of society. A totalitarian state is capable of suppressing social contradictions during a certain period, but it is incapable of perpetuating itself. The monstrous purges in the USSR are most convincing testimony of the fact that Soviet society organically tends toward ejection of the bureaucracy.

It is an astonishing thing that Bruno R. sees precisely in the Stalinist purges proof of the fact that the bureaucracy has become a ruling class, for in his opinion only a ruling class is capable of measures on so large a scale.^[2] He forgets however that Czarism, which was not a "class," also permitted itself rather large scale measures in purges and moreover precisely in the period when it was nearing its doom. Symptomatic of his oncoming death agony, by the sweep and monstrous fraudulence of his purge, Stalin testifies to nothing else but the incapacity of the bureaucracy to transform itself into a stable ruling class. Might we not place ourselves in a ludicrous position if we affixed to the Bonapartist oligarchy the nomenclature of a new ruling class just a few years or even a few months prior to its inglorious downfall? Posing this question clearly should alone in our opinion restrain the comrades from terminological experimentation and overhasty generalizations.

The Orientation Towards World Revolution and the Regeneration of the USSR

A quarter of a century proved too brief a span for the revolutionary rearming of the world proletarian vanguard, and too long a period for preserving the Soviet system intact in an isolated backward country. Mankind is now paying for this with a new imperialist war; but the basic task of our epoch has not changed, for the simple reason that it has not been solved. A colossal asset in the last quarter of a century and a priceless pledge for the future is constituted by the fact that one of the detachments of the world proletariat was able to demonstrate in action how the task must be solved.

The second imperialist war poses the unsolved task on a higher historical stage. It tests anew not only the stability of the existing regimes but also the ability of the proletariat to replace them. The results of this test will undoubtedly have a decisive significance for our appraisal of the modern epoch as the epoch of proletarian revolution. If contrary to all probabilities the October Revolution fails during the course of the present war, or immediately thereafter, to find its continuation in any of the advanced countries; and if, on the contrary, the proletariat is thrown back everywhere and on-all-fronts – then we should doubtlessly have to pose the question of revising our conception of the present epoch and its driving forces. In that case it would be a question not of slapping a copy book label on the USSR or the Stalinist gang but of re-evaluating the world historical perspective for the next decades if not centuries: Have we entered the epoch of social revolution and socialist society, or on the contrary the epoch of the declining society of totalitarian bureaucracy?

The twofold error of schematists like Hugo Urbahns and Bruno R. consists, first, in that they proclaim this latter régime as having been already finally installed; secondly, in that they declare it a prolonged transitional state of society between capitalism and socialism. Yet it is absolutely self-evident that if the international proletariat, as a result of the experience of our entire epoch and the current new war proves incapable of becoming the master of society, this would signify the foundering of all hope for a socialist revolution, for it is impossible to expect any other more favourable conditions for it; in any case no one foresees them now, or is able to characterize them. Marxists do not have the slightest right (if disillusionment and fatigue are not considered “rights”) to draw the conclusion that the proletariat has forfeited its revolutionary possibilities and must renounce all aspirations to hegemony in an era immediately ahead. Twenty-five years in the scales of history, when it is a question of profoundest

changes in economic and cultural systems, weigh less than an hour in the life of man. What good is the individual, who because of empirical failures in the course of an hour or a day renounces a goal that he set for himself on the basis of the experience and analysis of his entire previous lifetime? In the years of darkest Russian reaction (1907 to 1917) we took as our starting point those revolutionary possibilities which were revealed by the Russian proletariat in 1905. In the years of world reaction, we must proceed from those possibilities which the Russian proletariat revealed in 1917. The Fourth International did not by accident call itself the world party of the socialist revolution. Our road is not to be changed. We steer our course toward the world revolution and by virtue of this very fact toward the regeneration of the USSR as a worker's state.

Foreign Policy is the Continuation of Domestic Policy

What do we defend in the USSR? Not that in which it resembles the capitalist countries but precisely that in which it differs from them. In Germany also we advocate an uprising against the ruling bureaucracy, but only in order immediately to overthrow capitalist property. In the USSR the overthrow of the bureaucracy is indispensable for the preservation of state property. Only in this sense do we stand for the defence of the USSR.

There is not one among us who doubts that the Soviet workers should defend the state property, not only against the parasitism of the bureaucracy, but also against the tendencies toward private ownership, for example, on the part of the Kolkhoz aristocracy. But after all, foreign policy is the continuation of policy at home. If in domestic policy we correlated defence of the conquests of the October Revolution with irreconcilable struggle against the bureaucracy, then we must do the same thing in foreign policy as well. To be sure, Bruno R. proceeding from the fact that "bureaucratic collectivism" has already been victorious all along the line, assures us that no one threatens state property, because Hitler (and Chamberlain?) is as much interested, you see, in preserving it as Stalin. Sad to say, Bruno R.'s assurances are frivolous. In event of victory Hitler will in all probability begin by demanding the return to German capitalists of all the property expropriated from them; then he will secure a similar restoration of property for the English, the French, and the Belgians so as to reach an agreement with them at the expense of the USSR; finally, he will make Germany the contractor of the most important state enterprises in the USSR in the interests of the German military machine. Right now, Hitler is the ally and friend of Stalin; but should Hitler, with the aid of Stalin, come out victorious on the Western Front,

he would on the morrow turn his guns against the USSR. Finally, Chamberlain, too, in similar circumstances would act no differently from Hitler.

The Defence of the USSR and the Class Struggle

Mistakes on the question of defence of the USSR most frequently flow from an incorrect understanding of the methods of "defence". Defence of the USSR does not at all mean rapprochement with the Kremlin bureaucracy, the acceptance of its politics, or a conciliation with the politics of her allies. In this question, as in all others, we remain completely on the ground of the international class struggle.

In the tiny French periodical, *Que Faire*, it was recently stated that inasmuch as the "Trotskyites" are defeatists in relation to France and England they are therefore defeatists also in relation to the USSR. In other words: If you want to defend the USSR you must stop being defeatists in relation to her imperialist allies. *Que Faire* calculated that the "democracies" would be the allies of the USSR.

What these sages will say now we don't know. But that is hardly important, for their very method is rotten. To renounce defeatism in relation to that imperialist camp to which the USSR adheres today or might adhere tomorrow is to push the workers of the enemy camp to the side of their government; it means to renounce defeatism in general. The renunciation of defeatism under the conditions of imperialist war which is tantamount to the rejection of the socialist revolution – rejection of revolution in the name of "defence of the USSR" – would sentence the USSR to final decomposition and doom.

"Defence of the USSR" as interpreted by the Comintern like yesterday's "struggle against fascism", is based on renunciation of independent class politics. The proletariat is transformed – for various reasons in varying circumstances, but always and invariably – into an auxiliary force of one bourgeois camp against another. In contradistinction to this, some of our comrades say: Since we do not want to become tools of Stalin and his allies, we therefore renounce the defence of the USSR. But by this they only demonstrate that their understanding of "defence" coincides essentially with the understanding of the opportunists; they do not think in terms of the independent politics of the proletariat. As a matter of fact, we defend the USSR as we defend the colonies, as we solve all our problems, not by supporting some imperialist governments against others, but by the method of international class struggle in the colonies as well as in the metropolitan centres.

We are not a government party; we are the party of irreconcilable opposition, not only in capitalist countries but also in the USSR. Our tasks, among them the "defence of the USSR", we realize not through the medium of bourgeois governments and not even through the government of the USSR, but exclusively through the education of the masses through agitation, through explaining to the workers what they should defend and what they should overthrow. Such a "defence" cannot give immediate miraculous results. But we do not even pretend to be miracle workers. As things stand, we are a revolutionary minority. Our work must be directed so that the workers on whom we have influence should correctly appraise events, not permit themselves to be caught unawares, and prepare the general sentiment of their own class for the revolutionary solution of the tasks confronting us.

The defence of the USSR coincides for us with the preparation of world revolution. Only those methods are permissible which do not conflict with the interests of the revolution. The defence of the USSR is related to the world socialist revolution as a tactical task is related to a strategic one. A tactic is subordinated to a strategic goal and in no case can be in contradiction to the latter.

The Question of Occupied Territories

As I am writing these lines the question of the territories occupied by the Red Army still remains obscure. The cable dispatches contradict each other, since both sides lie a great deal; but the actual relationships on the scene are no doubt still extremely unsettled. Most of the occupied territories will doubtlessly become part of the USSR – in what form? Let us for a moment conceive that in accordance with the treaty with Hitler, the Moscow government leaves untouched the rights of private property in the occupied areas and limits itself to "control" after the Fascist pattern. Such a concession would have a deep going principled character and might become a starting point for a new chapter in the history of the Soviet regime; and consequently, a starting point for a new appraisal on our part of the nature of the Soviet state.

It is more likely, however, that in the territories scheduled to become a part of the USSR, the Moscow government will carry through the expropriation of the large landowners and statification of the means of production. This variant is most probable not because the bureaucracy remains true to the socialist program but because it is neither desirous nor capable of sharing the power, and the privileges the latter entails, with the old ruling classes in the occupied territories.

Here an analogy literally offers itself. The first Bonaparte halted the revolution by means of a military dictatorship. However, when the French troops invaded Poland, Napoleon signed a decree: "Serfdom is abolished." This measure was dictated not by Napoleon's sympathies for the peasants, nor by democratic principles but rather by the fact that the Bonapartist dictatorship based itself not on feudal, but on bourgeois property relations. Inasmuch as Stalin's Bonapartist dictatorship bases itself not on private but on state property, the invasion of Poland by the Red Army should, in the nature of the case, result in the abolition of private capitalist property, so as thus to bring the regime of the occupied territories into accord with the regime of the USSR.

This measure, revolutionary in character, – "the expropriation of the expropriators" – is in this case achieved in a military bureaucratic fashion. The appeal to independent activity on the part of the masses in the new territories – and without such an appeal, even if worded with extreme caution it is impossible to constitute a new regime – will on the morrow undoubtedly be suppressed by ruthless police measures in order to assure the preponderance of the bureaucracy over the awakened revolutionary masses. This is one side of the matter. But there is another. In order to gain the possibility of occupying Poland through a military alliance with Hitler, the Kremlin for a long time deceived and continues to deceive the masses in the USSR and in the whole world, and has thereby brought about the complete disorganization of the ranks of its own Communist International. The primary political criterion for us is not the transformation of property relations in this or another area, however important these may be in themselves, but rather the change in the consciousness and organization of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones. From this one, and the only decisive standpoint, the politics of Moscow, taken as a whole, wholly retain their reactionary character and remain the chief obstacle on the road to the world revolution.

Our *general* appraisal of the Kremlin and Comintern does not, however, alter the *particular* fact that the statification of property in the occupied territories is in itself a progressive measure. We must recognize this openly. Were Hitler on the morrow to throw his armies against the East, to restore "law and order" in Eastern Poland, the advanced workers would defend against Hitler these new property forms established by the Bonapartist Soviet bureaucracy.

We Do Not Change Our Course!

The stratification of the means of production is, as we said, a progressive measure. But its progressiveness is relative; its specific weight depends on the sum-total of all the other factors. Thus, we must first and foremost establish that the extension of the territory dominated by bureaucratic autocracy and parasitism, cloaked by "socialist" measures, can augment the prestige of the Kremlin, engender illusions concerning the possibility of replacing the proletarian revolution by bureaucratic manoeuvres and so on. This evil by far outweighs the progressive content of Stalinist reforms in Poland. In order that nationalized property in the occupied areas, as well as in the USSR, become a basis for genuinely progressive, that is to say socialist development, it is necessary to overthrow the Moscow bureaucracy. Our program retains, consequently, all its validity. The events did not catch us unaware. It is necessary only to interpret them correctly. It is necessary to understand clearly that sharp contradictions are contained in the character of the USSR and in her international position. It is impossible to free oneself from those contradictions with the help of terminological sleight of hand ("Workers State" – "Not Workers State.") We must take the facts as they are. We must build our policy by taking as our starting point the real relations and contradictions.

We do not entrust the Kremlin with any historic mission. We were and remain against seizures of new territories by the Kremlin. We are for the independence of Soviet Ukraine, and if the Byelorussians themselves wish – of Soviet Byelorussia. At the same time in the sections of Poland occupied by the Red Army, partisans of the Fourth International must play the most decisive part in expropriating the landlords and capitalists, in dividing the land among the peasants, in creating Soviets and Workers' Committees, etc. While so doing, they must preserve their political independence, they must fight during elections the Soviets and factory committees for the complete independence of the latter from the bureaucracy, and they must conduct revolutionary propaganda in the spirit of distrust towards the Kremlin and its local agencies.

But let us suppose that Hitler turns his weapons against the East and invades territories occupied by the Red Army. Under these conditions, partisans of the Fourth International, without changing in any way their attitude toward the Kremlin oligarchy, will advance to the forefront as the most urgent task of the hour, the military resistance against Hitler. The workers will say, "We cannot cede to Hitler the overthrowing of Stalin; that is our own task". During the military struggle against Hitler, the revolutionary workers will strive to enter into the closest possible comradely relations with the rank-

and-file fighters of the Red Army. While arms in hand they deal blows to Hitler, the Bolshevik-Leninists will at the same time conduct revolutionary propaganda against Stalin preparing his overthrow at the next and perhaps very near stage.

This kind of "defence of the USSR" will naturally differ, as heaven does from earth, from the official defence which is now being conducted under the slogan: "For the Fatherland! For Stalin!" *Our* defence of the USSR is carried on under the slogan: "For Socialism! For the world revolution! Against Stalin!" In order that these two varieties of "Defence of the USSR" do not become confused in the consciousness of the masses it is necessary to know clearly and precisely how to formulate slogans which correspond to the concrete situation. But above all it is necessary to establish clearly just *what* we are defending, just how we are defending it, against *whom* we are defending it. Our slogans will create confusion among the masses only if we ourselves do not have a clear conception of our tasks.

Conclusions

We have no reasons whatsoever at the present time for changing our principled position in relation to the USSR.

War accelerates the various political processes. It may accelerate the process of the revolutionary regeneration of the USSR. But it may also accelerate the process of its final degeneration. For this reason, it is indispensable that follow painstakingly and without prejudice these modifications which war introduces into the internal life of the USSR so that we may give ourselves a timely accounting of them. Our tasks in the occupied territories remain basically the same as in the USSR itself; but inasmuch as they are posed by events in an extremely sharp form, they enable us all the better to clarify our general tasks in relation to the USSR. We must formulate our slogans in such a way that the workers see clearly just what we are defending in the USSR, (state property and planned economy), and against whom we are conducting a ruthless struggle (the parasitic bureaucracy and their Comintern). We must not lose sight for a single moment of the fact that the question of overthrowing the Soviet bureaucracy is for us subordinate to the question of preserving state property in the means of production of the USSR: that the question of preserving state property in the means of production in the USSR is subordinate for us to the question of the world proletarian revolution.

L. Trotsky September 25, 1939.

NOTES ON TROTSKY'S BOOK (BY THE MARXIST INTERNET ARCHIVE)

Bruno Rizzi (March 20, 1901 – January 31, 1977) was a heterodox Marxist theoretician, close (although critical) to Trotskyism, best known for his essay "The bureaucratization of the world" (1939).

Member of the Italian Socialist Party and co-founder of the Italian Communist Party in 1921, Bruno Rizzi left in 1930. Persecuted by the fascists, he went into exile in France and published this essay in Paris in 1939. It was in this context that he participated in the controversy over the nature of the USSR ("degenerated workers' state" or "bureaucratic collectivism"?). In it, he asserts, in essence, that a "bureaucratic class", embodied by the CPSU, has taken the place of the bourgeoisie.

Bertrand Arthur William Russell (May 18, 1872 – February 2, 1970) was a British mathematician, logician, philosopher, epistemologist, politician, and moralist. He writes philosophical works in order to share his conception of a rationalist philosophy that works for peace and love. He defended ideas close to socialism, of a libertarian tendency and also militated against all forms of religion, considering that they were systems of cruelty inspired by fear and ignorance. He organized the Sartre-Russell Tribunal against crimes committed during the Vietnam War.

Hugo Urbahns (February 18, 1890 - November 16, 1946) was a German politician, member of the Communist Party, member of the Reichstag during the Weimar Republic.

Radicalized by the experience of the war, Urbahns joined the Spartakusbund in Hamburg and, after its founding, the KPD. Urbahns belongs to the left wing of the party. Urbahns played a central role in the build-up to the 1923 Hamburg Rising; he plays the role of political leader and must hide after the failure of the uprising. Secretly, he criticized the fact that the party leadership around Heinrich Brandler and August Thalheimer did not support the action of the Hamburg KPD by organizing insurrections in other regions.

The German-Soviet Pact, officially a non-aggression treaty between Germany and the Soviet Union, was a diplomatic agreement signed on August 23, 1939 in Moscow, by German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop and Minister Soviet Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, in the presence of Joseph Stalin. The additional protocols will be signed on August 28 and September 28.

It followed the 1938 Munich Agreement between Hitler and Western countries, which led to the dismantling of Czechoslovakia and the failure of Soviet-Western negotiations for a possible alliance against Nazi Germany. In addition to a commitment to neutrality in the event of a conflict between one of the two parties and the Western powers, the German-Soviet Pact included a secret protocol, which delimited the spheres of influence between the two countries, and whose implementation will result in invasion, occupation and annexation of certain states or territories (Poland, Finland, Baltics, Bessarabia). The pact was broken on June 22, 1941 by Hitler's decision to attack the USSR triggering Operation Barbarossa, that is, the invasion of Russia, which ended in total failure in 1943.

From the Marxist Internet Archive.

Who is J. Posadas?

J. Posadas was born in Argentina in 1912 and died in Italy in 1981. He began his activities as a trade union leader in the footwear industry. He soon adopted Trotsky's ideas and joined the Fourth International (Pablo) in 1935. He developed as a writer, theorist, political leader and revolutionary organizer. In 1947 he organized the Fourth International Group (GCI) and started the newspaper *Voz Proletaria*. There, he analysed the progressive and growing role of revolutionary nationalism in the world, which he had first identified in Peronism in Argentina. He wrote major works such as "*Plan quinquenal or Permanent Revolution*" and *El Peronismo* in 1963, and "*from Nationalism to the Workers State*" in 1966.

In 1962, J. Posadas created the Trotskyist-Posadist Fourth International on the basis of some of his fundamental texts like: *The Construction of the Workers' State and from the Workers State to Socialism*; *The role of the USSR in History*; *The Living Thought of Trotsky*, and *Partial Regeneration, Historic Re-encounter and the Process of Permanent Revolution in this stage*.

In the more general field of Art, Science and Culture, the author has left many writings that incorporate into the Marxist analysis themes ranging from 'The human relations' to 'The communist future of humanity'. This formed part of his *History of Human Civilization* that he left unfinished due to his unexpected death in 1981.

Aware of the implacable and historic antagonism of the capitalist system towards the Workers States and humanity, J. Posadas upheld Trotsky's "unconditional defence of the Soviet Union" and of the Workers States. He did not want world war or any war, but from the behaviour of world capitalism, he saw the need to prepare humanity, and the world's soldiers, for the war which will also be world revolution.

He devoted all his life, and all of his work, to the task of giving humanity confidence in that the war of capitalism forms part of the dialectical process of history, and has no supernatural powers. Human confidence and creativity have always been more powerful than the destructive capacity of fear and unreason.

Some of J Posadas' last words were: "*Life makes no sense without the struggle for socialism, with all the consequences.*"

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