

Trotsky and Trotskyism

**How Trotskyism
was integrated
into the left of capital**



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Introduction

In the political milieu, the two leftist traditions of the political apparatus of capital, namely Stalinism and Trotskyism, each claim to be the true heir of communism and the Communist International, as well as the October Revolution. They both view themselves as the real successor to Lenin and the only alternative to the revolution. Each accuses the other of betraying the working class and communism.

Stalinists claim that Trotsky was a spy for the bourgeoisie within the working class as well as being its enemy, and that Lenin provided valuable experiences to the communists to guide their actions in the fight against the deviant approach of Trotskyism. Stalinists also assert that the Trotskyite revisionist approach was fully supported by the bourgeois propaganda apparatus. Therefore, Stalinists consider the complete rejection of Trotskyism necessary for the victory of the revolution, because they believe that within all of the revolutions that have occurred in the world, Trotskyism has played no role other than disrupting the revolutionary cause and helping the reactionaries and counter-revolutionaries.

On the other hand, the Trotskyists claim that following the beginning of the decadence of the October Revolution and the Communist International, as well as the rise of the bureaucracy in Russia and the parties belonging to the Communist International, it was Trotsky and the Trotskyists who started the struggle against the rise of the counter-revolution and that they are the only true heirs of Bolshevism and the Communist International. The Trotskyists also maintain that they have continued the red and turbulent path of the struggle until today and have not allowed any break in the continuity of the revolutionary and communist movement. They write:

“There was no break, no gap in the continuity of the revolutionary movement, and that despite the enormous ebb in the labour movement starting in 1923, despite the degeneration of the October Revolution, despite the infamous role exercised by Stalinism within the working class.”¹

The narrative of the Trotskyists and Stalinists is similar to that in the election circus. One faction from the left of capital participates in the election spectacle with socialist words and the other boycotts it. Participating or boycotting the elections are two sides of the same coin, which involve spreading the illusion of bourgeois parliamentarism, legitimizing it, and consequently standing against the social revolution.

Stalinism and Trotskyism are two sides of the same coin. They both form the left wing of the bourgeoisie and are the product of the defeat of the wave of the world revolution, the victory of the counter-revolution and the subsequent decline of the October Revolution and the Communist International. Neither of them represent the true continuation of communism and the Communist International, and such a claim is a big historical lie. In the history of class battles, only the counter-revolutionaries in power (Stalinism) and in opposition (Trotskyism) have not played a role against social revolution. In contrast, communists and revolutionaries have also been involved in class battles and defended communist and proletarian positions.

In this book, we discuss how an anti-revolutionary and anti-communist ideology under the title of Trotskyism was formed based on one of the main creators of the glorious October Revolution, a famous orator of the communist revolution and one of the heroes of the civil war.

¹ *The Fourth International-The Long March of the Trotskyists* – Pierre Frank

This review would not have been possible unless it showed that the true heirs of communism (the communist left), although in absolute isolation and in the most difficult conditions, remained loyal to the positions of the proletariat in all social events, stood against being dragged into the mud of communism and rose to defend Marxism. It can be said that the only alternative for the possibility of the future world revolution is the continuation of the communist left.

Trotsky and the Revolution of 1905

In 1897, Trotsky started his socialist and underground activity by forming a group called the “South Russian Workers’ Union”. Although most of the members of the group were young people, it was active among the workers, published the *Nashe Delo* (*Our Cause*) magazine and distributed leaflets and announcements among the factories and shipyards, in addition to recruiting members among them. At the end of 1899, Trotsky was sentenced to four years of exile in Siberia, approximately two years after being imprisoned. In 1901, while in Siberia, Trotsky advocated a type of organization with a strong centrality and discipline, and published a pamphlet on this topic. After four and a half years of imprisonment and exile, Trotsky managed to escape from Siberia and travel to Samara, the location of the headquarters of *Iskra*. He was immediately sent to visit the Ukrainian socialist groups in Kharkiv and Kiev, and after returning from that mission, received an urgent message from Lenin stating that he should introduce himself to the *Iskra* centre abroad as soon as possible.

In October 1902, Trotsky visited Lenin’s house in London and then settled next to the editorial board of *Iskra*. He finally joined it on Lenin’s recommendation. Trotsky participated in the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party in August 1903 as a representative of Siberia, at which time he was among Lenin’s supporters. During this congress, the dispute over the organization and the terms of membership in the party led to its split into two factions, the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. Contrary to his previous opinions, Trotsky joined the Menshevik faction during the congress under the influence of Martov and accused Lenin of imposing military rule on the party with power-hungry motives. In August 1904, Trotsky published a pamphlet entitled *Our Political*

Duties, which was actually a sharp indictment by a socialist against Lenin. In this publication, he personally angered Lenin in an indescribable way, although Lenin was the one who had called Trotsky to Europe and prepared the ground for his development. Trotsky wrote in the same pamphlet:

“Lenin’s method leads to the point that: first, the party organization replaces the entire party, then the central committee replaces the organization, and finally the “dictator” replaces the central committee”.

The Mensheviks’ laxities and hesitations caused Trotsky to send an “open letter to the comrades” to *Iskra* (now a Menshevik publication) in September 1904, announcing his departure from the Mensheviks, but this letter was never published. From then on, Trotsky acted independently and was not a member of either faction of the party, the Bolsheviks or the Mensheviks, until July 1917, when he joined the Bolsheviks.

On 9 January 1905, the workers of St Petersburg marched towards the tsar’s Winter Palace during a peaceful demonstration and asked the tsar to listen to their problems, but the tsar instead ordered the palace guards to massacre them. This event marked the beginning of the 1905 revolution. Discussion of the protests and its analysis intensified in Russian exile circles. The dispute was over which social class should be at the head of the revolutionary movement. Trotsky secretly went to Russia in February 1905 to influence the events of the social protests. In Russia, Leonid Krasin, a member of the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks, supported him and took Trotsky to St Petersburg.

The wave of protests and strikes in January and February had passed and the police reprisals had terrified the workers. The Okhrana, the secret police of tsarist Russia, were looking for

instigators. In October 1905, the printing press workers went on strike again, demanding lower working hours and higher wages. The strike spread to different industries in St Petersburg, as well as to other cities. During these strikes, an institution was formed that represented the workers, the “council”. Approximately 500 representatives represented the workers in the council, and it published its own newspaper, *Izvestia* (News). Trotsky, with his impassioned speeches in the council, and as the chairman of its executive committee, as well as by writing its statements and resolutions, and even by editing *Izvestia*, moved the spirit of the council, so that it became the main focus of the revolution. After 50 days, the first labour council was suppressed by the police and its main members were arrested and sentenced to eternal exile to Siberia and the deprivation of all social rights. Trotsky again managed to escape from Siberia and return to St Petersburg. He then left for Finland to go back to London and participate in the party congress.

Between 1907 and 1914, Trotsky’s professional life involved little serious political work, and he was more engaged in journalism and literary criticism. During these years, the re-collaboration with the Mensheviks in the framework of the August 1909 bloc, as well as the collaboration with Plekhanov, represent other negative points of his political performance.

Trotsky in Zimmerwald

Switzerland's neutrality in World War I meant that it became a haven for revolutionaries living in Germany and Austria. This neutrality made it possible to tolerate the internationalist propaganda of the Russian revolutionaries to some extent. The Austrian government planned to detain Russian immigrants and refugees. Therefore, following the decision of the Austrian government, Trotsky had to go to Switzerland, and Lenin, who was arrested by the Austrian government, also travelled there after his release. World War I confronted the labour movement with its deepest crises and split the socialist parties into two. Most of these parties, in line with the goals of the "fatherland" and by supporting patriotism, violated their obligations against labour internationalism, which obliged them "not to participate in any bourgeois war", and as a result, they were directly integrated into the bourgeois camp. Simultaneously with the start of the war and the shock caused by the pro-war positions, the anti-war campaigns also began immediately. Oppositions to the war were few in the beginning, but later and with great effort, the revolutionaries were able to reverse the pro-war policy in favour of an anti-war one.

The Zimmerwald Conference in 1915 represented the first international reaction of the labour movement against the capitalist desire to participate in a world war, which was formed as a response to the slaughter and brutality of World War I. Zimmerwald was a small village located in Switzerland where conferences were held. It was here that the seed of the Third International was planted. Because of this, Zimmerwald became part of the communist left's legacy. In Zimmerwald, 38 delegates from 11 neutral and belligerent countries gathered to demonstrate their international

solidarity. But the participants in the conference, as their resolutions showed, were less united in their goals.

Most of the representatives at this conference were pacifists who earnestly wished for peace and had no desire to go beyond pacifism. Their presence at the conference was enough to end the support for the war and revive the desire for international peace. Actually, the centrist spectrum consisted of two factions. The right wing of the centrists was represented by Mensheviks, social revolutionaries and syndicalists, as well as German, Italian and Swiss trade unions. All of them were ready to give concessions to social chauvinism. In the following years, the right wing of the centrists revealed its positions on issues such as revolution and “peace” and demonstrated anti-revolutionary characteristics between 1917 and 1919. The left faction of the centrists, with its inability to make decisions and its shaky positions, did not make an effort to strengthen and stabilize its basic principles and, as a result, was led to compromise. Trotsky and the representatives of the group gathered around Luxemburg and Liebknecht, in addition to the Balkan and Polish parties, were the voices of this current.

Zimmerwald’s left wing included a small minority that had gathered around Lenin and now stood for the first time as a defender of international socialism that was not only Russian. In Switzerland, among the exiled Bolsheviks abroad, Lenin had tried to prepare for the transformation of the imperialist war into a civil one. Some of the exiles thought that their duty was to volunteer to serve in the French army.² There was a struggle around the “idea of defeatism” within the party in Russia as well, although militants like Shliapnikov argued that this position would discourage the workers. But in the end, due to the objective context, the party realized that

² The position taken by Plekhanov, the teacher of Marxism, against the tsarist tyranny was supported by a group of people.

politically and practically, it should prepare the workers for a revolutionary period. Accordingly, at the Zimmerwald Conference, Lenin's defeatist position was taken against all warring governments and different nations were asked to "turn the imperialist war into a civil war". The necessity of forming a new international organization was also announced. The Zimmerwald Manifesto was a "joint statement" that came out of the conference. Although the Zimmerwald Manifesto was a reflection of the majority's views, it expressed most of those of the pacifists, so Trotsky, the author of the manifesto, remained a pacifist and did not join the left wing. In the manifesto written by Trotsky, we read:

"The war has lasted more than a year. Millions of corpses cover the battlefields. Millions of human beings have been crippled for the rest of their lives. *Europe is like a gigantic human slaughterhouse...The war which has produced this chaos is the outcome of imperialism*, of the attempt on the part of the capitalist classes of each nation, to foster their greed for profit by the exploitation of human labour and of the natural treasures of the entire globe."³

The impact of this manifesto extended beyond the goals of the signatories who held positions between the proletarian and chauvinist ones and were known as centrists. Gathering the militants of warring countries over the barbed wire and bloody trenches was considered a great crime in those war conditions. Since this manifesto originated from the socialists of the warring countries, it was soon employed as propaganda to incite brotherhood between the soldiers on both sides of the war. The ambiguities of the manifesto, which was actually the result of a compromise between

³ *Manifesto -International Socialist Conference at Zimmerwald*

Zimmerwald's different groups who wanted to stand as a united movement against the imperialist powers, were of secondary importance in the minds of the workers. This conference had historical importance for the evolution of the class struggle and the formation of the international communist left.

Without backing down, the Bolsheviks criticized the compromising tone of the manifesto's urge for revolutionary peace, which encouraged the workers' struggle for peace and lacked a vision for revolution. The left's attitude is described as follows:

“The left, regrouping seven to eight delegates, a tiny minority, was conscious of this step forward. The international bourgeoisie in fact wasn't mistaken on the meaning of Zimmerwald. Either it used the most infamous calumnies in order to present the revolutionaries as ‘enemy agents’, and it was backed up in this by the social-chauvinists, or else, as much as possible, it censored any article dealing with the results of the conference. It wasn't for nothing that the bourgeoisie of both camps were afraid. The establishment of an International Socialist Commission, to which the most part of the Zimmerwald movement subsequently adhered, was a step forward in the break with the Second International, even if its initiators declared that they didn't want to “*substitute itself for the International Secretariat*”, and intended “*to dissolve itself as soon as the latter begins again to fulfill its mission*”.”⁴

⁴ *International Review*, No 44

Trotsky and His Role in the October Revolution

After being expelled from France and Spain, Trotsky went to America and became one of the writers for the *Novy Mir* (*New World*) newspaper, which was edited by Bukharin, Kollontai and Volodarsky. This issue smoothed Trotsky's close bond with the Bolsheviks. At this point, Kollontai had transformed from a Menshevik into a passionate and ardent Bolshevik. From the middle of March, different news about the unrest in the Russian capital reached the Russian circles abroad. On 13 March, Trotsky wrote in *Novy Mir*:

“We are witnessing the beginning of the Second Russian Revolution. May many of us be participants in it”.

On 27 March, Trotsky and a small group of emigrants left New York for Russia, but when the Norwegian ship docked in Halifax on 3 April, British police arrested him and his family. After five weeks of fighting with the British authorities, Trotsky finally managed to leave Amherst (a special camp for German prisoners of war) for Finland on 29 April. The band of sailors escorting him played the international anthem. At that time, 10 weeks had passed since the Russian February Revolution. Trotsky left for Petrograd by train on 17 May (4 May according to the old calendar). Lenin had returned to Russia a month before Trotsky's arrival.

From the moment Trotsky arrived, it was obvious that an alliance would be established between the revolutionaries. At the April 1917 conference where Lenin announced the April Theses, reconciliation and unity with groups and movements that truly stood on internationalist ground were accepted. At this point, Trotsky belonged to a small group of social democrats called the United Social Democrats (*Mezhraiontsy*). Lenin personally attended one of

the meetings of the United Social Democrats and suggested that they be represented on the council of writers of *Pravda* and the preparatory committee of the upcoming Congress of the Bolshevik Party.⁵

When Trotsky attended the meeting of the executive board of the council, he observed that 10 capitalist and six moderate socialist ministers were elected to government positions. Like the Bolsheviks, he believed that all power should be entrusted to the Soviets. The Bolshevik members of the executive board of the Soviet stated that the leader of the 1905 Soviet should have a seat on the current executive board. Finally, it was decided that Trotsky should be accepted as an associate member of the council, without the right to vote. In his speech in the council, Trotsky demanded that all the power should be placed in the hands of the councils and said:

“I think that our next move will be to transfer the whole power into the hands of the Soviets. Only a single power can save Russia.”⁶

Trotsky ended his speech with the slogan “Long live the Russian revolution as a precursor to the world revolution”. In the two or three weeks after Trotsky’s arrival in Russia, he gained great popularity as one of the most elite orators and propagandists of the left in the Soviets.

In June 1917, the first All-Russian Congress of Soviets was held in Petrograd, where moderate socialists were in the majority, but of the 120 delegates who belonged to the left wing, most were workers in large industrial centres.

In early July 1917, the Bolsheviks were supposed to hold their sixth congress, during which the inter-district organization,

⁵ *A History of Soviet Russia* – E. H. Carr, Volume 1, page 120.

⁶ *The Prophet Armed* - Isaac Deutscher - page 254

including Trotsky, joined the Bolsheviks. In Petrograd, the workers demanded radical and immediate changes, but in the cities, the February regime was still valid. Lenin and Trotsky, after examining the balance of the forces of the whole country, concluded that the time for an uprising had not yet come, and this issue increased the experience of the Bolshevik leaders. In early July, a number of regiments of soldiers confronted the Bolsheviks and called for an armed demonstration on 3 July. The Bolsheviks tried to cancel the demonstrations, but the anger of the people could not be contained. The Bolsheviks decided to hold the demonstration in a peaceful manner and thus prevented an early uprising. If the Bolsheviks had not used their influence and peaceful demonstrations had not been held, the bloodbath would have continued. Lenin and Trotsky played a vital role in this area, which showed the maturity of the Bolsheviks. Unfortunately, the German communists could not learn from their experience and correctly assess the appropriateness of class forces, and they fell into the trap of an early uprising of the bourgeoisie and were massacred.

In the wake of these events, a right-wing newspaper fraudulently published documents claiming that Lenin was a spy for the Germans. The government's counterintelligence agency had forged the documents and given them to the newspaper. Following a meeting between Trotsky and Lenin, Lenin believed that these conspiracies were planned in order to massacre the revolutionaries. Upon assessing the situation, Lenin decided to go into hiding with Zinoviev. At that time and even after the victory of the October Revolution, there was a kind of scepticism towards Lenin among some people, who thought that Lenin preferred to escape rather than remain in sensitive and exceptional situations. After the massacre of Rosa Luxemburg and Liebknecht, the wisdom of Lenin's decision became clear to everyone. The bourgeoisie launched a brutal attack and unleashed unbridled terror against the Bolsheviks. Trotsky was

arrested, along with a large number of Bolsheviks. He turned his trial into a platform against the authorities.

Finally, on 24 August 1917, General Kornilov moved to the capital with his coup d'état and declared war on the government, announcing that he would rid the country of revolution. The Kronstadt sailors sent a delegation to Trotsky in prison, which turned Trotsky's cell into a place of discussion and consultation. Trotsky advised that the Kronstadt sailors should first repel the danger of Kornilov and postpone the settlement of accounts with Kerensky. Kornilov was defeated not by military force, but by the propagandistic strength of the Bolsheviks, and his forces collapsed without even a single shot being fired. Kornilov's defeat paved the way for the October Revolution.

Upon Trotsky's release from prison, his speeches continued, and on 9 September 1917, during one of these, he demanded the unconditional restoration of dignity from the leaders of the Bolsheviks. Trotsky also proposed the impeachment of the presidium of the council and, to everyone's surprise, won the majority vote. This issue indicated that the influence of the Bolsheviks had increased greatly, while the Mensheviks and their allies had lost their dominance. The Bolsheviks in the Soviet became stronger and in September, the Bolsheviks gained the majority. On 23 September 1917, the Petrograd Soviet elected Trotsky as its president.

It can be safely said that after Lenin, Trotsky played the most important role in the glorious October Revolution. Trotsky believed that since the Bolsheviks wanted "all power in the hands of the soviets", then the uprising should be carried out at the same time as the Congress of Soviets, so that the new power (Soviet power) was entrusted to the Congress of Soviets. Trotsky believed that if the uprising was carried out by order of the Soviet, it would mobilize the masses. There was a difference of opinion regarding the uprising

within the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks. Lenin and Trotsky were staunch defenders of it, while Zinoviev and Kamenev were opponents.

The Revolutionary Military Committee was formed by the executive committee of the Council for the Uprising, and Trotsky was at its head. He arranged the preparations for the uprising and tried his best to organize the Second Congress of Soviets. As the chairman of the council, he conveyed a radio message to all the councils to send their representatives to the congress.

Trotsky also played an important role in the military preparation of the uprising. On 23 October 1917, the Revolutionary Military Committee prepared a detailed plan of the uprising. On the night of 25 October 1917, the Revolutionary Military Committee issued an uprising order. The Red Guards and the forces under the command of the Revolutionary Military Committee captured government centres and strategic points one after another. Kerensky fled from the capital in a car belonging to one of the foreign embassies, but the Winter Palace resisted and did not surrender. The national Congress of Soviets was opened when the cruiser *Aurora* bombarded the Winter Palace, the last and most important fortress of the bourgeoisie that would not surrender, as a result of which it collapsed and fell into the hands of the workers and revolutionaries.

Trotsky and the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk

In World War I, two powerful imperialist blocs lined up against each other. One side was formed by the Allied Powers, which was a coalition of Russia, Britain, and France, and the other was the Central Powers, which included Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the Ottoman Empire. Until 1915, on the battlefield, the Central Powers had gained greater military superiority, but with the entry of the United States into the war, the balance of power tilted in favour of the Allied Powers. In February 1917, a violent revolutionary wave led to the overthrow of the tsar and the rise of Kerensky, but Kerensky remained faithful to his commitments regarding the war.

The vast majority of the Russian population wanted the war to end, and the Bolshevik Party made a firm decision to implement the people's wishes. From the beginning of the war, the Bolsheviks demanded an immediate armistice, including an international peace treaty without paying compensation or annexing other people's lands. This request was strongly opposed by the British and French governments, and the British and French ambassadors asked Kerensky to suppress the Bolsheviks.

The victory of the October Revolution meant not committing to imperialist treaties or military alliances. The Bolsheviks announced that they would unilaterally cancel the colonial agreements and accordingly withdrew their forces from Iran. The Bolsheviks also stated that they would publish confidential documents, and in this context, Trotsky declared that "The abolition of secret diplomacy is the primary condition for an honest, popular, truly democratic foreign policy".⁷

⁷Statement by Trotsky on the publication of the secret treaties.

The Allies wanted to break up the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Bolsheviks desired a just peace, without annexation or payment of compensation, so a call was sent to all nations to participate in a conference to conclude a “just and democratic” peace which was approved by the Second Congress of Soviets.

For the French and British bourgeoisie, the terror of the revolution had become apparent, and this issue increased the possibility of a compromise between the Allies and the Axis powers. In such a situation, the following question was before the Bolsheviks: should they wait for peace so that the world revolution could spread, or should they help it advance by concluding a peace agreement?

Since the imperialist governments did not respond to the Bolsheviks’ request for a peace conference and continued the war, the Bolsheviks were therefore forced to solve the problems caused by this imperialist war according to the deadline that Lenin and the majority of the Bolsheviks had recommended by declaring an armistice with the German and Austro-Hungarian armies.

Within the Bolsheviks there were two positions on this matter: immediate peace or the expansion of the revolution through revolutionary war. Lenin defended the idea of immediate peace in order to gain breathing space, while the communist left, represented by Bukharin, wanted a revolutionary war against Germany and opposed peace. The communist left evaluated the peace treaty as a betrayal of the world revolution and was afraid that Germany would impose unacceptable conditions on the country of the Soviets, which would contradict the principles of revolutionary socialism and provide the basis for the growth of opportunism. Lenin, Trotsky and the communist left all saw the final victory of the Russian proletariat in the expansion of the world revolution.

Trotsky, as the minister of foreign affairs of the revolutionary government, assumed that the Germans would propose

unacceptable conditions for peace, and that the revolutionary government would be forced into a revolutionary war. Trotsky believed that by not signing the peace treaty immediately and delaying the negotiations, there would be an opportunity to expose the warmongering policy of the imperialists, and that it would be proved to the European proletariat that the revolutionary government would not surrender, but would give in to peace as a result of forced conditions, so these issues would lead the working class in other countries to enter into class battles.

The peace talks started in December 1917 in Brest-Litovsk. Trotsky took a suitcase full of leaflets and statements with him and distributed them among the German soldiers in front of the German diplomats. The Germans set tough conditions before the Soviet negotiating team.

After returning from the peace negotiations, Trotsky announced his mission report and his conclusions: neither peace, nor war, thus buying time for the German revolution to spread. Trotsky took a stance on peace between Lenin and the communist left, but ultimately moved in favour of Lenin's position. Lenin pressured the Central Committee to accept Germany's conditions, and Bukharin, as a representative of the communist left, demanded a revolutionary war. Lenin's proposal for immediate peace received 15 votes, Trotsky's 16, and Bukharin's 32. Because those who did not have the right to vote had participated in the voting, the Central Committee did not consider itself obligated to act in line with the results of the vote. Finally, the Central Committee voted for the resolution proposed by Trotsky, or rather, gave Trotsky the authority to advance his policy in the negotiations, which is summarized in the following sentence:

“We will give up the war and leave the peace agreement unsigned – we will withdraw the army from mobilization”.

The Germans realized Trotsky's policy, cancelled the armistice and in February 1918 organized new attacks against the revolutionary government. The Germans occupied significant parts of Russia within two weeks and won significant victories, advancing as far as Petrograd. Finally, under the pressure of Lenin's decisions, the peace treaty was signed with much worse conditions than before.

The main concern of the members of the communist left who gathered around Bukharin, Pyatakov, Usinsky, etc., was that the Brest-Litovsk agreement would delay the revolution in Germany, so they believed that the workers, instead of committing to a revolutionary war to spread the world revolution, had agreed to an uneasy peace. Despite the internationalist intentions and motivations of the communist left, Lenin's position was more in line with the needs of the world revolution. The ruling and victorious proletariat cannot accomplish its revolution through force and bayonet, but the proletarian revolution of any country, the conscious struggle of the proletariat of that country against its own capitalism, can be a step in advancing the world revolution. One clear example is the advance of the Red Army in Poland in 1920, which caused the Polish proletariat to fall into the bosom of the domestic bourgeoisie. The military victories of the proletariat in a trench cannot replace the conscious and political movement of the workers. Freeing the workers of other countries through revolutionary war is against the nature of the proletarian revolution and the historical role of the proletariat, and it is in the bourgeois uprisings that the revolution is spread by bayonet force and through war. The establishment of the Communist International in 1919, in which the Bolsheviks played an important role, contributed more to the world revolution than the "revolutionary war".

Trotsky and the Treaty of Rapallo

After the end of the civil war, Trotsky tried to play a prominent role in the field of diplomacy, and in this context, beginning in 1920, he urged Lenin to improve relations with Britain. He carried out the same diplomatic and confidential efforts in relation to Germany, so that, starting in 1921, negotiations with Germany were conducted in the most secret way possible. Trotsky also made the preparations for the Rapallo contract in this manner. Although he was not present at the time of its signing, he played an important role in its engineering. In 1922, in the city of Rapallo in Italy, an amity treaty was signed between Germany and the Soviet Union, and after that, these two countries began military and economic cooperation with each other.

A simple comparison between the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk in 1918 and the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922 clearly shows the fundamental difference between a principled withdrawal due to special conditions and an attempt to integrate into the capitalist world system. The Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was openly discussed within the party and society, without the slightest attempt to hide the harsh conditions imposed by Germany, and the framework of the discussion regarding the Brest-Litovsk treaty was determined based on the world revolution, not on the national interests of Russia.

However, unlike the Brest-Litovsk agreement, the Rapallo treaty was signed completely secretly without the slightest discussion in the party or society, and conditions were imposed on the Soviet government to supply some of the weapons for the German army. These were the same weapons that were used to defend the capitalist order and suppress the German workers in 1923, and the corresponding agreement that prepared the ground for Russia's integration into global capitalism.

Following the victory of the October Revolution, the Bolsheviks announced that they were against secret diplomacy, and as mentioned earlier, they declared that they would publish secret documents. In this regard, Trotsky said:

“Secret diplomacy is a necessary tool for a propertied minority which is compelled to deceive the majority in order to subject it to its interests. Imperialism, with its dark plans of conquest and its robber alliances and deals, developed the system of secret diplomacy to the highest level. The struggle against the imperialism which is exhausting and destroying the peoples of Europe is at the same time a struggle against capitalist diplomacy, which has cause enough to fear the light of day. The Russian people, and the peoples of Europe and the whole world, should learn the documentary truth about the plans forged in secret by the financiers and industrialists together with their parliamentary and diplomatic agents. The peoples of Europe have paid for the right to this truth with countless sacrifices and universal economic desolation.

The abolition of secret diplomacy is the primary condition for an honest, popular, truly democratic foreign policy. The Soviet Government regards it as its duty to carry out such a policy in practice...The workers’ and peasants’ Government abolishes secret diplomacy and its intrigues, codes, and lies. We have nothing to hide.”⁸

What happened now that they had abandoned “honest foreign policy” and the “cancellation of secret diplomacy” and turned to secret diplomacy? What foreign policy did Trotsky turn to? Trotsky was not able realize his mistake, or recognize that he was turning his back on the principles and doctrines that he had once prided himself on, such as the transparency during the Brest-Litovsk agreement.

⁸ [Statement by Trotsky on the publication of the secret treaties.](#)

Trotsky and the Civil War

In their programme, the Bolsheviks spoke of the necessity of disbanding the bourgeois army and assembling the Red Guard as a means of defending the dictatorship of the proletariat. They had established criteria for the Red Guard to respond to the needs of the proletariat. For this purpose, the body of the Red Guard should be formed by the workers and the lower levels of the peasants, so that training in the Red Guard was based on class solidarity and socialist consciousness under the supervision of political commissars who were trusted members of the Communist Party.

In this regard, the Red Guards, recruited from the proletariat and poor peasants with class consciousness, were intended to take leadership of the Red Army, and the garrison training period would be reduced to the minimum possible time. In addition, the Red Guard was meant to maintain its close relationship with the workers, labour committees and organizations of poor peasants and society. The Red Guard was supposed to allow the use of former military experts only under conditions. But the first experience of the Red Guards of the workers' councils after the Paris Commune certainly had shortcomings and deficiencies in various forms.

In 1918, with the start of the imperialist governments' hostile operations against the Soviets, which were carried out in order to contain the October Revolution and prevent its spread, the continuation of the Soviet government's political life faced a serious threat. The civil war indicated that if the victories of the October Revolution were not strengthened by the world revolution, the danger of the destruction of the October Revolution would be serious. But the world revolution could not make serious progress outside of Russia, so the Russian proletariat had to fight essentially

alone against the attacks of the White counter-revolution and its imperialist supporters.

One of the most important and brilliant performances of Trotsky is related to this period between 1918 and 1920 when he was the commissar of war. Although Trotsky lacked military experience, by organizing the Red Army and during the three years of civil war, he was able to break the internal counter-revolutionary invasion as well as the one by 14 imperialist countries. At this point, the victories of the Red Army, by crushing the White Army, stabilized the position of the young government of the Soviets and raised its prestige at the global level. Trotsky's abilities and his genius in leading the Red Army earned him tremendous credit both in Russia and internationally.

The siege of the young Soviet government by the imperialist countries, combined with the imposition of civil war and the non-intervention of the workers of other countries, put the Red Army in a very difficult situation. At this point, Trotsky advocated the use of former tsarist officers in the Red Army because of their experience in military affairs, so that the conditional usage of former tsarist officers, which was previously a standard, lost its meaning in practice. In response to this dilemma, the party proposed to appoint elected political commissars and it was decided that the army would not be controlled by military cadres, but by military political commissars.

During the imperialist World War I, the Bolsheviks rejected militarism and encouraged soldiers to disobey military discipline and hierarchy. This attitude derived from the fact that the Bolsheviks saw the army as a tool for defending the interests of the class enemy. But during the civil war, when Trotsky proposed that the army needed formal hierarchy and discipline, he was essentially violating one of his basic principles. Trotsky then decreed the implementation of the conscription system.

The communist left was against having a standing army with military hierarchy like the bourgeois armies and insisted on the use of the Red Guard. A standing army involved a fighting force that was separated from society, artificially isolated and composed of professional forces, which contradicted the nature of the revolution. In order to defend the ideals of the proletarian revolution, the Red Guard could be based on production units, factories and rural communities. The members of the Red Guard were involved in social production and in the metabolism of society, and military activity was only part of their duties. In the case of a threat, the Red Guard could expand by mobilizing workers and poor peasants and then return to its core once the danger was removed.

Militarily, the heroic resistance of the Russian workers was victorious, but politically, when the Russian proletariat emerged from the civil war, it was exhausted and scattered, having suffered heavy casualties, and most importantly, it had essentially lost control over the Soviets. Enthusiasm for military victories hastened the decline of the political power of the working class with the continuous militarization of social and economic life. The accumulation of power in the upper ranks of the government apparatus made it possible for military campaigns to be pursued in a ruthless and effective manner, but this issue further weakened the real strongholds of the revolution, such as mass-unifying organs. In a general analogy, the moral force of the Red Guard was the creator of modern man, but the classical army, which is run by evil men, requires the power of a monster. This alienation and bureaucratization of the Soviet regime that happened in this period was supposed to be compensated by the return of the world revolution after 1921.

Trotsky and War Communism

Years of imperialist war, revolution and then civil war destroyed the Russian economy and the social fabric of the society, and its infrastructure was torn apart. After the end of the civil war, coal production fell to less than one tenth and iron and steel production to one twentieth of the pre-war rates. The production of consumer goods decreased by a quarter and agriculture was also decimated. Labour groups were sent to the villages to confiscate food for the army and the city. In order to cover its expenses, the government began indiscriminately printing banknotes. Money became so worthless that they had to pay a part of the workers' wages with goods, and workers often exchanged goods for food.

The new conditions were, on the one hand, the result of the civil war that the imperialists imposed on the young government of the Soviets, and on the other, the result of the isolation of the October Revolution and the new Soviet government. The October Revolution and the Soviet government needed the cooperation of the working class of other countries.

Following the confiscation of the villagers' food, the peasants cultivated only as much as they needed to keep their families alive. Because they did not die of hunger, the workers moved to the villages and the cities became empty of people. The hungry workers stole part of their produced goods to exchange for food in the black market, which in turn grew cancerous. Food confiscation, as well as the prohibition of private trade, payment of workers' wages with goods, etc., could not last for a long time. Society was literally collapsing.

During the civil war, due to the necessity of unity of action against the foreign enemy, the discussions within the Bolshevik Party were essentially closed. In such a situation, the Bolshevik

leaders tried to end the chaos and economic disorder and had to resort to solutions that they had previously condemned. In the speech entitled “Urgent Tasks of the Soviet Regime” that he presented to the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks, Lenin spoke about the necessity of protecting the capital owners and experts under the supervision of the proletarian government and he also stated that workers should also follow Taylor’s scientific system and one-man management in factories. This was after Lenin had previously condemned Taylor’s system⁹ as the enslavement of man by machine.

To prevent the collapse of society and rebuild its ruins, the Bolsheviks adopted the policy of war communism. As the commander of the Red Army during the civil war, which had achieved extraordinary success, Trotsky not only became a supporter of using the methods of war communism, but in fact he himself became one of the main architects of the policy. Referring to his successes in the civil war, Trotsky emphasized that these experiences could be utilized on the labour front as well, and accordingly, for the reconstruction of Russia, he developed and applied the “militarization of labour” for the entire working class. Trotsky argued that workers cannot be lured to the workplace with the promise of a better life, so should be sent to work through the method of forced conscription.

Trotsky emphasized that working is the duty of every citizen of the society and declared “Anyone who does not work cannot eat”. He tried to make military discipline in work into a culture, and for this reason, he introduced military terms and metaphors into economic and business affairs. Coercion at work is meaningless and unimaginable in communism, but Trotsky stated that during the

⁹ Taylorism.

transition from capitalism to socialism, it must be carried out to the highest degree.

The working class, which had been destroyed due to social conditions, had become the mass of workers, and through the black market and small thefts had begun to drown in peasant life and so on. Trotsky wanted a large part of it placed under forced conscription. The Bolsheviks controlled the workers' time, returned them to their workplaces and put them to work with complete militarism. Trotsky first formulated his views in theses describing "the transition from war to peace"¹⁰ and defended them at the ninth party congress in March–April 1920. He said:

"The working masses cannot be wandering all over Russia. They must be thrown here and there, appointed, commanded, just like soldiers"¹¹

Trotsky pressured the congress to pass disciplinary measures in the workplace. He demanded that runaways should be sent to penal battalions or forced labour camps and evading work should be considered a crime. He said:

"Deserters from the labour front are to be punished like deserters from the Red Army."¹²

The issue of trade unions in Russia may seem somewhat strange, because the establishment of new forms of workers' self-organization such as factory committees, councils, etc., effectively made the necessity of forming trade unions obsolete. The reason that trade unions started at a later date in Russia was to some extent an

¹⁰ *Pravda*, 16 December 1919.

¹¹ [Leon Trotsky](#)

¹² [Order by the Revolutionary War Council of the First Labour Army \(Order No.7\)](#)

expression of the backwardness of Russian capitalism at that time. The state apparatus was not sufficiently developed to recognize the value of trade unions as a means of deflecting the class struggle. Therefore, all the unions that were founded before the revolution and even during the 1917 revolution were somewhat independent from the government and had not yet been integrated into the capitalist system, so they cannot all be considered to have been organs of the enemy class.

The main problem for the government was how to curb the factory committees that had spread everywhere since February 1917 and defended the revolutionary and proletarian goals. How could they reduce their necessity, decrease their growing authority in the factories and finally annexe these committees to the trade unions? The latter were already integrated into the government and could be controlled. The party leadership considered these policies the best way for the revolutionary regime to overcome the economic chaos and rationalize the economy towards a social structure until the world revolution spread. Lenin clearly called this system “state capitalism”, through which the workers’ government was able to control the capitalist economy for the benefit of the revolution.

Trotsky knew that the trade unions were integrated into the government and tried to convince them to accept the militarization of work, but he went beyond this, emphasizing that the duty of trade unions is not to fight for better working conditions but to serve the government, so that it can advance its economic plans by exercising its power. He explained the duties of trade unions as follows:

“The young Socialist State requires trade unions, not for a struggle for better conditions of labour – that is the task of the social and State organizations as a whole – but to organize the working class for the ends of production, to educate, discipline, distribute, group, retain certain categories and

certain workers at their posts for fixed periods – in a word, hand in hand with the State to exercise their authority in order to lead the workers into the framework of a single economic plan.”¹³

Most trade unionists knew from experience that such advice would not be understandable to hungry workers. For them, it was not reasonable to accept turning the wheels of the economy by force and military command in a country where the working class held political power, and they did not consider it the right thing to do. Trotsky also went beyond this, placing transportation under the supervision of a war court and deposing and installing union leaders as government officials. The leaders of the unions who did not obey Trotsky were dismissed and Trotsky appointed new ones for the unions ones which listened to his orders and acted according to the economic interests of the government.

“Trotsky placed the railway men and the personnel of the repair workshops under martial law;...When the railwaymen’s trade union objections to his action, he dismissed its leaders and appointed others who were willing to do his bidding. He repeated this procedure in unions of other transport workers.”¹⁴

Trotsky had once said that the Soviet system was better than bourgeois parliamentarism. This is because in the council system, voters have the right to dismiss their previous representatives and elect new ones at any time, not only between two elections. For this reason, the councils would be able to reflect any change in the

¹³ *Terrorism and Communism* - Leon Trotsky

¹⁴ *The Prophet Armed* - Isaac Deutscher - pages 501 and 502

working masses exactly and immediately in a way that could not be done by any parliament. Apparently, those days had already passed.

Trotsky's dismissal and installation aroused Lenin's sensitivity and distanced him from Trotsky's behaviour. Lenin advised the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks that by blaming Trotsky's actions, they could prohibit his public comments about the relations between labour unions and the government.

In contrast, Trotsky argued that since forced labour had played a progressive role in earlier modes of production, such as Asiatic tyranny and classical slavery, if the workers' state could not use such methods on a large scale, this was merely sentimentalism. Trotsky was so immersed in militarism that he evaluated it as a special form of labour organization in the transition from capitalism to socialism. In this regard, he said:

“The foundations of the militarization of labour are those forms of State compulsion without which the replacement of capitalist economy by the Socialist will for ever remain an empty sound.”¹⁵

War communism was an inverted and at the same time painful caricature of the perspective of the transitional society. The withering of productive forces (lowering the standard of living, universalizing poverty, etc.) cannot be in the direction of socialism, but serves the social decay and destruction of productive resources. A transitional society (dictatorship of the proletariat) must be able to produce sufficient social wealth and the developed production must be able to provide enough goods (consumption value) and abundant services to the society that the productive forces can flourish and the context for the socialization of the means of production and the institutions of society can be prepared.

¹⁵ *Terrorism and Communism* - Leon Trotsky

Trotsky and the New Economic Policy

On the one hand, the policy of war communism could not save the Russian economy, which was in decline, and on the other, with the subsidence of the waves of the world revolution, the Russian proletariat found itself in isolation. In 1921, during the Third Congress of the Communist International, the absolute failure of the March operation in Germany was revealed, which caused the revolutionary wave that had started in October 1917 to fall from its peak. This issue made the Bolsheviks unable to count on the immediate help of the global proletariat. In such a situation, the proletariat in power, which could not receive immediate help, had to take the necessary economic measures for its own survival until the world revolution started again. The isolation of the Russian proletariat was the result of the international situation.

In response to such dilemmas, the New Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced at the 10th Congress of the Bolshevik Party in 1921, which Lenin presented as a strategic retreat, necessitated by the isolation and weakness of the Russian proletariat. Peasants who had supported the Bolsheviks against the old landowners during the civil war now demanded economic concessions. These were formulated in the NEP, which included cancelling the compulsory grain collection plans related to the period of war communism and replacing them with a goods tax. Private trade was allowed for the middle peasants. A mixed economy was created in which state-owned industries operated alongside private capitalist companies and even in competition with each other.

The ineffectiveness of war communism, of which Trotsky was one of the main founders, led him to demand the economic freedom for the peasants on the one hand, and on the other to believe that the working class should bear the main burden of industrial

reconstruction. Trotsky presented these proposals at the Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party and the Central Committee rejected them, but now almost the same ones had been proposed in the NEP, and it was quite natural for Trotsky to be one of the serious defenders of the New Economic Policy. Stalin along with Bukharin believed that Russia under the NEP would move towards socialism, albeit slowly, despite the grumbling and nagging of the peasants. Trotsky did not consider it impossible for Russia to shift towards socialism in absolute isolation, but he emphasized that this would require a dynamic and flourishing industry. With the implementation of the New Economic Policy (NEP), the proletariat lost its power and the economy, including the agricultural sector, advanced beyond state capitalism.

Lenin had no illusions about the economic nature of the NEP. He emphasized that the NEP was a form of state capitalism. Lenin had already argued in 1918 that state capitalism was a centralized and developed type of bourgeois economy that could be a step forward and a move towards socialism for backward economies like medieval Russia. Lenin returned with the same theme in his speech to the congress in 1922. He stressed that a fundamental distinction should be made between state capitalism under the rule of the reactionary bourgeoisie and state capitalism governed by the proletarian state:

“We must remember the fundamental thing that state capitalism in the form we have here is not dealt with in any theory, or in any books, for the simple reason that all the usual concepts connected with this term are associated with bourgeois rule in capitalist society. Our society is one which has left the rails of capitalism, but has not yet got on to new rails. The state in this society is not ruled by the bourgeoisie, but by the proletariat. We refuse to understand that when we

say 'state' we mean ourselves, the proletariat, the vanguard of the working class. State capitalism is capitalism which we shall be able to restrain, and the limits of which we shall be able to fix. This state capitalism is connected with the state, and the state is the workers, the advanced section of the workers, the vanguard. We are the state.”¹⁶

The statement that “we are the state” suggests that Lenin had lost the distinction between the proletariat and the Communist Party and indicates substitutionism. Lenin had previously warned that the interests of the proletariat were not always the same as those of the state. Despite all this, Lenin was aware of the real limitations and consequences of proletarian state capitalism, as well as its control. Lenin argued that the state machine was not directed by the proletariat but by another hand (capitalism), stating in his speech:

“Never before in history has there been a situation in which the proletariat, the revolutionary vanguard, possessed sufficient political power and had state capitalism existing along side it. The whole question turns on our understanding that this is the capitalism that we can and must permit, that we can and must confine within certain bounds; for this capitalism is essential for the broad masses of the peasantry and for private capital, which must trade in such a way as to satisfy the needs of the peasantry. We must organise things in such a way as to make possible the customary operation of capitalist economy and capitalist exchange, because this is essential for the people. Without it, existence is impossible. All the rest is not an absolutely vital matter to this camp. They can resign themselves to all that. You Communists, you

¹⁶ [Speech in the eleventh congress of the R.C.P.](#)

workers, you, the politically enlightened section of the proletariat, which undertook to administer the state, must be able to arrange it so that the state, which you have taken into your hands, shall function the way you want it to. Well, we have lived through a year, the state is in our hands; but has it operated the New Economic Policy in the way we wanted in this past year? No. But we refuse to admit that it did not operate in the way we wanted. How did it operate? The machine refused to obey the hand that guided it. It was like a car that was going not in the direction the driver desired, but in the direction someone else desired; as if it were being driven by some mysterious, lawless hand, God knows whose, perhaps of a profiteer, or of a private capitalist, or of both. Be that as it may, the car is not going quite in the direction the man at the wheel imagines, and often it goes in an altogether different direction.”¹⁷

As you can see, according to Lenin’s statements, the government was not driven by the communists, nor by the proletariat, but by another force, and not in the direction of the Bolsheviks and the proletariat, but in the opposite one. That great force was world capitalism, which undeniably determined the course of the movement of “proletarian state capitalism” and the Russian economy. However, the answers provided by the Bolsheviks were not compatible with the nature of the issue. The Bolsheviks did not put the proletarian solution to such a problem, i.e., the political revival of Soviets and other class bodies, on the agenda.

Trotsky was no longer the defender of workers’ democracy, nor of the workers’ councils, which he was once at the head of, but

¹⁷ [Speech in the eleventh congress of the R.C.P.](#)

he defended actions aimed at weakening the power of the proletariat. One of these was his defence of the advantages of one-man management. Trotsky himself admitted that one-man management was the biggest blow to the independence of the class. However, he himself became one of the defenders of such a policy and said in this regard:

“We are told that the transference of factories to single directors instead of to a board is a crime against the working class and the Socialist revolution...The first who must plead guilty in the face of the Socialist revolution is our Party Congress, which expressed itself in favour of the principle of one-man management in the administration of industry, and above all in the lowest grades, in the factories and plants. It would be the greatest possible mistake, however, to consider this decision as a blow to the independence of the working class.”¹⁸

The important point is that Trotsky considered one-man management not a product of special circumstances and a short-term response to the problems caused by the civil war, but a correct policy in the field of economic management. Trotsky believed that if the civil war had not destroyed the economic organizations, they would have applied one-man management much earlier and far more easily in the field of economic management. He stated:

“I consider that if the civil war had not plundered our economic organs of all that was strongest, most independent, most endowed with initiative, we should undoubtedly have entered the path of one-man management in the sphere of

¹⁸ *Terrorism and Communism* - Leon Trotsky

economic administration much sooner, and much less painfully.”¹⁹

Apart from one-man management, Trotsky spoke about the progressive aspects of Taylor’s system. He favoured socialist competition, and in other words, he believed that Taylor’s system could be used wisely in the Soviet government. This was despite the fact that Taylor’s system had once been considered the cause of workers’ slavery.

¹⁹ Idem.

Trotsky and the World Revolution

“This is the essential and enduring in Bolshevik policy. In this sense theirs is the immortal historical service of having marched at the head of the international proletariat with the conquest of political power and the practical placing of the problem of the realization of socialism, and of having advanced mightily the settlement of the score between capital and labour in the entire world. In Russia, the problem could only be posed. It could not be solved in Russia. And in this sense, the future everywhere belongs to ‘Bolshevism.’”²⁰

The communist revolution is a global one. In other words, the communist revolution is like a political earthquake, the centre of which can be a single country or multiple ones, but the condition of its victory is spreading the waves of this political earthquake to other places and nations. Otherwise, like the October Revolution, despite the sacrifices of the Russian proletariat, the revolution will be isolated and eventually decline. Socialist relations of production are only possible on a global scale and socialist islands cannot be formed within the capitalist system.

In his farewell letter to the Swiss workers, Lenin argued that the idea of a revolutionary class in Russia that was isolated from other European workers, was wholly alien and stressed that these conditions would probably be very short-lived. In other words, the workers in Europe would revolutionize. He wrote:

“To the Russian proletariat has fallen the great honour of *beginning* the series of revolutions which the imperialist

²⁰ *The Russian Revolution - Rosa Luxemburg*

war has made an objective inevitability. But the idea that the Russian proletariat is the chosen revolutionary proletariat among the workers of the world is absolutely alien to us... It is not its special qualities, but rather the special conjuncture of historical circumstances that *for a certain, perhaps very short, time* has made the proletariat of Russia the vanguard of the revolutionary proletariat of the whole world.”²¹

Upon his return from exile in April 1917, as soon as he entered Petrograd, Lenin concluded his famous speech with the slogan “Long live the world socialist revolution” and said:

“Dear comrades, soldiers, sailors and workers! I am very pleased to see the emblem of the victory of the Russian revolution on your faces. I salute you, the leaders of the world proletarian army... Long live the world socialist revolution!”

At that time, the world revolution was the dominant theory in the labour and communist movement, and the exact same vision was proposed by other revolutionaries of that time, such as Trotsky, Pannekoek, Gorter, Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. None of these revolutionaries believed that the revolution was occurring only in Russia, but on the contrary, they all hoped for the global nature of the communist revolution and the progress of the world revolution, especially the victory of the German one. Soviet power was established in Hungary and Southern Germany. With the beginning of the signs of the breaking of the wave of world revolution, Trotsky sank more deeply into his ambiguities. In the following sections, we will examine Trotsky’s intellectual confusion in this context.

²¹ Farewell Letter to the Swiss Workers - Lenin

Trotsky and the Transition Period

According to Marxism, the concepts of socialism and communism are the same. In other words, they describe a society in which social (not state) ownership prevails. The lack of accuracy on this point has caused socialism and communism to be described as two separate eras. When Marx discusses the mode of production after capitalism, he mentions the word socialism, and when he talks about the society after capitalism, he refers to a communist one. In other words, the word socialism refers to the mode of production and the term communism to society. These are not two societies or modes of production separate from each other.

The origin of the discussion of the transition period derives from the Second International and the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. In other words, the areas of ambiguity related to the concept of socialism go back to the Second International, especially after the death of Engels, when reformism grew greatly and provided the basis for the influence of bourgeois ideas within the labour movement. In the Second International, there was a broad movement that viewed private property as equivalent to that of individual capitalists, which they considered to be the only form of private property. Another ambiguity of the Second International was the perception of two separate and different societies in terms of socialism and communism, as mentioned above. This ambiguity was later turned into a principle by Stalinism. At this stage, capitalism had not yet entered the era of imperialism, and huge trusts and cartels had no concept of collective ownership (owned by a large number of capitalists). It was in such a context that state ownership was considered equivalent to social ownership and the destruction of capitalism, as a result of which state ownership would induce the end of the capitalist mode of production. Accordingly,

instead of the mode of production determining the nature of ownership, it is the opposite of these ownership relations that determine the mode of production.

Such an attitude shows Trotsky's complete break from Marxism and the critique of Marxist political economy. As a result, Trotsky in his intellectual confusion discussed the coexistence of the socialist mode of production with the bourgeois distribution method, which is meaningless from the Marxist point of view and is in complete contradiction to the Marxist concept. Trotsky wrote:

“The state assumes directly and from the very beginning a dual character: socialistic, insofar as it defends social property in the means of production; bourgeois, insofar as the distribution of life's goods is carried out with a capitalistic measure of value and all the consequences ensuing therefrom.”²²

Contrary to Trotsky, Marx believed that distribution is determined by production and the mode of distribution by that of production, and that the former cannot be separated from the latter. In other words, if the mode of production is socialist, then so is the mode of distribution. Marx wrote:

“The relations and modes of distribution thus appear merely as the obverse of the agents of production. An individual who participates in production in the form of wage labour shares in the products, in the results of production, in the form of wages. The structure [Gliederung] of distribution is completely determined by the structure of production. Distribution is itself a product of production, not only in its object, in that only the results of production can be distributed,

²² *The Revolution Betrayed* – Leon Trotsky - page 31

but also in its form, in that the specific kind of participation in production determines the specific forms of distribution, i.e. the pattern of participation in distribution.”²³

From the Marxist perspective, due to its internal contradictions, the capitalist society cannot be a permanent and eternal production system, so the only solution is the communist revolution by the proletariat, which leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat. After the victory of the working class, wage slavery still exists, the mode of production is still capitalist, the society is class-based, and there is a special type of “state” in the society. But at the same time, the socialization of the means of production and society’s institutions starts step by step. While socialization is gradually progressing, at the same time, the non-social sector is slowly decreasing and as a result, the state is getting smaller every day. When the whole society becomes socialized, then the state has deteriorated and we enter a socialist society.

After the capitalist system, we will see only one type of mode of production, the socialist one. In socialism, the mode of production is socialist, as in a communist society. The socialist mode of production means that there is no class and therefore there is no class struggle, and as a result there cannot be a state. In the early stages of communism (socialism), society still has the effects of capitalism and the distinction between manual and intellectual work has not completely disappeared. In the early stage of communism (socialism) society relations are “fair”; if you don’t work, you receive nothing. This is what Marx called “bourgeois rights” in a communist (socialist) society. Therefore, the motto of the first stage of the communist (socialist) society is, “To each according to his work” in terms of the material blessings of the

²³ *Grundrisse*, page 28 - Marx

society. “Socialist” justice is in contradiction to the concept of communism in a communist society. Therefore, in a communist society, equal rights must be transformed into unequal ones, so that a communist concept can be found and the slogan “from each according to his ability and to each according to his needs” makes sense.

Some of Trotsky’s supporters, including Mandel, have claimed that Trotsky also had a correct Marxist understanding of socialism and communism regarding the transitional period (the dictatorship of the proletariat). In other words, the same description we gave of the period of transition, socialism and communism. By referring to Trotsky’s works, we will show that the Trotskyists’ claim is not true and that Trotsky had confused opinions in this area.

Trotsky evaluated the militarization of work, regardless of the specific conditions imposed on the society, as a permanent and inevitable method of organizing and disciplining the workforce during the transition from capitalism to socialism. The militarization of the labour force was the result of special conditions that were imposed on the society. On the one hand, with the siege of the imperialists and the imposition of civil war by the White Army, the society faced many problems, and on the other, with the subsidence of the wave of the world revolution, the Bolsheviks were forced to resort to war communism. All these were conditions imposed on society. Trotsky wrote:

“Militarization of labour, in the root sense indicated by me, is not the invention of individual politicians or an invention of our War Department, but represents the inevitable method of organization and disciplining of labour-power during the period of transition from capitalism to Socialism.”²⁴

²⁴ *Terrorism and Communism* - Leon Trotsky


Trotsky goes even further than this, evaluating the suffocation and control of the members of the society as a necessity of the socialist dictatorship. We assume that what Trotsky means by “socialist dictatorship” is the dictatorship of the proletariat, as otherwise the term is meaningless in socialism. Trotsky speaks of a degree of coercion during the transition that has so far only been exercised by the military. In Trotsky’s view, the person who is supposed to build socialism is reduced to the level of a conscript in forced labour. The man who has reached that level of consciousness and prepared the ground for the socialist one to build a socialist society is alien to Trotsky. Trotsky wrote:

“Repression for the attainment of economic ends is a necessary weapon of the Socialist dictatorship... No organization except the army has ever controlled man with such severe compulsion as does the State organization of the working class in the most difficult period of transition. It is just for this reason that we speak of the militarization of labour.”²⁵

Trotsky continued his intellectual confusion and at the height of his misguided speech claimed that in the communist era, not only bourgeois law but even the bourgeois state would remain, but without the bourgeoisie. Trotsky wrote:

“It follows that under Communism not only will bourgeois law survive for a certain time, but also even a bourgeois state without the bourgeoisie!”²⁶

²⁵ As above.

²⁶ Trotsky was apparently referring to and quoting Lenin in the book *The Revolution Betrayed* on page 31, but irresponsibly did not indicate the 

Are Trotsky's heirs able to explain which bourgeois laws will survive under communism? Can the followers of Trotsky explain how a bourgeois state is possible without the bourgeoisie in a communist society? Isn't a communist society (even a socialist society) a classless one? And how will there be a state in a society that does not have classes? Therefore, the statements of Trotskyists that Trotsky had a Marxist understanding of the nature and concept of the transitional period, socialism and communism are nothing more than demagoguery.

source of his quote. Our efforts to find the original source of Trotsky's citation of Lenin have been unsuccessful. Since Trotsky proposed and defended this idea, it is reasonable to evaluate Trotsky's position.

Trotsky and the Thesis of Socialism in One Country

For Marx, Engels and the communist movement, the capitalist system is a global one, and accordingly, the proletariat is also a global class. As a result, the answer, or in other words, the solution of the proletariat, was logically universal, as is still the case today. This issue was raised in a more critical way during the wave of revolutions because the Bolsheviks and Lenin at the head knew very well that without the victory in other capitalist countries, especially in Germany where the revolution had started, the one in Russia would remain isolated. Therefore, they were at least waiting for a labour revolution in several European industrial countries, and Lenin emphasized that the European revolution was important for humanity.

In fact, without a doubt, the communist movement, including the Bolsheviks, believed socialism to be not a national issue, but a global one. The establishment of the Third International (Comintern), as the World Party of Socialist Revolution, was a concrete manifestation of such a vision. The victory of socialism on a global scale was an established idea in the communist movement before the wave of world revolution broke. The beginning of the process of defeating this wave and, as a result, the subsidence of the class struggle led to the growth of the counter-revolution, and it was in such a context that the anti-Marxist thesis “socialism in one country” was proposed.

Trotskyists claim that Trotsky was a staunch critic of the anti-Marxist thesis of “socialism in one country” and fought against it throughout his life. But this is not true, and Trotsky not only had doubts in this field, but sometimes he lost the Marxist perspective and appeared as a defender of “socialism in one country”. During the 14th congress in December 1925, Stalin together with Bukharin

proposed that under the NEP economy, despite the grumbling of the peasants, Russia would move towards socialism. Zinoviev and Kamenev took a position as opponents of “socialism in one country”. At this point, Trotsky underestimated the danger of Stalin, so he remained silent and in accord with him. Not only did Trotsky not oppose “socialism in one country”, but he also believed in the establishment of dynamic industry in this field. In a letter to the plenum of the Central Committee of the Russian Bolshevik Party, Trotsky, while rejecting the universal concept of socialism, explicitly accepted the possibility of building socialism in one country and wrote:

“I reject the statements and allusions to my “pessimistic” theory regarding the progress of building socialism in the conditions of postponing the revolution in the West”.²⁷

Regarding the socialist country, the positions of Trotsky and Stalin in the following years were not fundamentally different, although at this point Trotsky was in the opposition and in exile. Trotsky even mentioned the Soviet Union as a socialist country and stated:

“Thus the strength of the bureaucracy, both domestic and international, is in inverse proportion to the strength of the Soviet Union as a socialist state and a fighting base of the proletarian revolution. However, that is only one side of the medal. There is another.”²⁸

²⁷ Letter to the plenum of the Central Committee of the Russian Bolshevik Party, 15 January 1925

²⁸ *The Revolution Betrayed* - The League of Nations and the Communist International - Trotsky

Trotsky's ambiguities and even his acceptance regarding the anti-Marxist thesis of "socialism in one country" were at times caused by his intellectual confusion relating to the concept of socialism. Like the Stalinists, Trotsky considered communism and socialism to be two separate societies and believed that only in the era of socialism would the gradual decline of the state and money begin. The interpretation of Trotsky's statement is that a socialist society is a class one and therefore the state will exist. Because it is a class society, there will be wage labour and surplus value will be produced. Trotsky wrote about the beginning of the gradual decline of the state and money during the socialist era:

"In a communist society, the state and money will disappear. Their gradual dying away ought consequently to begin under socialism."²⁹

The socialist revolution and the establishment of the dictatorship of the working class would be the route to the gradual deterioration of the state and money. Trotsky estimated the growth of the bureaucracy not because of the isolation of the October Revolution and, as a result, the impossibility of building socialism in a country, but because of the low rate of growth of the productive forces or, in Trotsky's language, "the poverty of the Soviet Union". Trotsky's comment meant that if the revolution took place in an advanced country like Britain, where the level of growth of productive forces was high and not poor, the bureaucracy would not feel the hard and heavy rope around its neck. Trotsky wrote:

²⁹ As source 28.

“It is exactly because of its poverty that the Soviet society has hung around its neck the very costly bureaucracy.”³⁰

Internationalists have declared that the advancement of the October Revolution as part of the world revolution required the victory of the German one, because the nature of the socialist (communist) revolution is global. The expansion and dependence of the October Revolution based on the victory of the German one was not due to the low growth rate of Russia’s productive forces in 1917, but to the global nature of the communist revolution. Marxists believe that capitalism is a global system and in the era of the decline of capitalism, commodity relations have penetrated to the most remote parts of the world. Marxists derive the nature of their communist revolution not from the special relations of a particular country, but from the global state and conditions of capitalism, and from the growth of productive forces at the global level.

³⁰ As source 28.

Trotsky and Substitutionism

In the early 20th century, there were ambiguities within the social democracy regarding the growing power of the party of the working class instead of the working class itself, which at that time had its roots in parliamentarism. Even these ambiguities had their effects on the empowerment of the working class and the radical movements of social democracy that defended the position of the proletariat and wanted the proletariat to gain political power through social revolution. Following the victory of the October Revolution, the imperialist powers attacked it through the White Army to suppress it. Along with the subsidence of the wave of the world revolution, the power of the proletarian organs (workers' councils) was greatly reduced. The communist left and other critics hoped that this was a temporary issue and that after the end of the civil war, the workers' councils would be revived as bodies of proletarian power.

Although most Bolshevik leaders were ambivalent about "substitutionism", Trotsky unfortunately abandoned his correct arguments in 1905 and 1917 that workers' councils were organs of proletarian power and instead proposed the idea of a party dictatorship. Trotsky wrote:

"We have more than once been accused of having substituted for the dictatorship of the Soviets the dictatorship of our party. Yet it can be said with complete justice that the dictatorship of the Soviets became possible only by means of the dictatorship of the party. It is thanks to the clarity of its theoretical vision and its strong revolutionary organization that the party has afforded to the Soviets the possibility of becoming transformed from shapeless parliaments of labour into the apparatus of the supremacy of labour. In this

“substitution” of the power of the party for the power of the working class there is nothing accidental, and in reality there is no substitution at all. The Communists express the fundamental interests of the working class. It is quite natural that, in the period in which history brings up those interests, in all their magnitude, on to the order of the day, the Communists have become the recognized representatives of the working class as a whole.”³¹

The party dictatorship desired by Trotsky was miles away from his explanation of the councils as a tool and organ of proletarian power that he proposed in 1905 and 1917. Trotsky had suggested that the councils were something greater and higher than the parliamentary forms. The theory of party dictatorship has been an unconscious concession to bourgeois parliamentarism rather than a theory of labour authority. Here the Soviets had fallen into the lowest form of parliamentarism, an appendage of party dictatorship. Trotsky wanted special historical rights for the party of the working class to exercise its dictatorship even if it violated workers’ democracy. Trotsky wrote:

“As if the party were not entitled to assert its dictatorship even if that dictatorship temporarily clashed with the passing moods of the workers; democracy.”³²

Rights are bourgeois concepts, and Trotsky, who once emphasized workers’ democracy and proletarian power against rights, now stood against them. It was such an attitude that made Trotsky play an active role in suppressing proletarian and critical movements, which will be discussed in the following sections.

³¹ *Terrorism and Communism - Chapter 7 - Leon Trotsky*

³² *The Prophet Armed* – Isaac Deutscher - page 509

Trotsky and the Decline of Capitalism

Capitalism is only a specific historical form of social production. Before capitalism, there were other types of production methods with different levels of development within the productive forces. The origin of this process goes back to the time when humans tried to constantly grow and develop productive forces in order for natural life to survive. No social system falls apart during its flourishing period, unless it is replaced by a higher social system during its decline. This issue is also true for the capitalist system. The history of capitalist production can be divided into two stages.

The first is the time when the bourgeoisie played a revolutionary role and relations of production allowed the growth of production forces. The second is the phase when capitalism has entered its period of decline. This stage of imperialism is the era of the rottenness of capitalism. In the age of imperialism, the bourgeois class is an anti-revolutionary and reactionary one, and therefore capitalist relations create an obstacle in the way of the progress of productive forces.

The main characteristic of decadent capitalism, i.e., the imperialist era, is the cycle of crisis, war and reconstruction. World War I indicated that capitalism had entered the age of its decline and resorted to a world war as its last solution for the crisis it was involved in. In the stage of capitalist decline, capitalist relations of production are shackles on the hands and feet of the growth and development of productive forces. It is only at this stage that the material conditions are prepared for a social revolution in the current era of “communist revolution”.

The important point is that the historical decline of capitalism does not mean the end of the growth of productive forces, but that in the era of capitalist decline it is much more destructive. The

period of the decline of capitalism does not mean the cessation of the growth of productive forces, because capitalism cannot function without accumulation.

The late development of capitalism in Russia, compared to Britain, Germany, and the Netherlands, etc., meant that the Russian proletariat did not have the chance to fight for reforms, parliamentary rights, or trade unions, or gain experience from the destructive dangers of reformism. On the other hand, the Russian proletariat was very militant, focused and young, and with the rise of the wave of world revolution, it was in the front line. This issue made the Bolsheviks unable to reach the conclusion that with capitalism entering its decadent era in World War I, the period of reformist tactics had ended forever.

The controversy that arose in the Communist International after 1920 was due to the fact that the Bolsheviks did not fully understand the requirements of the new conditions. If the world revolution won, the Bolsheviks could overcome their weaknesses. Bolshevism began to metamorphose into social democracy when the world revolution was waning and the Russian proletariat was paralyzingly isolated in the Russian bastion. The further the wave of the world revolution receded, the more the mistakes and contradictions of the Bolsheviks increased, the culmination of which was the victory of the counter-revolution with the anti-Marxist thesis of “socialism in one country”, which also represented the death of the Communist International.

As one of the leaders of the Bolsheviks, Trotsky not only shared the uncertainty of the Bolsheviks that the era of reformist tactics has ended forever, but he was more uncertain about some issues than others. Trotsky was not able to understand the changes of capitalism, and as a result, he could not have a correct understanding of its decline.

Trotsky failed to realize that the form of organization of the working class is determined not by that class, but by the growth and development of capitalism. In the era of prosperity and development of capitalism, trade unions were schools for struggle and struggle was in turn a school for communism, and reforms were an opportunity for the working class to achieve a relative improvement of living conditions in the capitalist society. Capitalist society could become more humane through everyday struggles. The outbreak of World War I, which represented the entry of capitalism into its decline, led to the integration of labour unions into the capitalist state. The mobilization of workers by trade unions to the imperialist war, World War I, indicated that the trade unions were integrated into the capitalist state and that they were not labour organizations, but capitalist institutions in the workplace. This is how Trotsky outlined this issue:

“The primary slogan for this struggle is: *complete and unconditional independence of the trade unions in relation to the capitalist state*. This means a struggle to turn the trade unions into the organs of the broad exploited masses and not the organs of a labour aristocracy. The second slogan is: *trade union democracy*.”³³

Although the name of Trotsky’s article was “Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay”, he apparently still remained in the age of capitalist prosperity in his attitude and continued to describe unions and syndicates as mass organs of the working class. Trotsky stated that not only had the importance of the activity in the trade unions not decreased, but even this activity had somehow become a revolutionary one. He wrote:

³³ *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay* - Leon Trotsky

“From what has been said it follows quite clearly that, in spite of the progressive degeneration of trade unions and their growing together with the imperialist state, the work within the trade unions not only does not lose any of its importance but remains as before and becomes in a certain sense even more important work than ever for every revolutionary party. The matter at issue is essentially the struggle for influence over the working class.”³⁴

Trotsky personally played an important role in the workers’ councils in 1905 and 1917 and consequently had valuable experience in relation to workers’ councils. We have already seen that Trotsky replaced the party dictatorship with the dictatorship of the proletariat (dictatorship through workers’ councils). By abandoning this latter idea, Trotsky continued his intellectual ambiguities and assigned the task of overthrowing capitalism to the trade unions, considering them the organs of the workers’ revolution, and wrote:

“Does this mean that in the epoch of imperialism independent trade unions are generally impossible? It would be fundamentally incorrect to pose the question this way. Impossible are the independent or semi-independent reformist trade unions. Wholly possible are revolutionary trade unions which not only are not stockholders of imperialist policy but which set as their task the direct overthrow of the rule of capitalism. In the epoch of imperialist decay the trade unions can be really independent only to the extent that they are

³⁴ *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay* - Leon Trotsky

conscious of being, in action, the organs of proletarian revolution.”³⁵

Unfortunately, Trotsky’s ambiguities and intellectual confusion in relation to labour unions caused his heirs to work in and serve anti-labour unions, albeit with a critical stance. Finally, the performance of the Trotskyists integrated them into the capitalist state. Of course, the integration of the Trotskyists into the left wing of capital, throwing dirt in the eyes of the working class, was also considered a form of labour and proletarian activity. Trotsky explained the positions of the communist left in relation to the trade unions, which, in the era of the decline of capitalism, meant that the trade unions had been integrated into the capitalist state. They could no longer be useful for the working class and were a tool in the hands of the state. He described this as a “refutation of the preachments of those ultra-left doctrinaires” and wrote:

“In the struggle for partial and transitional demands, the workers now more than ever before need mass organizations, principally trade unions. The powerful growth of trade unionism in France and the United States is the best refutation of the preachments of those ultra-left doctrinaires who have been teaching that trade unions have ‘outlived their usefulness’.”³⁶

Trotsky went further and declared in the transitional plan that was supposed to be the world revolution programme that separating oneself from the trade unions was a betrayal of the revolution and those that do such a thing could become members of the Fourth International. The “principle” that Trotsky emphasized was an

³⁵ *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay* - Leon Trotsky

³⁶ *Transitional Program* – Leon Trotsky - page 9

expression of his intellectual turmoil and distance from Marxism, and the revolution he was looking for did not have the slightest resemblance to the communist revolution. Trotsky claimed:

“It is necessary to establish this firm rule: self-isolation of the capitulationist variety from mass trade unions, which is tantamount to a betrayal of the revolution, is incompatible with membership in the Fourth International.”³⁷

Trotsky was not able to understand that it is only in a socialist society, in a classless one, that the exploitation of man by others will be abolished, and consequently the oppression of smaller ethnic groups will lose its meaning, and the free growth of each people’s group will enable the advancement of all of them. The defence of national liberation movements is actually the protection of one imperialist power against another using the term national or “socialist”. In the era of imperialism, the “national liberation war” is a part of the imperialist policy, and major and minor criminals were united in their differences. Trotskyists consider these (big and small or weak and strong imperialism, etc.) as the difference between bad and worse, and they ask the workers to support the progressive bourgeoisie against the reactionary type. Trotsky explained his doubts as follows:

“The policy of Bolshevism on the national question, having ensured the victory of the October revolution, also helped the Soviet Union to hold out afterward notwithstanding inner centrifugal forces and a hostile environment.”³⁸

³⁷ As source 36.

³⁸ *The Revolution Betrayed* - Nationality and culture - Trotsky

Trotsky's opinion that Bolshevism's policy towards the national question guaranteed the victory of the October Revolution questioned its proletarian nature. The national struggle, due to its nature, was trans-class and even the national bourgeoisie participated in it. The October Revolution succeeded because the Russian proletariat was very militant and centralized, and the Russian communists broke with social democracy in time and provided a better understanding of the revolutionary organization and party of the working class.

Apart from the theoretical dimension of ambiguities, this statement by Trotsky also contains objective errors. Bolshevism's incorrect policy towards the national question led to the separation of Finland and Ukraine, both of which later became important bastions of the White Army against proletarian power.

Trotsky's ambiguities continued and he talked about meeting the cultural needs of nations. Trotsky forgot that nation-building is a product of capitalism. When the bourgeoisie played a progressive role in society, the communists defended autonomy, that is, the formation of a national government. But when the bourgeoisie became a reactionary class, the task of the communists was not to defend the establishment of the national government, but to strive for the world revolution. The important point is that the cultural desire of groups of people is not equal to that of nations. These mistakes and ambiguities have caused Trotsky's heirs (Trotskyists) to turn the workers into cannon fodder in the imperialist disputes under the title of a "national liberation war" or "national movement" and their hands are stained with the blood of the working class. Trotsky wrote:

"The cultural demands of the nations aroused by the revolution require the widest possible autonomy."³⁹

³⁹ As source 38.

Lenin's struggle Against Bureaucracy

Despite the illness that plagued him at the end of his life and unfortunately ended it, Lenin realized what serious consequences the growth of the bureaucracy would have for Soviet power. Lenin sounded the alarm about the general process of the revolution and accordingly started the struggle against the bureaucracy. He never supported the abandonment of internationalism, which was also carried out very hastily after his death by the counter-revolutionaries. The important point is that during Lenin's struggle against the dangers of the revolution, Trotsky not only did not stand by Lenin, but remained silent and essentially collaborated with those in power. During the 11th Congress of the Russian Communist Party in 1922, Lenin openly declared that the state machine did not move as the Bolsheviks wanted, but turned in the direction of world capitalism, which was the opposite of what the Bolsheviks desired. Lenin said in his speech:

“But we refuse to admit that it did not operate in the way we wanted. How did it operate? The machine refused to obey the hand that guided it. It was like a car that was going not in the direction the driver desired, but in the direction someone else desired; as if it were being driven by some mysterious, lawless hand, God knows whose, perhaps of a profiteer, or of a private capitalist, or of both. Be that as it may, the car is not going quite in the direction the man at the wheel imagines, and often it goes in an altogether different direction.”⁴⁰

The first question that arises is, how does Trotsky describe the struggles of Lenin at this stage? The second is, what was Trotsky

⁴⁰ [Speech in the eleventh congress of the R.C.P.](#)

doing at the time when Lenin started the struggle against the counter-revolutionary power grab? And why didn't he accompany Lenin? Trotsky, not at that time but approximately 10 years later, explained Lenin's struggle as follows:

“Thus it would be no exaggeration to say that the last half year of Lenin's political life, between his convalescence and his second illness, was filled with a sharpening struggle against Stalin. Let us recall once more the principal dates. In September 1922 Lenin opened fire against the national policy of Stalin. In the first part of December he attacked Stalin on the question of the monopoly of foreign trade. On December 25 he wrote the first part of his testament. On December 30 he wrote his letter on the national question (the “bombshell”). On January 4, 1923, he added a postscript to his testament on the necessity of removing Stalin from his position as General Secretary. On January 23 he drew up against Stalin a heavy battery: the project of a Control Commission. In an article on March 2 he dealt Stalin a double blow, both as organizer of the Inspection and as General Secretary. On March 5 he wrote me on the subject of his memorandum on the national question: “If you would agree to undertake its defence, I could be at rest.” On that same day he for the first time openly joined forces with the irreconcilable Georgian enemies of Stalin, informing them in a special note that he was backing their cause “with all my heart” and was preparing for them documents against Stalin, Ordzhonikidze and Dzerzhinsky.”⁴¹

As mentioned above, Trotsky outlined some of the events that occurred while Lenin was moving towards the opposition. In 1926,

⁴¹ [On the Suppressed Testament of Lenin - Leon Trotsky](#)

Krupskaya,⁴² Lenin's wife, stated that if Lenin were still alive, he would probably be in prison. Although all signs indicate that Lenin had started the fight against the counter-revolution, he alone could not prevent its victory. In the 1930s, according to the objective limitations that the Russian Revolution was facing, *Bilan*, a publication of the communist left, evaluated Lenin's fate as one of the leaders of the October Revolution, like other opponents, and wrote:

"If he had survived, centrism would have had the same attitude towards Lenin as it took towards the numerous Bolsheviks who paid for their loyalty to the internationalist programme of October 1917 with deportation, prison and exile."⁴³

Two important events facilitated the advance of the Stalinists and enabled them to achieve their goals more easily: the failure of the German revolution in October 1923 and the death of Lenin in January 1924. The defeat of the German revolution in 1923 indicated that the wave of the world revolution had failed, and we should discuss the beginning of a black period of counter-revolution, not a temporary retreat. Lenin had realized to some extent the danger that threatened the October Revolution, and if he had lived longer, he would have had the chance to make the necessary conclusions. But Trotsky's collaboration with the ruling power and his silence during the critical years had detrimental effects, which are the subject of the next section.

⁴² After Lenin's death, Krupskaya was first a critic of the formation of the counter-revolution and for a short period in 1926, she joined the opposition. But later she "submitted" to Stalinism. This compliance can be better understood only by comprehending the process of making people "repent" by the counter-revolution.

⁴³ *Bilan* 18, April-May 1935

Trotsky and His Appeasement with the Ruling Power

Although Stalinism was the grave-digger of the proletarian October Revolution, Trotsky had an important role in anti-worker policies until he emerged in opposition in 1923. Trotsky played a dual role in the October Revolution and its subsequent events. He had an important part, on the one hand, in the labour councils during the October Revolution and the civil war, and on the other, in the most brutal anti-labour policies, such as the militarization of work, the crushing of the Petrograd strike movement, the Kronstadt uprising, and so on.

Trotsky was silent for a long time in the face of the rise of counter-revolution. He even entered into a tacit alliance with Stalin, because Trotsky considered Zinoviev, not Stalin, to be the main enemy. When his differences with other factions of the bureaucracy intensified, these were to a greater extent about how best to use the working class to build state capitalism and spread this model to other parts of the world, rather than the Marxist defence of the achievements of the October Revolution and presenting a Marxist solution.

In 1921, during the 10th Congress of the Bolshevik Party, Lenin proposed a resolution prohibiting factions, which was approved considering Russia's special conditions. The existence of the freedom of thought, of opinions on current or strategic issues, were expressions of intra-party democracy. The growth of the working class is not linear, so it will present different political tendencies and this issue is completely natural until the disappearance of social classes. Suppressing the right to form tendencies or even factions under the name of the need for party discipline does not make the party militant and unifying, but it suppresses trends and factions and turns it into a cult. Trotsky was

one of those who voted in favour of this resolution. In other words, he did not stand up to defend intra-party democracy, but voted in favour of suppressing it.

After the death of Lenin, the acute internal debates about the freedom of the factions reappeared. Trotsky again emphasized the prohibition of factions within the party, in other words, the suppression of intra-party democracy, and in this regard he said:

“I have never believed in the freedom of groups within the party, and I don’t believe in it now, because in the current historical conditions, groups are just another name for factions...I have never believed that the formation of groups is free, but the formation of factions is not allowed, and I have never said such a thing anywhere. On the contrary, whenever I have the opportunity to discuss, I have repeatedly said that it is not allowed to distinguish between groups and factions”.⁴⁴

We see years later that Trotsky himself, in addition to being thrown into the opposition and exiled, also suffered the consequences of his policies, which included defending the ban on factions and voting in favour of it. Trotsky admitted that the prohibition of factions led to the restriction of any thought contrary to that of the leaders and created bureaucratic immunity. In other words, Trotsky played an important role in the development of bureaucratic immunity. He said:

“The prohibition of oppositional parties brought after it the prohibition of factions. The prohibition of factions ended in a prohibition to think otherwise than the infallible leaders. The police-manufactured monolithism of the party resulted

⁴⁴ Speech at the 13th party congress on 26 May 1924.

in a bureaucratic impunity, which has become the sources of all kinds of wantonness and corruption.”⁴⁵

Trotsky played an important role in approving the prohibition of factions, and this resolution silenced many voices. Trotsky was now reaping the benefits of his efforts. The difference was that that he himself would be subjected to the consequences of the resolution that he had the largest role in passing.

Since 1922, Lenin had felt the danger of counter-revolution and was actually moving towards the opposition. Unfortunately, his premature death did not give him a chance. The essential question is, what role did Trotsky play at this point? He was silent in the face of the counter-revolution’s rise to power, or rather, he obeyed it. In other words, in the struggle between Lenin and the counter-revolution, Trotsky left Lenin alone and did not stand by him, but instead agreed to appease the counter-revolution. Trotsky himself described Lenin’s struggle against the counter-revolutionary rise as follows:

“Already in 1922, during a brief improvement in his health, Lenin, horrified at the threatening growth of bureaucratism, was preparing a struggle against the faction of Stalin, which had made itself the axis of the party machine as a first step toward capturing the machinery of state. A second stroke and the death prevented him from measuring forces with this internal reaction”⁴⁶

Despite Lenin’s insistence in his writing about Georgia, where Stalin and Dzerzhinsky had been attacked, Trotsky did not

⁴⁵ *The Revolution Betrayed - The Degeneration of the Bolshevik Party-*
Trotsky

⁴⁶ As above.

react in the slightest at party meetings. He also did not follow Lenin's recommendations to inspect the workers and peasants, which prevented the growth of bureaucracy in the party. He even colluded with Stalin to prevent the publication of Lenin's testament.

When Eastman published Lenin's "letters" or "testament" and claimed that the party had kept them secret, Trotsky considered Eastman's claim to be an accusation against the Central Committee. He stated that all the gossip that Eastman started about the secret and fake "testament" was hostile slander and accused Eastman of distortion. Trotsky wrote:

"Eastman asserts in several places that the Central Committee has 'concealed' from the party a large number of documents of extraordinary importance, written by Lenin during the last period of his life. (The documents in question are letters on the national question, the famous 'Testament,' etc.) This is pure slander against the Central Committee of our party. Eastman's words convey the impression that Lenin wrote these letters, which are of an advisory character and deal with the inner-party organization, with the intention of having them published. This is not at all in accordance with the facts...The Thirteenth Party Congress devoted the greatest attention to this and to the other letters, and drew the appropriate conclusions. All talk with regard to a concealed or mutilated 'Testament' is nothing but a despicable lie, directed against the real will of Comrade Lenin and against the interests of the party created by him."⁴⁷

⁴⁷ [Letter on Eastman's Book - Leon Trotsky](#)

When Trotsky was in power and a member of the party leadership, he not only submitted to the ruling power, but also preached compromise with it and recommended absolute obedience. For the sake of the higher interests of the party and during the peak of the struggle, Trotsky sought compromise and not only submitted to Stalin, but also promoted the culture of submission and appeasement. He encouraged party fetishism, saying “it’s my party even if he’s wrong!”. Trotsky said during the internal party discussions:

“I cannot say so, however, because, comrades, I do not think so. I know that one ought not to be right against the party. One can be right only with the party and through the party because history has not created any other way for the realization of one’s rightness. The English have the saying ‘My country, right or wrong’. With much greater justification we can say: My party, right or wrong- wrong on certain partial, specific issues or at certain moments.”⁴⁸

With his sermons, Trotsky took away the possibility of independent thinking from the party members and the proletariat and reduced the revolutionaries to the level of infantrymen in the barracks. He took the spirit of protest from them, turned the proletariat into the blackness of the army, and in a word, reduced the members of the party to the level of sect members.

When the strike movement was formed spontaneously, especially in Petrograd, and the Bolshevik labour groups, including the Communist Party workers’ group, although they played a very minor role, were suppressed by the GPU where did Trotsky stand in these class struggles? Trotsky was aware of the rightness of the

⁴⁸ *The Prophet Unarmed* – Isaac Deutscher - page 139

workers' struggle. Not only did he not object to the suppression of labour protests, but he himself stood in the line of the oppressors. Trotsky's biographer describes this issue as follows:

"He [Trotsky] was not at all eager to defend the Workers' Group and kindred sets of dissenters. He did not protest when their adherents were thrown into prison. Although he held that much of their discontent was justified and that many of their criticisms were well founded."⁴⁹

Lenin had sensed the danger of counter-revolution rising and was trying to make changes in the leadership of the Bolsheviks. He wanted to remove Stalin from the post of general secretary. But Trotsky was collaborating with those in power and against such changes, including even removing Stalin from the post of general secretary. Trotsky's performance was anti-revolutionary in order to gain power, and he was disgustingly placated and collaborative with it, to the extent that his supporters described it as a "rotten compromise". Trotsky said:

"Trotsky at once reassured Kamenev that he himself would propose no such severe reprisals. T am, he said, against removing Stalin and against expelling Ordjonikidze and displacing Dzerzhinsky...but I do agree with Lenin in substance."⁵⁰

During the 14th congress in December 1925, when Stalin together with Bukharin proposed that under the NEP economy and despite the grumbling of the peasants, Russia was moving towards socialism, Zinoviev and Kamenev appeared to be opponents of

⁴⁹ *Idem*, page 108

⁵⁰ *Idem*, page 75

“socialism in one country”. At this point, Trotsky evaluated Stalin as less of a threat and remained silent and collaborated with him. Trotsky did not object to the anti-Marxist thesis of “socialism in one country” because he believed that socialism required a dynamic and highly productive industry.

Trotsky and the Platform of 46 People

In 1923, when, on the one hand, the increase in prices in the industrial sector and the simultaneous decrease in those in the agricultural one resulted in a predicament called the “Scissors Crisis” in Russia, while on the other, Lenin’s illness and convalescence led to his withdrawal from the political scene, the crisis flared up within the Bolshevik Party. It prepared the ground for the formation of the so-called “left opposition”. The opponents claimed that the leadership of the party, which at this point included Stalin, Bukharin, Zinoviev and Kamenev, was unable to solve it.

The background of the formation of the “Scissors Crisis” can be explained as follows: to deal with the effects of the war communism policy, the New Economic Policy (NEP) was adopted, which led to the crisis of 1921. The subsequent liberalization of the Russian economy produced the classic problems of a capitalist economy, and as a result, the government implemented a policy of economic austerity, which led to spontaneous strikes and protests in the main industrial centres in August–September 1923. These were suppressed by the government.

Trotsky used the same bourgeois arguments to suppress workers’ protests: if it was possible, the workers’ demands would be met. Now that it was not, workers must continue to make sacrifices. The basic issue was that the workers had organized a revolution in order to enjoy better living conditions and not be exploited. What was the difference between the current state and the previous one? If the conditions of the working class were supposed to be the same as before, if its protest was meant to be answered with repression, why did the working class revolt? How could Trotsky tolerate the deplorable conditions and hunger of the workers, but not the workers’ strike in the industry? He could do so

because Trotsky saw the growth of industry as necessary for “primitive socialist accumulation”.

“Nor was he [Trotsky] inclined to countenance industrial unrest. He did not see how the government could meet the workers’ demands when industrial output was still negligible.”⁵¹

In October 1923, the manifesto of the opposition, which was composed by the main ranks of the party, was sent to the political bureau of the party under the title of the “Platform of 46 people”. Most of these signatories were old members of the communist left and at least 16 were against Trotsky’s views. There were many people who were close to Trotsky among the signatories, but Trotsky’s signature is not found at the end of this document. The reason for that goes back to 1921 when factionalism was banned in the party and Trotsky himself had played an important role in this matter, so he could not put his signature to that document. Although it was clear that the 46-person platform was not organized by Trotsky, it nevertheless naturally placed Trotsky in the ranks of the opposition. Although the 46-person platform was initially a reaction to the economic problems, it emphasized two vital issues:

- Economic planning
- Intra-party democracy

The signatories did not all have the same understanding of the platform. For some who were around Trotsky, the government’s economic planning was the main issue, while for others, intra-party democracy was more important. In parts of the platform, we read:

⁵¹ *The Prophet Unarmed* – Isaac Deutscher - page 108

“Members of the Party who are dissatisfied with this or that decision of the central committee or even of a provincial committee, who have this or that doubt on their minds, who privately note this or that error, irregularity or disorder, are afraid to speak about it at Party meetings, and are even afraid to talk about it in conversation, unless the partner in the conversation is thoroughly reliable from the point of view of ‘discretion’; free discussion within the party has practically vanished, the public opinion of the party is stifled. Nowadays it is not the Party, not its broad masses, who promote and choose members of the provincial committees and of the Central Committee of the RCP. On the contrary the secretarial hierarchy of the Party to an ever greater extent recruits the membership of conferences and congresses, which are becoming to an ever greater extent the executive assemblies of this hierarchy...The position which has been created is explained by the fact that the régime of the dictatorship of a faction within the party...The factional régime must be abolished, and this must be done in the first instance by those who have created it; it must be replaced by a régime of comradely unity and inner party democracy.”⁵²

The platform of 46 people was not a rebellion by the simple members of the party, but they were among the most prominent party leaders who had a long experience of struggle and Marxist knowledge and were considered to be among the originators of the October Revolution. Some of them were members of the Central Committee, a number of them had been symbols of heroism in the civil war, and others had been heroes of the October Revolution. The ruling power could not suppress these rebellions easily and it

⁵² [The Platform of the 46](#)

did not have such a position, so it tried to solve the problem with the stick and carrot policy. On the one hand, powerful party leaders threatened the authors of the platform that if they spread it among the ranks of party members, they would face disciplinary punishment. Therefore, the Central Committee sent representatives to the party constituencies in advance to condemn the platform. On the other hand, Zinoviev from the Central Committee promised intra-party democracy and announced that the columns of *Pravda* and other newspapers would be open for discussion. He also stated that the members could speak openly about the issues they were dissatisfied with.

But the important point is that the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks in December 1923, shortly after the platform of 46 people, again retained the resolution prohibiting factions. Lenin was absent from the discussions due to illness, and Trotsky, like other members of the Central Committee, voted in favour of the resolution and did not raise any objections. In part of the resolution, we read:

“Labour democracy means the freedom to openly discuss explicitly the most important issues of the party’s life by all members, as well as the election of all the party’s main officials and all commissions by the lower bodies. Of course, this does not mean the freedom to form factions, which are extremely dangerous for the ruling party. Because the factions always lead the state and government bodies to the abyss of division or multiple factions”.⁵³

Trotsky’s repeated and positive vote in favour of banning factions showed that at that time Trotsky, contrary to the wishes of the 46-member platform, was still loyal to the “dictatorship of the

⁵³ Resolution of the Central Committee, 5 December 1923.

dominant faction of the party” and did not want to cut his umbilical cord from the factional regime.

The important point is that the criticisms of the “left opposition” were very superficial, so that they were not able to deal with the root of the issues. In other words, they could not answer these questions: why is there a party dictatorship? And what is the context of the Scissors Crisis? At the same time, the “left opposition” platform was not able to comprehend the failure of the world revolution and could not understand the new conditions, and was content only with criticisms at the level of and within the borders of Russia.

Trotsky and the Communist Left

With the rise of the wave of the world revolution and in the process of those problems that obstructed its progress, the material grounds of the communist left were prepared. With the signs of the breaking of the wave, which caused the isolation of the October Revolution, the October Revolution exhibited signs of its decline. It was in such a context that the necessity of the existence of the communist left was raised more than before. Internationalists from Bulgaria to Germany, from Russia to America, from Britain to the Netherlands, from Italy and so on, defended communist positions. But in three countries where the Marxist tradition was strong, that is, in Russia, Germany and Italy, the communist left showed itself in a strong and coherent way. In other words, the reaction of the communist left was a global one.

Despite this, the rise of counter-revolution in Russia as well as of a totalitarian state meant that the violent repression became a serious obstacle to the theoretical development of the communist left in Russia compared to that in the Netherlands, Germany and especially Italy. Due to the difficult conditions of that day, they were not able to present a general picture of the process of the failure of the world revolution and the decline of the October Revolution. But they sounded the alarm and showed with their political correctness and despite the ambiguities that the Russian proletariat was not defeated without a fight. This problem is described by the comrades of internationalism as follows:

“The enduring contribution of these small groups trying to come to grips with the new situation, is not that they could have possibly understood the entire process of state capitalism at its beginnings nor that they expressed a totally coherent

programme, but that they sounded the alarm and were among the first to prophetically denounce the establishment of a state capitalist regime; their legacy in the workers' movement is to have provided the political proof that the Russian proletariat did not go down to defeat in silence.”⁵⁴

We have already mentioned that Trotsky could not fight against Stalinism as Lenin expected and he collaborated with those in power. And when he started the battle against Stalinism, his positions were more inconsistent and non-decisive than the communist left struggle, especially the communist left workers' group.

During the civil war, the need for unity against the counter-revolutionary attack reduced internal divisions. But following the victory against the counter-revolution (the White Army and its supporters) and the necessity of rebuilding the ruins, the differences of opinion clearly showed themselves again. Bukharin was once a representative of the communist left, but later made a 180-degree turn, making peace with war communism and becoming a staunch defender of socialism in one country. But the left tendencies rose against the increasing militarization of workplaces and in support of worker democracy. In 1919, the “Democratic Centralists” group was formed around Ossinsky, Saprnov and others. But the most important communist left movement with theoretical value was the Workers' Group of the Communist Party of the Soviet.

The Workers' Group of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), led by veteran worker Bolsheviks such as Miasnikov, Kuznetsov, and Moiseev, distributed its manifesto, written in February 1923, in April–May 1923, shortly after the 13th Congress of the Bolshevik Party. Unlike other tendencies, their manifesto

⁵⁴ A Contribution on the Question of State Capitalism, *Internationalism* n°6

expressed a depth of political understanding, theoretical maturity and a proletarian nature. But this manifesto was not without weaknesses. The main one was that it was unable to understand the beginning of the process of the defeat of the world revolution and continued to emphasize aggressive struggles. As a result, it failed to comprehend the necessity of proletariat's retreat and defensive struggle and came to the wrong assessment that during the proletarian revolution, workers' struggles for wage increases no longer have any positive role.

However, the manifesto's strengths far outweighed its weaknesses. It considered the events from an internationalist horizon and examined the problems of the October Revolution in the delay of the world revolution and emphasized that the salvation of the October Revolution depends on the world revolution. The manifesto seriously criticized the opportunistic policies of the international under the "united front" and "workers' government" titles. The Workers' Group of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) wrote in its manifesto regarding the "united front" policy of the Comintern:

"The tactic which must lead the insurgent proletariat to victory cannot be that of the socialist united front, but that of bloody combat, without circumspection, against the bourgeois fractions and their confusing socialist terminology. Only this combat can bring victory and it must be done in this way. The Russian proletariat has won, not by allying itself with the Social Revolutionaries, with the Populists and the Mensheviks, but by struggling against them... This is the truth about the tactic of the socialist united front which, as backed up by the theses of the Executive of the CI, is supposed to be based on the experience of the Russian revolution, whereas, in reality, it is an opportunist tactic. Such a tactic of

collaboration with the declared enemies of the working class who carry out armed oppression against the revolutionary proletariat in their own and other countries is in open contradiction to the experience of the Russian revolution. In order to remain under the banner of the social revolution, we must make a “united front” against the bourgeoisie and its socialist servants.”⁵⁵

The group of workers of the Communist Party of Russia (Bolsheviks) protested the principle of one-man management in industry and supported the idea of collective management as the strongest weapon against the growth of bureaucracy. They wanted factories and industrial centres to be managed under the supervision of factory committees. They did not deny the use of bourgeois experts in industry and the army, but they emphasized the necessity of controlling them. The workers’ group considered that the best means to deal with the rise of bureaucracy and the revival of democracy was to revive the factory committees and, most importantly, the councils to take control of the economy and the government.

At the 10th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (March 1921), when this controversy reached its climax, Trotsky said the following:

“They have made a fetish of democratic principles. They have placed the workers’ right to elect representatives above the party, as it were, as if the party were not entitled to assert its dictatorship even if that dictatorship temporarily clashed with the passing moods of the workers; democracy. It is necessary to create among us the awareness of the revolutionary

⁵⁵ [Manifesto of the Workers' Group of the Russian Communist Party 1923](#)

historical birth right of the party. The party is obliged to maintain its dictatorship, regardless of temporary wavering in the spontaneous moods of the masses, regardless of the temporary vacillations even in the working class. This awareness is for us the indispensable unifying element. The dictatorship does not base itself at every given moment on the formal principle of a workers' democracy, although the workers' democracy is, of course, the only method by which the masses can be drawn more and more into political life."⁵⁶

As a result of the signs of the turning back of the wave of the world revolution and the isolation of the October Revolution, many problems arose for the Soviet power. The living conditions of the working class were deplorable and hunger was rampant. The workers' group was not simply a sect without influence in the working class, but its members were Bolshevik workers who had good leverage among the other ones. For this reason, the group of workers wanted to interfere in the protests of the working class. The increase in the political influence of the workers' group among the workers and in the party's ranks caused the terror of the "leaders" and prepared the ground for its suppression. First, we hear about the role of the workers' group of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in the labour protests and their defence of communist and proletarian positions (the presentation of the manifesto) and then their suppression from the Trotskyists:

"The strike agitation, which was spontaneous in the main....led by three labourers, Myasnikov, Kuznetsov, and Moiseev, all party member at least since 1905, in April and May, immediately after the twelfth congress, they circulated

⁵⁶ *The Prophet Armed* - Isaac Deutscher - page 509

a manifesto denouncing the New Exploitation of the Proletariat and urging the workers to fight for Soviet democracy. 1 In May Myasnikov was arrested. But his followers went on propagating his views....The discovery that this and similar groups, like the Workers' Truth, had been active in the factories caused among party leaders a dismay which seemed quite out of proportion to its cause. ... The party leaders sought to stamp out the sparks. They determined to suppress the Workers' Group and the Workers' Truth ... Dzerzhinsky was charged with the business of suppression. As he investigated the activities of the presumed culprits, he found that even party members of unquestioned loyalty regarded them as comrades and refused to testify against them.”⁵⁷

The basic question that arises is, when the most loyal workers of the Bolsheviks were being crushed when they were suppressing the embers, where did Trotsky stand in these class struggles? It must be said that Trotsky himself was among the oppressors, as the Trotskyists state:

“He [Trotsky] was not at all eager to defend the Workers' Group and kindred sets of dissenters. He did not protest when their adherents were thrown into prison. Although he held that much of their discontent was justified and that many of their criticisms were well founded.”⁵⁸

For Trotsky, “primitive socialist accumulation” was of great importance, and accordingly, for him, the growth of productive forces and the increase of labour productivity played a vital role in

⁵⁷ *Idem*, pages 107-108

⁵⁸ *Idem*, page 108

the construction of socialism. In Trotsky's mind, these questions related to whether the means of production and the institutions of society had become social. In whose hands was the real power? Had the field of the socialist been provided? Dozens of other questions had no place.

Trotsky and the Workers' Opposition

The workers' opposition was a tendency within the Bolshevik Party that emerged in the 1920s as a response to the growing bureaucracy. Most of the members of this opposition were workers, and it had great influence among the Russian industrial proletariat. The roots of the formation of this tendency go back to 1917 and the left wing of the Bolsheviks. At that time, the left wing of the Bolshevik Party wanted the independence of the power of the labour councils, but in contrast, it was difficult to separate the positions of the right wing of the Bolshevik Party from those of the Mensheviks regarding the provisional government, the revolution, etc.

One of the main leaders of the workers' opposition was Alexandra Kollontai, who wrote the platform of the workers' opposition, and this opposition presented its platform to the 10th congress. This platform considered the root cause of the dire economic conditions after the civil war, the growth of the bureaucracy and its dominance over the party as a deviation from the interests of the proletariat. The workers' opposition evaluated the Soviet government not as a purely proletarian body, but as a government that had to strike a balance between different classes.

Contrary to the manifesto of the Workers' Group of the Communist Party of Russia (Miasnikov's group), the platform of the workers' opposition did not theoretically express the depth of theoretical maturity and had a nationalist orientation. The workers' opposition was unable to understand that the real ally of the Russian proletariat and its revolutionary minorities was the global working class. Communism cannot be built independently and separately, even on the most advanced island. The workers' opposition saw the rise of bureaucracy and the deterioration of the living conditions of the working class not from the internationalist horizon in terms of

the non-expansion of the world revolution, but within the national borders. The workers' opposition failed to comprehend the important issue that the main problem facing the Russian working class was not the reconstruction of the Russian economy, but the failure to spread the world revolution. Nevertheless, the platform of the workers' opposition expressed the reaction of the industrial working class to their conditions.

The solutions offered by the workers' opposition expressed the theoretical limitations and intellectual confusion regarding this trend. The theoretical limitations of the workers' opposition in terms of the influence of syndicalism and, most importantly, the nationalist attitude to the problems of the working class not only caused the removal of the workers' opposition from the scene of events, but also failed to provide a new horizon for the next generations of the working class. The workers' opposition played a role in only a short chapter in the history of the Bolshevik Party. It evaluated the trade unions as organizations defending the class interests of the proletariat, whose task was to create communism:

“The Workers Opposition sees in the unions the managers and creators of the Communist economy.”⁵⁹

The workers' opposition was unable to understand the evolution of capitalism due to its theoretical limitations. Understanding the development of the stages of capitalism means that in the era of the decline of capitalism, trade unions are no longer a labour organization, but one that has been integrated into the ruling class and the state. The emergence of factory committees and workers' councils during the October Revolution showed that unions were a thing of the past and the working class had gone

⁵⁹ [The Workers' Opposition](#)

beyond the form of organizing unions, so that factory committees and workers' councils now formed the organs of labour power. The introduction of trade unions in 1921 as the backbone of the revolution by the workers' opposition, on the other hand, also spoke of a bitter truth. Factory committees and labour councils were marginalized and lacked the power they had in 1917. The transfer of decision-making power to trade unions could in no way put power back in the hands of the proletariat. Because if the power was transferred to the labour unions, this would be like a transfer of power from one branch of the state to another, instead of placing it in the hands of the proletariat.

The workers' opposition wrote:

“Who shall develop the creative powers in the sphere of economic reconstruction? Shall it be purely class organs, directly connected by vital ties with the industries - that is, shall industrial unions undertake the work of reconstruction - or shall it be left to the Soviet machine which is separated from direct vital industrial activity and is axed in its composition? This is the root of the break. The Workers' Opposition defends the first principle, where the leaders of the Party, whatever their differences on various secondary matters, are in complete accord on the cardinal point, and defend the second principle.”⁶⁰

At the 10th Congress of the Bolshevik Party in March 1921, there was a discussion about the role of trade unions in the dictatorship of the proletariat, in which three points of view were raised.

⁶⁰ As source 59.

The first was represented by Trotsky, who believed that unions should be integrated into the workers' state in order to increase labour productivity. Trotsky tried to apply the experiences used in the Red Army to the workplace.

The second point of view was represented by Lenin, who believed that the unions should maintain their independence and act as the defence organ of the working class.

The third point of view was represented by the workers' opposition. They believed that industrial unions independent of the Soviet state should take over the management of production.

In 1921, a wave of labour protests and strikes swept Moscow and Petrograd. Trade unions not only could not help the spread of labour protests and strikes, but actually stood as an obstacle in the way of its development. When the labour protests started spontaneously, the expansion of the protests depended on the striking workers sending their representatives to other industries in order to spread the protests and gain the class solidarity of their brothers and sisters to continue the struggle with a more united force. The course of events of those years clearly shows the reality of the labour unions' performance despite the demands of the workers' opposition. The question that now arose was, considering that under those conditions labour unions were not able to lead labour protests and strikes, how could they manage production?

Contrary to the description of the Trotskyists, Trotsky did not demand direct workers' supervision of the industry and strongly defended one-man management. Trotsky did not want factories to be managed by factory committees or workers' councils. He opposed the plans of the workers' opposition, which aimed for management to be the responsibility of the labour unions, and evaluated these plans as "anarcho-syndicalist". Trotsky aspired for the unions to be integrated into his party dictatorial state and his subordinates to be the leaders of the unions. Trotsky dismissed the

leaders of the unions, such as the transport union, who did not obey his orders, and appointed his own trusted people. In other words, union leaders were designated and not elected. Regarding the defence of party leaders, including Trotsky, from individual management, the workers' opposition wrote:

“Collective management was favoured by all the representatives of the Trade Unions, while opposed to it were all the leaders of our Party, who are accustomed to appraise all events from the institutional angle. They require a good deal of shrewdness and skill to placate the socially heterogeneous and the sometimes politically hostile aspirations of the different social groups of the population as expressed by proletarians, petty owners, peasantry, and bourgeoisie in the person of specialists, and pseudo-specialists, of all kinds and degrees.”⁶¹

The workers' opposition assessed the influx of non-proletarian members as the root of the growth of bureaucracy in the party, as well as the roots of opportunism that grew in it. The workers' opposition believed that if the non-proletarian members were purged and the proletarian members joined the ranks of the party instead, the decline of the party would not have taken place. The workers' opposition failed to understand that such an attitude is not a class understanding, but a sociological one. The reason for the decline of the party was not because of the history of its members, but because of the turning back of the wave of the world revolution and as a result defining the rule of the state with that of the party.

The workers' opposition, like other party leaders, had a substitutionist understanding of the dictatorship of the proletariat, or

⁶¹ As source 59.

in other words, to the workers' opposition, the dictatorship of the proletariat was the same as the party dictatorship. The opposition wrote:

“The Central Committee of our Party must become the supreme directing centre of our class policy, the organ of class thought and control over the practical policy of the Soviets, and the spiritual personification of our basic programme”⁶²

It was due to this substitutionist understanding that when the news of the Kronstadt rebellion came during the 10th congress, it was the leaders of the workers' opposition who were at the forefront of the attack, and despite the help of the workers' opposition in suppressing it, this did not prevent the condemnation of the workers' opposition under the title of “petty-bourgeois anarchist deviation”.

In the beginning, for the workers' opposition, the Soviet state was not a pure proletarian state, but rather a heterogeneous institution that was forced to establish a balance between different classes and strata in society.

“They like to whip the masses into an obedient flock, and drive them wherever their unrestricted will desires. The working class and its spokesmen, on the contrary, realise that the new Communist aspirations can be obtained only through the collective efforts of the workers themselves...Only those who are directly bound to industry can introduce into it animating innovations.”⁶³

The statements of the workers' opposition that communism could be realized in Russia, provided that the problems of economic

⁶² As source 59.

⁶³ As source 59.

management were solved correctly, showed the influence of the syndicalist ideology on the opposition. The existence of such confusion caused the theoretician of the workers' opposition, Kollontai, to submit to Stalinism and become one of the staunch defenders of "socialism in one country", and thus her life ended as a loyal servant of the counter-revolution.

The case of the workers' opposition was discussed at the 10th party congress in March 1921. The discussions were actually about the case of the workers' opposition and led to the prohibition of factionalism at the 10th Congress of the Bolshevik Party. Trotsky played a big role in passing the ban on factionalism and dealt a major blow to the workers' opposition. The workers' opposition suffered from a kind of party fetishism, in the sense that the party was like an idol, inviolable, so that it was reluctant to challenge it. Therefore, they were not able to oppose this party regime illegally.

At the behest of the Bolshevik Central Committee, Trotsky issued a petition against the workers' opposition to the Bolshevik Party and the Communist International. Since the activity of the workers' opposition was banned and they were threatened with expulsion, they complained to the Bolshevik Party in 1922 at the Fourth World Congress of the Communist International. The workers' opposition limited their complaint to the bureaucratization of the regime and the lack of freedom of expression of the opposition communist groups. Trotsky, as part of the executive committee of the Communist International, succeeded in rejecting the complaint of the workers' opposition. Finally, the Bolshevik Party formed a special commission to investigate the activities of the workers' opposition, which concluded that the workers' opposition was an illegal faction. After that, with the repression in which Trotsky played an important role, the activities of the workers' opposition were essentially ended in 1922.

Trotsky and the Kronstadt Tragedy

In the history of the Russian revolution, the Kronstadt rebellion and its suppression is considered a tragedy. The Bolsheviks had several years of experience in the civil war against the White Army, which was raised by the domestic counter-revolution and the world bourgeoisie to suppress the October Revolution. But the Kronstadt rebellion was different because it was carried out by those who had once been in the vanguard of the October Revolution. Kronstadt, which was the stronghold of Bolshevism in 1917, and the sailors, who were at the forefront of the October Revolution and which Trotsky had called “the pride and glory of the Russian Revolution”, now rebelled!

Stalinists and Trotskyists consider the Kronstadt rebellion to have been an anti-revolutionary conspiracy and a plot by the White Army, or at best, a conspiracy by sailors who had now become part of the petite bourgeoisie and rebelled against the proletariat by not tolerating the miserable conditions to end the civil war. The anarchists described the Kronstadt rebellion as the third revolution against the Bolshevik dictatorship and considered themselves the true heirs of the Kronstadt rebels.

For internationalists, none of the above descriptions is a dialectical expression of the process of social events, and this tragedy cannot simply be ignored. All these narratives present a fake version of Marxism.⁶⁴

The year 1921 was a turning point in the history of the world revolution, and the bitter truth, the beginning of the failure of its

⁶⁴ For a better analysis of the formation grounds of the Kronstadt rebellion and the reasons for its suppression, reading “*The Tragedy of Kronstadt – The Beginning of the Process of the Failure of the World Revolution*” is recommended.

process, was revealed. The failure of the world revolution wave, which began with the defeat of the German revolution and the systematic massacre of the leaders of the German working class, caused the isolation of the October Revolution. This increased the process of gradual corruption in the field of proletarian internationalism and power (Soviet power) in Russia. The Bolshevik Party was increasingly integrated into the state apparatus and showed the results of its actions in the councils, factory committees, the Red Army, etc. The signs of the failure of the world revolution were demonstrated in the events of the 10th Congress of the Bolshevik Party, which adopted the New Economic Policy (NEP) and banned the right to form factions, etc., and in the Third Congress of the Communist International in 1921, which assumed a united front policy.

In mid-February 1921, spontaneous labour strikes and protests took place in Moscow, in which workers demanded better food rationing and an end to forced labour methods, etc., which were related to the war communism policy. Following these protests, a large number of “illegal” strikes occurred in Petrograd factories and industries. Because each person was given only half a kilo of bread per day and the cold was fierce, the strikers demanded an increase in food rations and clothing, as well as the release of working-class prisoners, etc. In condemning the labour strikes, the government officials, led by Zinoviev, considered them to be the result of anti-revolutionary movements.

Apart from labour strikes, the number of peasant uprisings had reached more than a hundred, and the Cheka⁶⁵ violently suppressed the peasant uprisings. It should be noted that the sailors in 1921 did not have the same composition as in 1917 and more people with

⁶⁵ The All-Russian Extraordinary Commission, commonly known as the Cheka, was the first of a succession of Soviet secret police organizations.

peasant backgrounds were recruited in Kronstadt in 1921. It was in such a situation that the Bolsheviks mistakenly evaluated the Kronstadt uprising as the same as threatening the peasants, and this erroneous assessment prepared the ground for the bloody suppression of the Kronstadt uprising. The Kronstadt rebellion was carried out as a continuation of the protests and labour strikes in Petrograd, which were suppressed. At the end of February, representatives of the workers of Petrograd reported the situation to the sailors of Kronstadt, which prompted the resolution of the sailors of Kronstadt to be considered and approved. This resolution called for new council elections, as well as fairer food rationing, in addition to the release of socialist and anarchist prisoners (not bourgeois ones), freedom of speech and the press for workers, peasants, anarchists and left parties (not the bourgeois press), limited freedom of handicrafts, the restricted liberty of the peasants for free production and so on.

At one time, Kronstadt sailors had sent a delegation to Trotsky in Kresty Prison to suppress the coup of General Kornilov, who had announced that he wanted to rid the country of revolution, and they had listened to Trotsky's advice and implemented his instructions as the orders of the revolution. The sailors had taken Trotsky on their shoulders as the commander of the revolution in the heroic days of 1917, and had faced such dangers in their bravery, but now Trotsky was going to shed their blood!

In contrast to the maturity that the Bolsheviks had shown previously, especially in 1917 during the July events,⁶⁶ they reacted

⁶⁶ In July 1917, the bourgeoisie tried to stage an early uprising in Petrograd, before massacring the proletariat and the Bolsheviks. In response to the Duma's proclamation, the proletariat of Petrograd, after arming itself, came up with the slogan, "All power to the Soviets". The Bolsheviks had already warned the working class of the consequences of early action: when the Bolsheviks confronted an armed demonstration of 500,000 workers, they tried to be at the ➡

immediately with a kind of carelessness and inexperience. Their immediate reaction was to condemn the Kronstadt uprising under the name of a White Army conspiracy. On 3 March 1921, Radio Moscow sent the message “Let’s fight against the conspiracy of the White Army!”, which contained rumours and slander that angered the citizens of Kronstadt.

Trotsky apparently did not personally command the suppression of the Kronstadt rebellion, but he played a large role in it. Trotsky arrived in Petrograd on 5 March and showed no desire to negotiate with the Kronstadt sailors. Trotsky did not offer any proposals to the rebels’ demands and eliminated the possibility of negotiations between the government and the sailors. He spoke only with the language of the gun and was aiming for repression. Trotsky urged the rebels to surrender unconditionally, or they would be suppressed by force of arms, saying:

“Only those who do so, he stated, ‘can count on the mercy of the Soviet Republic. Simultaneously with this warning I am issuing instructions that everything be prepared for the suppression of the mutiny by armed force. This is the last warning.’”⁶⁷

The order had been issued that under no circumstances should members of the Red Army engage in conversation or debate with

head of it and say it was a peaceful move, so as not to fall into the trap of the bourgeoisie. The same night, the proletariat realized its early action and, the next day, the working class did not come out at the request of the Bolsheviks. The bourgeoisie did the same in Germany: the early rise of the proletariat in 1919 and 1923 led to the bloody repression of the proletariat and the communists. Particularly, the early uprising of 1919 dealt the greatest blow to world revolution; there was no realization that sheer mental will was an insufficient condition for the victory of the working class.

⁶⁷ *The Prophet Armed* – Isaac Deutscher - page 512

the rebels during the capture of Kronstadt. Instead, they should arrest them and send them to the rear. In order to eliminate the effects of the uprising, they began a large-scale purge and Kronstadt came under military control. Finally, on 18 March 1921, the Red Army suppressed the Kronstadt rebellion with an exaggerated massacre. After the bloody repression of Kronstadt on 3 April 1921, Trotsky anticipated a victory and said:

“We waited as long as possible, to our blinded sailor comrades to see with their own eyes where the mutiny led. But we were confronted by the danger that the ice would melt away and we were compelled to carry out the attack.”⁶⁸

Trotsky’s use of the title “comrades” for the defeated sailors indicated that the accusation that the Kronstadt mutiny was a White Army conspiracy was baseless. Later, the Bolshevik leaders themselves abandoned the White Army conspiracy claim and emphasized the petit bourgeois nature of the revolt, which they claimed paved the way for counter-revolutionary influence.

The Kronstadt tragedy should not be seen as an isolated phenomenon. This issue can only be understood in the context of the world revolution. Whichever side would win, it would be an anti-revolutionary victory. Although the prospect of world revolution was still present in 1921 and this was a vital factor in the outlook of the revolutionaries of that time, by assaulting the rebels, the Bolsheviks were actually attacking the real defenders of the revolution and the holders of direct proletarian power, their class brothers and sisters.

⁶⁸ Idem, page 523

Trotsky and the United Front Policy

The era of communist revolutions and imperialist wars began with the entry of capitalism into decadence. In the period of capitalist decline, the working class is the only revolutionary class, and the only revolution ahead of the working class is the proletarian one. In the meantime, there can be no joint undertaking between the revolutionary class and factions of the bourgeoisie. Unlike the growing period of capitalism, when the bourgeoisie was a revolutionary class and could play a revolutionary role in social events, in the era of the decline of capitalism, all factions of the bourgeoisie are reactionary and anti-revolutionary. In such a period, bourgeois democracy has become one of the deadliest poisons against the proletariat and a deceptive mask to hide the brutality of capitalism. Bourgeois democracy is the other side of the coin of bourgeois dictatorship.

At the Third Congress of the Communist International in 1921, the “united front” tactic was proposed, of which Trotsky was one of the main designers, but it faced resistance from the communist left, especially from Italy, Germany and the Netherlands. First, we will examine the reaction of the communist left and the Trotskyist literature published by the “radicals” to the “united front” tactic. Trotskyists describe the course of events as follows:

“At the congress, in July 1921, the ultra-radical made a stand. They exercised a strong influence on the German, Italian, and Dutch parties and they drew their strength from a powerful emotional current in the whole international. The communist parties had come into existence in a desperate struggle against the leader of the old socialist parties whom they blamed for

supporting the imperialist slaughter of 1914-1918, for the subsequent suppression of revolution in Europe, for the assassination of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, and for an ambiguous attitude towards European intervention in Russia. No wonder that many communists were bewildered and indignant when they now heard Lenin and Trotsky urging them to acknowledge defeat, be it temporarily, and to co-operate with the hated ‘social imperialist’ and ‘social traitors’. This to the ultra-radicals was surrender or even betrayal. At congress, as earlier on the Executive, Trotsky and Lenin had use all their influence and eloquence to prevent the Opposition from gaining the upper hand- they even threatened to split the international if it backed the ultra-radicals.”⁶⁹

According to the “united front” tactic, revolutionary organizations can cooperate with factions of the bourgeoisie under the name of so-called “labour parties” and enter into an alliance, and in the course of this cooperation, expose their bourgeois nature. The “united front” or similar tactics are the most destructive weapons for diverting the class struggle. The independence of the proletariat is the basic condition for the evolution of the class struggle.

Trotsky stated that the roots of the “united front” tactic derived from the experiences of the Bolshevik Party during the Russian Revolution in 1917.⁷⁰ Now Trotsky along with other Comintern leaders wanted to transfer this “experience” to other communist parties. Trotsky’s biographer describes the origins of the “united front” tactic as follows:

⁶⁹ *The Prophet Unarmed* – Isaac Deutscher - page 52

⁷⁰ <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/germany/1932-ger>

“The idea of the united front embodied the whole tactical experience of the Bolsheviks who had indeed fought first against Tsardom, then the Cadets, and then Kornilov, in a sort of a united front with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries until, in the end, they gained ascendancy over the latter too.”⁷¹

Fortunately, at the same time, Trotsky and the other defenders of the “united front” tactic were answered by the Russian communist left. They pointed out the baselessness of Trotsky’s argument and emphasized that the Bolsheviks won not in a united front with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries, but through a brutal war against them. The communist left wrote in its manifesto:

“The propaganda for the united front with the social traitors of all nuances tends to the belief that they are also definitively fighting the bourgeoisie, for socialism and not the contrary... Can one say that the Russian proletariat triumphed because it was united with the Mensheviks and the SRs? This is nonsense. The Russian proletariat defeated the bourgeoisie and landowners through its fierce fight against the Mensheviks and SRs.

In one of his speeches on the need for a united front tactic, comrade Trotsky said that we have triumphed, but must analyse how we are beaten. He argues that we marched in a united front with the Mensheviks and SRs because we ourselves, the Mensheviks and SRs sat in the same councils. If the united front tactic consists of sitting in the same

⁷¹ *The Prophet Unarmed* – Isaac Deutscher - page 53

institution, then the head of forced labour and the convicts are also in a united front: both are in prison.”⁷²

The Fourth Congress of the Communist International in 1922 approved the “united front” tactic, and Trotsky played an important role in its approval. According to it, the communists should fight together with the “imperialist slaughterers”, with the murderers of Luxemburg and Liebknecht, as well as “social traitors” and with the so-called “labour parties”. Trotskyists explain Trotsky’s role in approving the “united front” tactic and the opposition’s reaction as follows:

“At the next, the fourth, congress Lenin, already ill, spoke only briefly and with great difficulty, and Trotsky came to the fore as the chief expounder of the international’s strategy and tactics. He advocated once again the united front. He went a step farther and urged the Communist parties to support, on condition, social democratic governments and even, under special circumstances, in prerevolutionary situations, when such coalitions could pave the way for proletarian dictatorship, to participate in them. The opposition was outraged.”⁷³

The “united front” tactic not only failed to help the progress of the labour and communist movement, but also caused the massacre of revolutionaries and the proletariat in Germany, Spain, China, etc. The united front tactic brought about the defeat of the Saxon and Thuringian governments and led to massacres in China.

⁷² [Manifesto of the Workers' Group of the Russian Communist Party 1923](#)

⁷³ *The Prophet Unarmed* – Isaac Deutscher - pages 53-54

Trotsky and the Last Resistance of the Opposition

At the 10th congress in 1921, all major tendencies of the Bolshevik Party had voted in favour of banning factionalism. As a result, after that, there were no more than two alternatives for dissidents and opponents. Either they should turn to illegal activities such as the “workers’ group”, or they should avoid any organized activities. Apart from the “workers’ group”, no one engaged in illegal activities. The important point is that in 1925 and 1926, Trotsky did not involve himself in many controversies, but he handled the discussions very carefully and with a great deal of diplomacy, and somehow withdrew himself from political life.

The first person to oppose the anti-Marxist thesis of “socialism in one country” was Zinoviev. Zinoviev spoke about the danger of state capitalism, as well as the strengthening of the bureaucracy and its domination over the party. In 1926, the opponents tried to raise their opinions in an organized way not only to the party, but also to society. The opponents held their meetings secretly in the forests and outside the city, because it was not possible to hold them publicly. Leaders of the opposition started giving speeches in factories, the most famous of which was Trotsky’s speech at the Moscow aircraft factory. The reaction of the Stalinist repression apparatus to the activities of the opposition was very violent; Trotsky was dismissed from the Politburo of the Bolshevik Party in October 1926. The opponents were not only expelled from the party, but also physically removed. One of the former opponents named Larin expressed Stalin’s hidden thoughts at the 15th party conference in October–November 1926 as follows:

“Either the Opposition must be excluded and legally suppressed, or the question will be settled with machine guns

in the streets, as the Left Socialist Revolutionaries did in Moscow in 1918.”⁷⁴

After the collapse of the Stalin-Zinoviev-Kamenev bloc, the “left opposition” was formed, the main members of which were Trotsky, Zinoviev and Kamenev. The internal party struggles came to a head in 1927, when the “left opposition” presented its platform. The left opposition argued that there were three main tendencies in the Central Committee, the party’s leadership organs and the government. In its platform, we read:

“At the present time there are three fundamental tendencies in the Central Committee and in the leading organs of the party and state in general. The first tendency is a frank and open drift to the right... The second tendency is the centrism of the official apparatus. The leaders of this tendency are Comrades Stalin, Molotov, Uglanov, Kaganovich, Mikoyan, Kirov... Bukharin, wavering between one side and the other, generalizes the policies of this group... The third tendency is the so-called Opposition. It is the Leninist wing of the party... There exist in this country two mutually exclusive fundamental positions. One, the position of the proletariat building socialism, the other, the position of the bourgeoisie aspiring to switch our development on to capitalist lines... The decisive factor in appraising the movement of our country forward along the road of socialist reconstruction, must be the growth of our productive forces and the dominance of the socialist elements over the capitalist—together with an improvement of all the conditions of existence of the working class... The monopoly of foreign trade is a vitally necessary

⁷⁴ *The Conscience Of The Revolution: Communist Opposition In Soviet Russia*
- Page 282

weapon for socialist construction, when the capitalist countries possess a higher technique. But the socialist economy now under construction can be defended by this monopoly only if it continually approaches the world economy in respect of technique, cost of production, quality and price of its products.”⁷⁵

The long quote above is significant from several angles, which we will examine in turn. The so-called “left wing” in 1927 still considered Stalinism to be the “centre wing”, which was between the right wing and the left wing, and Trotsky did not consider Stalinism to be the main enemy, so he reconciled with it and still considered the so-called right wing the chief adversary.

The so-called left wing evaluated the growth of productive forces as the factor determining the path of socialist construction in the Soviet Union and talked about the socialist economy that was being built. In other words, accepting the anti-Marxist thesis of “socialism in one country” meant actually abandoning the world revolution and ignoring the fact that building socialism is the task of the global working class. For the so-called left faction, building socialism was only an economic matter that was tied to the growth of productive forces and raising the level of labour productivity. In this case, socialism was a product of class struggle, and this faction was essentially alien to it. Essentially, socialism is the product of the socialization of the means of production and society’s institutions, which will lead to the decline of the state and only be possible on a global scale.

In November 1927, the opponents tried to interfere in the annual demonstrations of the October Revolution celebration with their flags and banners. The necessity of Leninist unity against

⁷⁵ Platform of the Joint Opposition

division was part of the opposition's demands. Emphasizing the necessity of the unity of the Leninist party, when it had become anti-revolutionary and the anti-revolutionary only speaks in the language of repression, showed that the opponents were constantly looking for compromise and friendly agreement with the anti-revolutionaries. This discreet policy of the opposition greatly weakened their resistance and paved the way for their final defeat. In October 1927, Trotsky was expelled from the Central Committee, followed by his expulsion from the party in November 1927.

The suppression of the opposition and the expulsion of Trotsky and Zinoviev from the party greatly lowered the fighting spirit of the opposition and the alliance of Trotsky and Zinoviev essentially fell apart. Although the opposition leaders signed a statement admitting that they had made a mistake and violated the party order and begged to be able return to the party, the Stalinist repression machine made the repression more violent and began to suppress Bukharin and his supporters.

By suppressing the kulaks and dissolving them as a class and thus moving towards industrialization, Stalin in a way intended to disarm the opposition ideologically. Many opponents were deceived by this tactic of Stalin, which caused their number to decrease.

To summarize the events, 1928 represented a turning point in the history of Russia. In this year, Stalinism was able to consolidate its victory by crushing the opponents and advance state capitalism as fast as possible without any obstacles. During its sixth congress in August 1928, the Comintern became part of Russia's foreign policy, and by adopting the anti-Marxist thesis of "socialism in one country", the Second International signed its death warrant in 1914 by participating in the imperialist war, announced its demise and ended its life.

Trotsky was exiled to Almaty in January 1928 and eventually expelled from the Soviet Union in February 1929. First, he spent his

exile in Turkey, then in France and Norway, and finally in Mexico, where he was murdered by Stalin's terror apparatus. Even in exile (while in Turkey), Trotsky did not cut his umbilical cord from the stinking corpse (Comintern) and declared that he and his followers were loyal to the Comintern. Although they had been expelled from it, Trotsky and his followers wanted to resurrect the stinking corpse of the Comintern and then reform it. He went even further and considered the anti-revolution to be the scout of the working class and advised that the place of opponents was among these. Trotskyists write:

“Despite the comprehensiveness of its criticism of the Comintern, Trotskyism did not aspire to set up a new communist movement....He declared that he and his adherents owed their loyalty to the Communist International even though they had been expelled from it...they therefore stood for a reform of international, not for a permanent break with it. Trotsky believed that with all their flaws and vices the Communist parties still represented the militant vanguard of the working classes. The opposition's place was with that vanguard.”⁷⁶

⁷⁶ *The Prophet Outcast* – Isaac Deutscher – page 33

The Break Between Trotsky and the Communist Left

Following Trotsky's turn to the opposition, there were alignments between Trotsky and his supporters with the communist left. This trend was visible both in Russia and internationally. The communist left expressed solidarity against the repression of Trotsky and his supporters. Correspondence or a level of relations between Trotsky and the communist left was formed, but due to Trotsky's ambiguities, theoretical limitations and intellectual confusion, these ended after some time. First, we take a very brief look at these relationships, then examine how Trotsky, despite his criticism and struggle with the rise of Stalin's counter-revolution, could not cut his umbilical cord and prepared the ground for his heirs to merge into the left of capital. In fact, the communist left was able to defend the positions of the proletariat in those difficult conditions and be the defender of true communism!⁷⁷

We have already examined the group of workers of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks), whose manifesto expressed the level of theoretical maturity of the Russian communist left despite the limitations of the Russian conditions. The workers' group's defence of internationalism, the world revolution and the concept of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as well as their condemnation of theses such as the "united front", "workers' government" and so on, represented the defence of the proletarian

⁷⁷ Examining the communist left in general and the Russian communist left in particular is not the focus of this section. Any brief description will certainly be incomplete. The international communist current has begun to publish a series of books entitled *The Italian Communist Left*, *The Russian Communist Left*, *The British Communist Left* and *The Dutch and German Communist Left*. Reading them is recommended for learning about the history and positions of the communist left currents before World War II.

positions of that group in class conflicts. At that time, Trotsky himself was in the ranks of the oppressors and played a role in suppressing the communist left.

Democratic Centralists (Decists) had existed since 1919 and constantly fought against the dangers of bureaucracy in the party and government. A group of Decists known as the “Group of Fifteen” presented their platform to the 15th party congress, a crime for which they were immediately expelled from the party. The positions of the “Group of Fifteen” platform on issues such as the nature of the Soviet Union, the workers’ government, etc., were very close to those of the “Workers’ Group”.

In the years 1928-1929, discussions took place between Trotsky and the Democratic Centralists, in which Trotsky focused his efforts on showing that the damage caused by the errors of the “extreme left” had caused the greatest damage to the opposition.

For the Decists, or at least a significant number of them, the events of 1927 to 1928 and the repression of the opposition by Stalin’s terror apparatus indicated that the Bolshevik Party had completely lost its proletarian nature and had become a “stinking corpse” and that there was nothing left to defend the Soviet regime. Trotsky was strongly against such a view and fought against it, and in his letter titled “Our Differences with the Democratic Centralists” he wrote to Borodai:

“Your Kharkov colleagues, from what I am informed, have addressed themselves to the workers with an appeal based upon the false idea that the October revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat are already liquidated. This

manifesto, false in essence, has done the greatest harm to the Opposition.”⁷⁸

After the unbridled repression of Stalin’s terror apparatus, which led to the silence of the communist left in Russia, lessons learned from Russian events, in addition to the proletarian defence of the achievements of the October Revolution and the presentation of theoretical horizons, were transferred outside of Russia, and this honour went to the communist left of Italy.

Following the launch of the anti-Trotskyist campaign in the communist parties by order of the Comintern, this campaign was opposed in Italy by a group including Bordiga. Bordiga’s opposition led to the expulsion of this group from the party on the trumped-up charge of leaning towards Trotskyism, while Bordiga himself was the founder of the Communist Party of Italy.

The Italian communist abandoned the hesitations of 1925 and transformed itself into a faction with its own organs and discipline. The important point is that due to the suppression of fascism, a large number of Italian communists lived in exile in various countries, and many non-Italian revolutionaries considered themselves to be part of this faction. As a result, it correctly declared itself not an Italian one, but the left faction of the Communist International. While declaring solidarity with Trotsky, the left faction continued to emphasize their differences in political positions:

“While the Fraction was in solidarity with Trotsky, it still defended its own standpoint: the theses of Bordiga, and of the Comintern’s 2nd Congress; it thus rejected the 3rd and 4th Congresses defended by the Russian Opposition

⁷⁸ 1924-28: the triumph of Stalinist state capitalism

current around Trotsky. Finally, it should be noted that it formed itself not as an ‘Italian Fraction’ but as a ‘Left Fraction of the Communist International’.”⁷⁹

In 1929, when there was still a prospect of joint cooperation between the left faction of the Communist International and Trotsky, he wrote an open letter to Trotsky and published it in *Prometeo No. 20*. The faction had significant influence, especially in France, and its publications sold more than any opposition group. For the Stalinists, the “number one enemy” was not the Trotskyists, but the faction. Trotsky knew Bordiga personally and was aware of the faction’s political weight and did not want to alienate it, but intended to create an opposition based on “Bolshevik-Leninist” ideas. On 25 September 1929, Trotsky responded to Fraction’s open letter as follows:

“Thus having, on one side, centrists like Ercoli, on the other the ultra-leftist confusionists, you, comrades, are called upon, in the difficult conditions of the fascist dictatorship, to defend the historic interests of the Italian and of the international proletariat. With all my heart, I wish you good luck and success.”

However, Trotsky’s answer contained a kind of ambivalence, which was met with an unequivocal answer from the Fraction. Until 1934 there was some kind of relationship between Trotsky and Trotskyism with the communist left, but in this year the break was definitive. The main focus of the Trotskyists’ struggle was to reform the Communist International, or in other words, to fight and try to revive the stinking corpse. The goal of the communist left was not

⁷⁹ *The Italian Communist Left* – the ICC – page 54

to revive the stinking corpse, but to form a faction and defend proletarian and communist positions and fight against the Comintern, which had now become the centre of counter-revolution. The Trotskyists describe this break in the following way:

“In this period, an attempt at collaborating with the Bordigists, in the same international organisation, proved fruitless. The Copenhagen Conference registered the impossibility of our being in the same movement, under the given circumstances.”⁸⁰

After years of trying in vain to revive the stinking corpse, the Trotskyists realized the futility of their efforts to reform the Communist International and became tired attempting to reforming it and decided to form their own organization.

Trotsky was looking for the declaration of the Fourth International because he believed that a revolutionary upsurge was imminent, and this misconception led him to take reactionary positions in later events. During the events of May 1936, Trotsky announced that the French revolution had begun. For Trotsky, the Sino-Japanese war in 1937 and the national liberation war were not a prelude to a world war, but to the Chinese revolution.

Trotsky could not overcome the weaknesses inherited from the Second International and Third International, and he not only failed to fight these weaknesses, but made a virtue out of them, and was not able to present a clear picture of the necessity of overthrowing the bourgeois state and fighting for communism. To conquer the masses, the united front, the minimum programme, etc., were used. Trotsky called on his supporters to “fight reformism in their strongholds” and enter the currents of the Belgian Labour Party

⁸⁰ *The Fourth International: The Long March of the Trotskyists*- Pierre Frank

(POB) and the French Section of the Workers' International (SFIO) and "bring the revolutionary program to the masses". This meant their disappearance as a revolutionary movement among traitors and apostates. In other words, they crossed the border of the proletariat and entered the land of traitors. The undeniable truth is that the transformation of Trotskyism towards social democracy began during Trotsky's time and during the events in France, Spain, etc., and with its completion during World War II, Trotskyism was forever integrated into the left of capital. The communist left faction expressed its position in this regard as follows:

"Trotsky has rapidly disappointed us. Today he is lipping and we wonder whether this is a definitive fall on his part or an eclipse which the events of tomorrow will dissipate. In any case, in the present situation, we have to wage a pitiless struggle against him and his partisans who have crossed the Rubicon⁸¹ and rejoined social democracy."⁸²

Prometeo, the Fraction's magazine, was the only one in the revolutionary milieu that condemned the Spanish Republic a reactionary republic and against the working class. The faction believed that the Spanish Republic was an attack against the workers to eliminate any possibility of class reaction. Trotsky and his supporters defended the Spanish Republic as an anti-feudal republic. This analysis was one of the main reasons for the split between the Trotskyist movement and the Italian communist left faction. With the start of the imperialist war, Trotskyism made the workers cannon fodder in the imperialist conflicts and completely integrated into the left of capital, which will be carefully examined in the following sections.

⁸¹ [Rubicon](#)

⁸² *Bilan* no. 11 September 1934

Trotsky and the Nature of the Soviet Union

One of Trotsky's biggest mistakes was his assessment of the nature of the Soviet Union. On the one hand, Trotsky's theoretical confusion and ambiguities, and on the other, his idealistic attitude to the process of social developments in Russia and the world caused Trotskyism to turn workers into cannon fodder in imperialist conflicts, especially in World War II, and the hands of Trotskyists became stained with the blood of the working class. This issue will be discussed in the next chapters. First, we examine the areas of Trotsky's ambiguities that played an important role in Trotsky's idealistic attitude.

We already mentioned Trotsky's ambiguities regarding the concept of socialism that he inherited from the Second International. Without being able to cite Marx, Trotsky asserted that Marx and all Marxists equated state ownership with the workers' state and he discussed national ownership, which is in contradiction to socialization. Trotsky distorted Marx and Marxism in broad daylight. Neither Marx nor all Marxists had such an opinion. Trotsky wrote:

“It is perfectly true that Marxists, beginning with Marx himself, have employed in relation to the workers' state the terms *state*, *national* and *socialist* property as simple synonyms.”⁸³

Since for Trotsky nationalization was tantamount to socialization, for him the main task of socialism was not the abolition of wage labour, but the expropriation of property from the bourgeoisie. It is based on this background that Trotsky

⁸³ *The Revolution Betrayed* – Chapter 9 - Trotsky

considered private property in the hands of private capitalists to be a feature of capitalism and state ownership to be one of socialism. Trotsky wrote:

“The first concentration of the means of production in the hands of the state to occur in history was achieved by the proletariat with the method of social revolution, and not by capitalists with the method of state russification.”⁸⁴

To prove his false and non-Marxist claim, Trotsky clung to an illogical and metaphysical argument and stated that before socialization, private property must go through the stage of state ownership. He stated:

“In order to become social, private property must as inevitably pass through the state stage as the caterpillar in order to become a butterfly must pass through the pupal stage.”⁸⁵

Trotsky usually resorted to metaphors in his arguments, but unfortunately, these lose their true meaning and content in social events. The laws of biology cannot be generalized to social science. Edible salt is a chemical compound of chlorine, which is poisonous, and a dangerous metal, sodium, while their chemical composition is edible salt, which is not only poisonous and dangerous, but also a necessity for human life. Is it possible to combine two toxic and dangerous phenomena in social science and then expect the result to be useful and necessary for society? Trotsky's assertion is baseless and non-dialectical.

⁸⁴ As source 83

⁸⁵ As above

On the other hand, the interpretation of Trotsky's statements becomes that wherever state ownership (state capitalism) prevails, half of the transition to socialization has been completed. Trotsky failed to understand that in the age of capitalist decline, when capital feels threatened, it tends towards statehood, that is, state capitalism, and this issue has been clearly observed in both metropolitan and peripheral capitalism in the last century.

Trotsky failed to recognize that the bureaucracy he was talking about was the new ruling class that owned the means of production, collectively appropriated the surplus value resulting from the exploitation of the working class and then transferred the resulting surplus value between its members. The ruling class, the bureaucracy, was divided. This whole process was carried out collaboratively. For Trotsky, Russia was socialist because:

“The nationalization of the land, the means of industrial production, transport and exchange, together with the monopoly of foreign trade, constitute the basis of the Soviet social structure.”⁸⁶

As long as the Soviet Union was a workers' country, Trotsky argued, the workers should not be expected or encouraged to turn away from the Third International. Trotsky went even further and claimed that the proletariat would continue to be the ruling class as long as the state ownership created by the October Revolution was not destroyed. If the proletariat was the ruling class, according to both Trotsky and Stalin, then what was the difference between Trotsky and Stalin? Apparently, the only one was in the way the proletarian rule was applied! In 1936, Trotsky wrote:

⁸⁶ *The Revolution Betrayed* - Chapter 9 - Trotsky

“So long as the forms of property that have been created by the October Revolution are not overthrown, the proletariat remains the ruling class.”⁸⁷

How was the proletariat in 1936 the ruling class that had no power in the councils, in the factory committees, or in any other proletarian institutions, and how did it exercise its rule? How did the working class exercise its political power? How was the proletarian rule the one in which proletarian protests and strikes were suppressed? Trotsky failed to realize that he was committing one of his greatest mistakes by defending the nature of the Soviet Union not on the basis of a class criterion, but on purely judicial law. The government’s ownership of the main centres of the economy and monopoly on foreign trade formed the main grounds for Trotsky’s defence of the proletarian nature of the state. Trotsky’s ambiguities prevented him from being able to see that counter-revolution could stabilize capitalism based on state property. Trotsky continued his mental turmoil. We have already observed that Trotsky believed that the proletariat was the ruling class in 1936; on the other hand, in the same year, he stated that the worldview of the ruling class was a petit bourgeois one and wrote:

“The petty bourgeois outlook of the new ruling stratum was his own outlook.”⁸⁸

Trotsky considered the basis of Stalinism to be the workers’ state and the grave-digger of the proletarian October Revolution, that is, Stalinism was the proletariat. Now Trotsky put a “proletarian seal” against the revolution that celebrated its victory

⁸⁷ The Class Nature of the Soviet State - Leon Trotsky

⁸⁸ *The Revolution Betrayed* - The Degeneration of the Bolshevik Party

on the ruins of the glorious October Revolution. Apparently, there was no end to Trotsky's intellectual turmoil, because he wrote:

“Stalinism is a variety of the same system, but upon the basis of a workers' state.”⁸⁹

Of course, after that, the word “degenerate” was added to the proletarian state, and the Soviet Union was named the “Degenerated Workers' State”. Trotsky argued that the Stalinist superstructure (bureaucracy) conflicted with the proletarian substructure of the economy. He believed that the bureaucracy would prevent the transition to socialism in order to preserve its privileges. It was the bureaucracy that orchestrated the nationalization of the main industries and the monopoly of foreign trade, which Trotsky believed was the basis of socialism. These contradictions could not be explained by Trotsky. The whole theory of the “Degenerated Workers' State” was based on this intellectual confusion. It is interesting to note that every state that for any reason fell under the Soviet umbrella became a “Degenerated Workers' State”. It was with such an explanation that the Trotskyists evaluated the entire former Eastern Bloc as a “Degenerated Workers' State”.

The judicial form of ownership of the means of production does not determine the class nature of the state. It is the relations of production that shape the nature of the mode of production as well as the nature of production, distribution and the ideological superstructure of society. Capital is a specific historical and social relationship that is based on the exclusion and separation of labour from the means of production. The important point is that it is the relations of production that turn work into a commodity. Therefore, without the abolition of wage labour, it is meaningless to talk about

⁸⁹ *The Revolution Betrayed* - Bonapartism as a regime of crisis - Leon Trotsky

socialism. The struggle for socialism is the fight for the abolition of wage labour, the state, the law of value, and commodity production. Since the early 1930s, the left opposition, especially the left wing of the Trotskyist movement, had expected Trotsky to question the proletarian nature of the Soviet Union and define it as non-proletarian. But Trotsky still emphasized the proletarian nature of the Stalinist state and declared that “bureaucracy is not at all a new exploiting class in the Marxist sense”, which caused great discouragement for Trotsky’s supporters. Trotsky rejected the assertions of those who assessed the nature of the Soviet Union as state capitalism. Of course, it must be acknowledged that Trotsky’s arguments in rejecting state capitalism revealed his ambiguities to a greater extent. Trotsky wrote:

“An attempt has been made to conceal the enigma of the Soviet regime by calling it “state capitalism”. This term has the advantage that nobody knows exactly what it means. The term “state capitalism” originally arose to designate all the phenomena which arise when a bourgeois state takes direct charge of the means of transport or of industrial enterprises. The very necessity of such measures is one of the signs that the productive forces have outgrown capitalism and are bringing it to a partial self-negation in practice.”⁹⁰

In state capitalism and ownership as well as planning, the market does not disappear, because goods are exchanged and distributed only in and through the market. In state capitalism, in its dominant form, prices are determined not by individual capitalists or groups of them, but by the state, and instead of individual capitalists, it is the state that extracts surplus value. In

⁹⁰ *The Revolution Betrayed*- State Capitalism - Leon Trotsky

other words, as long as there is wage labour, regardless of who is the employer, whether an individual capitalist, a group or the state, surplus value is produced and there is exploitation. According to Trotsky, profit is made by state capitalism in the following manner:

“Under an integral ’state capitalism’, this law of the equal rate of profit would be realized, not by devious routes - that is, competition among different capitals- but immediately and directly through state bookkeeping. Such a regime never existed, however, and, because of profound contradictions among the proprietors themselves, never will exist- the more so since, in its quality of universal repository of capitalist property, the state would be too tempting an object for social revolution”.⁹¹

The determination of prices and the issue of profit were discussed above. But that part of Trotsky’s argument which states that such a regime (state capitalism) has never existed, so it cannot occur, is baseless. For this reason, the Soviets were formed for the first time during the Russian Revolution. Could a person or movement argue that such a labour organization never developed, so such a labour organization could not be established?

But the second part of Trotsky’s assertion is correct because state ownership or state capitalism itself has been and will be a goal for social revolution. In this way, the fundamental difference between Trotskyists and the communist left is determined. Trotsky and the Trotskyists believed that the Eastern Bloc only needed a political revolution for the proletariat to overthrow the bureaucracy and become the ruling class, while the communist left

⁹¹ *The Revolution Betrayed* - State Capitalism - Leon Trotsky

has always insisted that in the former Eastern Bloc, as elsewhere on this earth, the proletariat is able to exercise its political sovereignty only through a social revolution. Contrary to the members of the communist left who maintained that the Soviet Union had joined the counter-revolutionary army and become a counter-revolutionary stronghold, Trotsky still insisted, even in 1936, that the Soviet Union was a socialist country and a fighting base for the proletarian revolution. Trotsky wrote:

“Thus the strength of the bureaucracy, both domestic and international, is in inverse proportion to the strength of the Soviet Union as a socialist state and a fighting base of the proletarian revolution.”⁹²

Trotsky not only continued his unconditional defence of the Soviet Union, but also stated that it was the duty of every political group to defend the socialist Soviet Union. Trotsky went even further and stated that any political group that denied the duty of defending the Soviet Union on the pretext that it was not socialist faced the danger of becoming a tool of imperialism. Trotsky’s argument was that if the bureaucratic balance in the Soviet Union was disturbed, the counter-revolution would benefit from it. As a result, the unconditional defence of the Soviet Union should be continued. While respecting Trotsky, it must be acknowledged that his thoughts become really disgusting at this point. He wrote:

“The new International ... before it can reform the Soviet state, must take upon itself the duty to defend it. Any political grouping which disavows this commitment, under the pretext that the Soviet Union is no longer a workers’

⁹² *The Revolution Betrayed* - The League of Nations and the Communist International- Leon Trotsky

state, risks becoming a passive tool of imperialism. The adherents of the new International, he added, must in an hour of mortal danger fight on the last barricade' in defence of the U.S.S.R".⁹³

⁹³ *The Prophet Outcast* –Isaac Deutscher - page 165

Trotsky and the Political Revolution

We have already seen how Trotsky argued that the Stalinist political superstructure (bureaucracy) was in conflict with the proletarian substructure of the economy. He believed that the bureaucracy would prevent the transition to socialism in order to preserve its privileges. As a result, the Soviet Union needed a political revolution and not a social one. Trotsky stated that in the same way as the French bourgeoisie had to complete the social revolution of 1789 to 1793 by means of the political ones of 1830 and 1848, so that there was no alteration in the economic structure, but the rulers and the methods of state changed, the same should occur in connection with the October Revolution. According to Trotsky, to “save” the October Revolution, the proletariat only needed to overthrow the bureaucracy (Stalinist political system) and carry out reforms, but not a social revolution. In fact, the defence of the proletarian nature of the Soviet Union was Trotsky’s main belief until his death, which was also the root of Trotsky’s political mistakes. He wrote:

“After the political revolution - that is, the deposing of the bureaucracy - the proletariat would have to introduce in the economy a series of very important reforms, but not another social revolution.”⁹⁴

Trotsky’s belief that Russia was a workers’ state and only needed a political revolution to become socialist by removing the bureaucracy shows that Trotsky failed to understand the nature of

⁹⁴ *The Revolution Betrayed* -The question of the character of the Soviet Union not yet decided by history- Leon Trotsky

capitalism and that his idea of socialism was not in the Marxist sense, but shared the same understanding as Stalinism.

As mentioned earlier, Trotsky deduced the nature of the Soviet state not from its relations of production, but from the form of state ownership. Because state ownership prevailed, he argued, it was proletarian in nature. Marxists do not understand the nature of the state from its legal forms. On the contrary, they comprehend it from the relations of production. For Trotsky, five-year plans by a state that owns the means of production were towards socialism. The Soviet five-year plans of the 1930s called for an intensification of the exploitation of the working class, using Taylorism and new techniques to manage labour and raise productivity. The new ruling class in the Soviet Union, like the classical private bourgeoisie, found the driving force in the development of national capital. In the era of capitalist decline, capital is not able to accumulate in absolute isolation and must be integrated into global capital. But according to Trotsky's argument, the Soviet Union only needed a political revolution due to the parasitic nature of the bureaucracy. Expressing the parasitic nature of the bureaucracy does not convey the class nature of the state and cannot explain the inevitable need of the bourgeois state to serve the process of capital accumulation. Trotsky could not comprehend the new social relations in the Soviet Union and therefore was unable to provide tasks appropriate to the new era. He therefore continued to insist:

“On this point, that the Soviet Union, however ‘bureaucratically deformed’, remained a workers’ state, Trotsky was adamant. What, in his view, determined the social character of the Soviet state was the national ownership of the means of production. As long as this, the most important conquest of October’, was unimpaired, the

Soviet Union possessed the foundations on which to base its socialist development.”⁹⁵

After World War II, the world was re-divided between the conquering states and Eastern Europe came under Soviet domination. The proletarian revolution never took place in the countries of Eastern Europe and these were absorbed under the umbrella of the Soviet Union. But the Trotskyists remained loyal to their preceptor and evaluated those countries as workers’ states that only needed a political revolution to remove the bureaucracy. The Trotskyists justify the destruction of capitalism in countries such as the Eastern Bloc and North Korea in this way:

“At the same time, the 'cold war' led the Soviet Union (in order to protect its buffer states) to effect a social change -- by military-bureaucratic means -- in the East European countries its armies had entered during the war. Despite a few measures aimed at those members of the propertied classes who had collaborated with the Germans, the army had left the bourgeois social structures of these countries intact. The 'cold war' forced the Kremlin to liquidate the bases of capitalism in those countries and to transform them into workers states.”⁹⁶

Is overthrowing capitalism in a “bureaucratic-military” way nothing more than demagoguery? Isn’t the change of capitalism to the “bureaucratic-military” mode the same as social democracy in the best case? Isn’t the military overthrow of capitalism identical to taking political power through a coup? The only subversive force of capitalism, i.e., the working class, is absent in these arguments, and

⁹⁵ *The Prophet Outcast* - Isaac Deutscher - page 34

⁹⁶ *The Fourth International-The Long March of the Trotskyists* - Pierre Frank

the only way to overthrow capitalism, i.e., social revolution, has given way to bureaucracy and conspiracy.

Apparently, according to the Trotskyists, as long as the capitalist system was not restored in the Eastern Bloc, all these states were workers' states, whoever the officials and government officials were. And whatever they did, it would not create the slightest disturbance in the working nature of these states. That the Soviet workers' states intervened to suppress the workers' uprising of the Hungarian workers' state in 1956 and succeeded in re-establishing its rule after killing the workers, or that again in 1968 the same Soviet workers' state attacked the Hungarian workers' state with 2,000 tanks to suppress the protests in Prague, still did not change the nature of these states for the Trotskyists.

For Trotskyists, the material force of social changes, i.e., the working class, is meaningless and only a tool. From a Marxist point of view as well as dialectically, it is not the labour leaders and Marxist leaders who fuel the labour movement, but on the contrary, it is the intensification of the class struggle that brings its spokespersons and leaders to the field. In the demagoguery of the Trotskyists, at the height of the counter-revolutionary period, a "Marxist leader" will suddenly descend from the sky and, like a legendary hero with magical abilities, seize power in the Soviet Union and establish a socialist democracy. Not only would the Eastern Bloc be liberated and pure socialism implemented there, but the anti-colonial revolutions would add a new type of workers' states to the current ones. Does this nonsense have the slightest connection with Marxism? Do the Trotskyists smear Marxism and throw dust in the eyes of the working class any less than the Stalinists? Trotskyists make such speeches:

"The Soviet Union, even without proletarian democracy being established in it, has a huge attractive power from the point of

view of the masses of the colonized countries because this country, in a period of less than half a century, the existence of practical possibilities in a backward country, in terms of improving the level of its economic growth, proves to be an advanced industrial country and improving the living conditions of the masses. If, in the not-too-distant future, a Marxist revolutionary leadership takes power in the Soviet Union and thus places socialist democracy inside and revolutionary solidarity outside that country, the process of integrating the anti-colonial revolution into the workers' states can accelerate tremendously".⁹⁷

⁹⁷ *The Fourth International* – Pierre Frank, pages 251-252 (Persian edition).

Trotsky and Entryism

Entryism is a special policy on the part of the Trotskyists, according to which policy and their own assessment they infiltrate reformist parties, institutions and movements and, as they say, introduce their revolutionary programme into the mass organizations of the working class to fight against the reformism within them and, by radicalizing the reformist movement, lead it to the path that has a revolutionary programme and platform.

In the 1930s, Trotsky himself was the originator of the policy of entryism under the name “French Turn”. According to Trotsky’s advice, the Trotskyists in France should go into the Socialist Party and take their revolutionary programme to the masses of the people so that they could attract workers and militants to it as well as to the Fourth International. Trotsky, of course, extended this policy to all countries and advised his supporters to join social democratic parties in order to implement this policy. Trotskyists explain the politics of entryism as follows:

“In our efforts to move towards a stronger organisation, we were to pass through a stage in which the Trotskyist group would temporarily lose its organisational independence by entering a mass working class party. Trotsky himself raised the question of the Ligue Communiste entering the SFIO. The move was decided on in September-October of 1934. This policy, called *entryism*, was subsequently extended to other countries... Since then the majority of the organisation has considered this tactic admissible.”⁹⁸

⁹⁸ *The Fourth International-The Long March of the Trotskyists- Entryism - Pierre Frank*

One of the demagogic methods of the Trotskyists is introducing bourgeois parties under the title of labour parties. Their reasoning is that these parties have a workers' base, and in other words, they are a gathering place for workers. This is at best a sociological argument and not a class one. This programme represents the goals and most importantly the performance of a political movement that determines its class nature. Trotskyists explain their entry into a bourgeois party and conquest of it from within as follows:

“After the war, the International had come out in favour of the British Trotskyists entering the Labour Party... No major social crisis in a European country could fail to involve a major crisis for the mass workers parties in that country, especially the dominant workers party. Sustained activity in the mass parties, more especially in the main mass party in each country, was thus placed on the order of the day.”⁹⁹

Entryism was somewhat successful for the Trotskyists in Britain, not because they were able to transform their revolutionary programme into the programme of the “Labour Party” and “Independent Labour Party”, but because they were able to attract members to Trotskyism. However, talking about the revolutionary programme of the Trotskyists is nothing more than demagoguery, because in the mid-1930s, Trotskyism was shedding its last revolutionary ideas and preparing itself to merge with the left of capital, which during World War II betrayed internationalism and dragged the working class into the imperialist slaughter, and with this the integration of Trotskyism into the left of capital was complete.

⁹⁹ *The Fourth International-The Long March of the Trotskyists- Critique of the Third World Congress* - Pierre Frank

Of course, the politics of entryism led more to the rupture and dispersion in the ranks of the Trotskyists than to bringing the reformers into the revolutionary programme of the Trotskyists. Trotskyists explain the failure of entryism as follows:

“Trotskyism could not appeal, except episodically, to the rank and file of a Social Democratic Party; it went too strongly against their habits of thought and deep-rooted reformist tradition. Trotsky could not defeat Blum's¹⁰⁰ influence on Blum's native ground, which was what he indirectly undertook to do. His followers entered the S.F.I.O. as a tiny group without authority or prestige, proclaiming in advance their enmity to the party's established leaders and accepted tenets. They made a few converts among the young, but soon ran up against a wall of hostility.”¹⁰¹

In this sense, although the Trotskyists were able to attract young people to them with the politics of entryism, in reality, the Trotskyists had become a tool in the hands of the Socialist Party, which the Socialist Party used for its own interests and purposes. Being a tool in the hands of the socialists with non-class reasoning which was very weak in its process ended up being to the detriment of the Trotskyists and disgusted the ones in the political environment. Trotskyists are aware of this issue and explain it as follows:

“‘French turn’ removed the Trotskyists even further from the mass of communists and provided grist to Stalinist propaganda. To the communist rank and file the claim that they had joined the S.F.I.O. only in order to ‘give battle to

¹⁰⁰ [Léon Blum](#)

¹⁰¹ *The prophet outcast* - Enemy of the people - Isaac Deutscher - page 220

reformism' sounded like a flimsy pretext. Communists saw the Social Democrats making for a time political capital out of the Trotskyists' adherence; and they heard the latter inveighing against Stalinism from Social Democratic platforms... All the same, the 'French turn' helped to change the antipathy the ordinary French communist felt for Trotskyism into an intense animosity; and even if the difference was only one of a nuance, it was not unimportant: it was by such imperceptible gradations that the mood of western communists was being worked up to that furious abhorrence of Trotskyism in which they were to receive the Great Purges."¹⁰²

Infiltration or entryism is one of the basic policies of Trotskyists. In the 1930s, Trotskyists entered the Socialist Party of France using entryism, and with the same policy they entered the "Labour Party" and "Independent Labour Party" in Britain, as well as the Communist Party of Belgium in the 1950s and 1960s to change its policies. Trotskyists also participated in the formation of the Brazilian Labour Party with the same policy. These are only a few examples of the politics of how Trotskyism has worked tirelessly to consolidate and identify its bourgeois parties under the titles of "labour", "democratic" and "socialist" parties, and of course the list could be extended.

¹⁰² *The Prophet Outcast* - Enemy of the people - Isaac Deutscher – page 221

Trotsky and the Rise of Nazism

For internationalists, the rise of fascism was the product of specific historical conditions in the capitalist system. In other words, fascism was the product of the failure of the revolutionary struggles of the working class at the global level. Successive defeats of the working class in the 1920s paved the way for the rise of fascism.

The rise of Nazism was rooted in two basic factors. The first was the failure of the German revolution, and the second was the German bourgeoisie, which was still suffering from the consequences of the defeat of World War I. The social democrats (Labour Party) prepared the ground for the rise of Nazism by suppressing the bloody German revolution. Hitler's militias were the heirs of Noske's Freikorps, which had murdered Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Liebknecht, and thousands of communists and workers.¹⁰³ The proletarian threat was eliminated by the German Labour Party (social democracy), not by the Nazis, and Nazism grew when this threat was eliminated and the democratic bourgeoisie overcame the working class.

“The false policy of the International in Germany resulted ten years later in the victory of Hitler—that is, in a threatening war danger from the West.”¹⁰⁴

Trotsky argued that the incorrect policy of the Comintern in Germany led to the victory of Hitler or, in other words, that the anti-

¹⁰³ In 1924, Emil Julius Gumbel published a famous book entitled *Four Years of Political Murder*. He was not a revolutionary communist, but a defender of the bourgeois republic established in Weimar. Despite his bourgeois thoughts, he was searching for the truth of how political and systematic murders took place in Germany.

¹⁰⁴ *The Revolution Betrayed*- Trotsky- page 52

revolutionary policy of the Comintern was in line with the collapse of the German revolution and the defeat of the working class paved the way to it. Despite this, it gave Soviet diplomacy the ability to wait for the right opportunity, to negotiate with Hitler and even temporarily come to an understanding with him and sign a friendship pact.¹⁰⁵

In the world of politicians, such positions are normal, but is such an argument compatible with Marxism? Trotsky recommends what Stalin was doing. Apparently, at this point, the difference between Trotsky and Stalin was that Stalin is in power and Trotsky was in the opposition. Trotsky argued:

“Hitler’s bloodless victory and the total destruction of the German left, Trotsky now pointed out, turned the balance against the Soviet Union, especially as the Soviet Union was also weakened internally by the Stalinist collectivization. Soviet diplomacy was therefore entitled to bide its time, to parley, and even to seek a temporary accommodation with Hitler.”¹⁰⁶

Contrary to Trotsky, Bordiga, one of the Italian communist left figures, evaluated the victory of fascism as the result of the failure of the social revolution, in other words, the historical failure of the working class, and said:

“In 1919-20, the Italian workers seized factories on their own initiative, thus signalling the news to their ‘leaders’ of

¹⁰⁵ On 23 August 1939, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was signed between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

¹⁰⁶ *The Prophet Outcast* – Reason and Unreason – Isaac Deutscher - page 173

the coming of the social revolution. The ‘leaders’ paid no heed to the signal. The victory of fascism was the result.”¹⁰⁷

Trotsky then argued that the seizure of power by the Nazis meant that the workers’ state must engage in revolutionary defence of itself, and that the duty of every revolutionary worker was to defend the workers’ state. In this context he said:

“Yet it should be ‘an axiom’ that a Nazi attempt to seize power’ must be followed by a mobilization of red army. For the workers’ state this will be a matter of revolutionary self-defences... Germany is not only Germany. It is the heart of Europe. Hitler is not only Hitler. He is the candidate for the role of a super- Wrangell. But the red army is not only Red Army. It is the instrument of proletarian world revolution.”¹⁰⁸

Unfortunately, in defence of the Soviet Union, Trotsky’s fall had no boundaries. The Red Army in the mid- or late 1930s was not the same as the Red Army in 1918-1920. In 1918-1920, the Red Army was considered a proletarian organ and a weapon of the global proletarian revolution. The adoption of “socialism in one country” at the sixth congress of the Comintern destroyed the last remaining revolutionary light and turned the Comintern into a bourgeois organ working against the global proletarian revolution. At this point, the Red Army was not a weapon of the proletarian revolution, but one of its destruction in the hands and at the service of the anti-revolutionaries.

As Trotsky’s intellectual confusion gradually increased and he moved away from Marxism, he was forced to present incorrect,

¹⁰⁷ *The Transitional Program* – Trotsky - Page19

¹⁰⁸ *The Prophet Outcast* - Reason and unreason-Isaac Deutscher - page 125

mechanical and non-Marxist analyses. Trotsky argued that if fascism crushed the German working class, the result would be at least half the collapse of the Soviet Union. Fascism defeated the German working class, but the Soviet Union not only failed to disintegrate, but also took over Eastern Europe, becoming one of the two superpowers and one of the two poles of the Cold War. Trotsky wrote:

“If Fascism were to crush the German working class, this would amount to at least half the collapse of the Republic of the Soviets.”¹⁰⁹

On the other hand, the global failure of the working class, in which the anti-revolutionary policies of the Comintern and the Soviet Union played a major role, prepared the ground for Russia’s integration into the world power games. From now on, the Soviet Union entered the arena of world games as a claimant of an imperialist power.

In this regard, Trotsky appeared in the role of an adviser to the imperialists and encouraged America to recognize the Soviet Union and stand by this country by establishing diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union so that they could better deal with the threats of Japan and Germany:

“In reports to the American press, Trotsky advised the United States government (which at that time – in the 16th year of the revolution – had not yet recognized the Soviet government) to approach the Soviet Union to counter the threats from Japan and Germany”.

¹⁰⁹ *The Prophet Outcast* - Reason and unreason - Isaac Deutscher - page125

Shortly after this issue, the United States decided to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union, and after that, the Soviet Union signed agreements with France, which officially prepared the ground for the honourable recognition of the Soviet Union in the League of Nations (the predecessor of the United Nations) and in the club of imperialists. The integration of the Soviet Union into the imperialist nations set the stage for the fateful British-Russian-American alliance during the imperialist war.

Contrary to the democrats' demagoguery, savagery and brutality are not characteristic of fascism and fascist regimes, but rather of capitalism in decline, where brutality takes a systematic, mechanical and industrial form. The democratic bourgeoisie is no less criminal than the fascists. For example, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the brutal bombardment of residential cities in Hamburg and Dresden, and the state terrorism of the democrats or Stalinism were no less than the brutality of fascism.

The theory of anti-fascism was one of the most powerful ideological tools to create confusion in the working class and drag it into the second imperialist war. The Spanish war provided this ground for the Stalinists, Trotskyists and anarchists to practise fighting alongside the democrats and prepare themselves for a patriotic war under the British-Russian-American imperialist alliance.

Along with Stalinists, anarchists and democrats, Trotskyists highlight the role of fascist organizations and defend bourgeois democratic institutions, as well as demagoguing the brutality of democrats. So that the number of black peoples who were massacred by the civilized and democratic governments of Britain and America was not less than the massacre of Jewish people by the Nazis. Now the political apparatus of the left of capitalism is

trying to maintain long and stubborn fascism (capitalism) by creating confusion under the title of “anti-fascism”.

At that time, it became clear to the communist left that the course of history had changed and that instead of social revolution, it was moving towards imperialist war, and a long period of counter-revolution was waiting for the working class.

Trotskyism and the Events in Spain

Following the decisive victory of the “People’s Front Republic” in the 1936 elections, the Spanish army prepared a coup under the command of General Franco against the republican government. During the coup, the workers of Barcelona armed themselves and stood up from their class ground to face it. But since the “proletarian front” dissolved in the quagmire of the anti-fascist front, all the political forces active in the working class demanded a fight against fascism instead of a class struggle. By accepting the struggle against fascism instead of the class one, many currents belonging to the working class joined the camp of capital forever and made the workers cannon fodder in the imperialist war.¹¹⁰

Seeing the danger of fascism, the Trotskyists rushed to the aid of the bourgeois republic and put all their strength and energy into the campaign of “arms for Spain” and gathering “infantry” for the international brigades. Contrary to the anti-fascism front, i.e., the different tendencies of the left of capital, the communist left stated that anti-capitalist positions should be determined so that the proletariat could gather around that class programme to fight against capitalism. The duty of the working class is to assemble around their class positions and fight against capitalism, regardless of its forms, whether dictatorial, fascist, democratic, etc.

¹¹⁰ During the events of May 1937, apart from the communist left, only a few Trotskyists around Munis and a small group of anarchists under the title “The Friends of Durruti” remained in the workers’ front. The May movement revealed the true nature and role of anarcho-syndicalist leaders. The proletarian forces were in control of the streets for four and a half days; unfortunately, the labour forces lacked leadership and goals, and despite their fighting enthusiasm, the workers stopped a few metres from the Generalidad Palace and the workers began to retreat.

General Franco's coup d'état, which started the imperialist war known as the "Civil War", lasted for three years and finally ended with his victory after a bloody massacre in 1939.

Democratic historians describe the events in Spain in the late 1930s as a civil war, while Trotskyists and anarchists evaluate it as the Spanish Revolution. For us the events of the late 1930s in Spain were neither a civil war nor a revolution, but an imperialist war whose two sides were formed by bourgeois factions, and it was considered an exercise for the slaughter of the working class in World War II. One side of the war front involved Franco with the support of German and Italian imperialism and the other consisted of the "People's Front Republic", which included Stalinists, anarchists¹¹¹ and the Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (POUM),¹¹² which was supported by the democratic imperialists. More than any other movement, it was the POUM and the CNT that registered workers for the front. These two movements announced the end of the general strike against capitalism.

During the wave of the world revolution and following the victory of the October Revolution, the CNT was able to gather the main forces of the proletariat in Spain and unite radical positions. When embracing the October Revolution, the CNT had shown its readiness to join the Communist International. But now, by turning

¹¹¹ The anarchists organized in the "Confederación Nacional del Trabajo" (CNT), which played an important role in suppressing the proletarian revolt in Barcelona, while anti-government champions entered the cabinet with four ministers. A very weak movement of anarchists in 1937 under the title "The Friends of Durruti" rose up to fight against the reactionary positions of the CNT and tried to remain loyal to the positions of the insurgent workers, but the CNT suppressed them as traitors.

¹¹² The Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (POUM) was formed from the merger of the Trotskyists in the Izquierda Comunista de España (ICE) and the Workers and Peasants' Bloc (BOC) and was active during the Spanish imperialist war.

around, it had accepted the bourgeois republic, which was itself an expression of betraying the working class and mobilizing the workers for the imperialist war.

For communists, their primary task is to intervene in the class struggle, but for Trotsky, the main duty of every revolutionary was to fight against Franco, Mussolini and Hitler. In the meantime, if a political movement evaluated the Spanish Republican Army as bourgeois and declared that it did not want to become the infantry of the bourgeois army and thus not make the workers cannon fodder in imperialist conflicts, it would be accused of being “cowards” by Trotsky. Trotsky, a proletarian revolutionary, the creator of the heroic days of October and the head of the Petrograd workers’ councils, tragically fell and led the proletariat to imperialist slaughter. Trotsky wrote:

*“Only cowards, traitors, or agents of fascism can renounce aid to the Spanish Republican armies. The elementary duty of every revolutionist is to struggle against the bands of Franco, Mussolini and Hitler.”*¹¹³

Trotsky had apparently forgotten his Marxist teachings, in which the state is the organ of class rule, and bourgeois democracy and bourgeois dictatorship (fascism) are two sides of the same coin, the barbarism of capitalism. Trotsky continued his downfall and called on the workers everywhere to defend the rotten bourgeois democracy against fascism. He wrote:

“Everywhere and always, wherever and whenever revolutionary workers are not powerful enough immediately to overthrow the bourgeois regime, they defend even rotten bourgeois democracy from Fascism,

¹¹³ [Leon Trotsky](#)

and they especially defend their own position inside bourgeois democracy.”¹¹⁴

Unlike the anarchists, Stalinists and Trotskyists, the communist left did not defend the republic at that time and did not make the workers cannon fodder in the imperialist war. The communist left declared that “anti-fascism” was a formula for confusion and would only serve to obfuscate the positions of the proletariat and defeat the working class. Fascism would be able to seize power only with the defeat of the working class, so that social democracy after World War I, by suppressing labour struggles, and then Stalinism in the 1920s, by defeating the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat, prepared the ground for fascism.

The characteristic of the 1930s was the definite and temporary failure of the global working class and the preparation of the main imperialist powers for a global conflict. These paved the way for World War II.

¹¹⁴ *Revolutionary Defeatism* - Leon Trotsky

Trotsky and the Formation of the Fourth International

In periods when the class struggle is stagnating and retreating, a revolutionary organization with very weak influence in the working class continues to operate. It can have a direct and immediate impact on the class struggle and take the form of a party in periods of strong influence in the working class and the existence of revolutionary conditions. Revolutionary organization is a bridge between periods of stagnant class struggle, to an evolved stage of class struggle, which challenges the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The task of the revolutionary organization is to intervene in the class struggle, defend the positions and programme of the proletariat, and try to make the necessary preparations to build the future world party.

The communist left (especially the Italian communist left) had come to the conclusion that following the integration of the Comintern into the capital camp in 1928 and the temporary defeat of the proletariat and the defensiveness of the class struggle, the formation of a new party could not be included in the agenda of the proletariat. This was because the creation of such a party is not voluntary, but is the product of the special conditions of the class struggle in which the existing organizations and groups are not able to meet the needs of the class struggle and the development of a global party is the order of the day. The communist left stated that what was needed was the establishment of communist factions to defend proletarian positions and programmes and allow them to establish a new party when the conditions of the global class struggle require it. In fact, one of the main differences between the communist left and Trotskyism in the 1930s was that the communist left faction wanted to go forward with transparency and defence of

the programme with all the forces and currents that had risen to fight the decline of the Communist International. But the Trotskyist current was trying to form a party quickly and without serious discussion, and despite the beginning of the black period of counter-revolution. Trotskyists express their goals for the establishment of the Fourth International, including the importance of the historical continuity of the revolutionary movement and the creation of the World Party of Socialist Revolution. They claim that it has also provided many services to the labour movement and that its foundation was in response to historical necessity and at the right time, and they write as follows:

“Trotsky was essentially aiming at assuring this continuity during a perilous period. It was not at all 'too soon', but rather in the nick of time, that the Fourth International was founded, at the 1938 conference. The decision to create *The World Party of Socialist Revolution* -- the name the Fourth International adopted -- rendered an inestimable service to the working class movement.”¹¹⁵

Guaranteeing the historical continuity of the revolutionary movement for the establishment of the Fourth International is baseless. Did the Bolsheviks create it in 1914 after the betrayal of the Second International? In which case, how was the historical continuity achieved? Through the Bolsheviks themselves, which until 1917, in the form of a faction, performed the same task.

The second of the goals to build a global party of socialist revolution to lead the world socialist revolution is more baseless than the previous part. The expression of the leadership of the world socialist revolution, when the proletariat had suffered a historic

¹¹⁵ *The Fourth International-The Long March of the Trotskyists* –Pierre Frank

defeat, is at best only one of voluntarism. Trotsky evaluated the world conditions and the balance of class forces in 1936 and presented a realistic assessment of the world conditions and the balance of class forces at that time:

“The Italian proletariat is in the chains of fascism; the Chinese revolution is shattered, and Japan is playing the boss in China; the German proletariat is so crushed that Hitler's plebiscite encounters no resistance whatever; the proletariat of Austria is bound hand and foot; the revolutionary parties of the Balkans are trampled in the earth; in France, in Spain, the workers are marching at the tail of the radical bourgeoisie.”¹¹⁶

For Trotsky, the most obvious feature of the global situation at that time was the historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat. At that time in France, the People's Front had won victories and Trotsky was encouraging his supporters and the workers to join unions and syndicates. For Trotsky and his friends, the formation of a new party was on the agenda during the black period of anti-revolution, while for the communist left faction, the establishment of a party during that period had no meaning. Trotsky was not able to understand the counter-revolution and the new historical conditions. Despite the unfavourable balance of class forces that Trotsky described at that time, in which the position of the proletariat was described as almost broken, he identified May and June 1936 in France as the beginning of the revolution, and in an article for the American magazine *The Nation* announced that “the French Revolution has begun”.

For Trotskyists, it is the party that instigates the revolution, not the left wing and vanguard of the working class. In the politics

¹¹⁶ *The Revolution Betrayed* - The League of Nations and the Communist International - Trotsky

of the Trotskyists, the mass of the working class is an inactive group and the only follower of the party and party leaders.

In *The Death of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International*, known as the *Transitional Program*, which he wrote in 1938 and actually functioned as the platform of the Fourth International, Trotsky showed that he was incapable of understanding the dynamics of capitalism. Unfortunately, Trotsky could not understand the evolution of capitalism and especially its decline. Trotsky evaluated the most obvious feature of the political situation in the world at that point of the historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat and wrote:

“The world political situation as a whole is chiefly characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat. The economic prerequisite for the proletarian revolution has already in general achieved the highest point of fruition that can be reached under capitalism. Mankind’s productive forces stagnate.”¹¹⁷

Unfortunately, Trotsky, drowning in mental confusion, stated that the productive forces had remained stagnant. If capitalism enters the era of decline, it does not mean the end of the growth of productive forces, but it takes a destructive form, because capitalism without capital accumulation (without the growth of productive forces) is meaningless and not able to continue.

Another aspect of Trotsky’s intellectual confusion was that he attributed the defeats of the world working class in the 1920s and then in the 1930s solely to the lack of revolutionary leadership, meaning that the working class as a social class had no place in Trotsky’s argument. According to Trotsky, it was not the social

¹¹⁷ *The Transitional Program* –Leon Trotsky

class that created social events, but the “leaders” who led the working class in different directions. It was the “opportunistic leaders” who were the main obstacle in the way of shifting to revolutionary conditions, and he wrote:

“The chief obstacle in the path of transforming the pre-Revolutionary into a revolutionary state is the opportunist character of proletarian leadership.”¹¹⁸

With such insight, Trotsky stated that in 1938, the political situation of the world was due to the historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat. For Trotsky, “labour” and “communist” parties and organizations, despite their history of betrayal and killing, could serve the revolution, but only if their leadership changed. It was because of this reactionary attitude that in 1935 Trotsky called upon the Trotskyists to enter social democracy under the “united front” tactic to take over their leadership. According to the argument of those who stated that the formation of the Communist International was the product of certain historical conditions, that is, when the class struggle at the global level takes an aggressive form and the world revolution becomes the order of the day for the proletariat and it is not possible to create the international will fully and artificially, critics are useless. See how rich and dialectical Trotsky’s assertion was in response! Trotsky answered the critics as follows:

“Sceptics ask: But has the moment for the creation of the Fourth International yet arrived? It is impossible, they say, to create an International ‘artificially’; it can arise only out of great events, etc., etc. All of these objections merely show that

¹¹⁸ *As source 117*

sceptics are no good for the building of a new International. They are good for scarcely anything at all.”¹¹⁹

Trotsky stated that the Fourth International did not need to declare its existence, because it already existed and was fighting class battles. Trotsky also claimed that apart from the Fourth International, there was no revolutionary movement on the planet worth mentioning. Trotsky also argued that although the number of members of the Fourth International was small, from a theoretical point of view, the programme and tradition of its cadres were incomparably strong, and he wrote:

“But has the time yet arrived to proclaim its creation? The sceptics are not quieted down. The Fourth International, we answer, has no need of being ”proclaimed”. It exists and it fights. It is weak? Yes, its ranks are not numerous because it is still young. They are as yet chiefly cadres. But these cadres are pledges for the future. Outside these cadres there does not exist a single revolutionary current on this planet really meriting the name. If our international be still weak in numbers, it is strong in doctrine, program, tradition, in the incomparable tempering of its cadres. Who does not perceive this today, let him in the meantime stand aside. Tomorrow it will become more evident.”¹²⁰

Trotsky could not recognize the communist left as a revolutionary trend or consider the positions of the communist left as revolutionary. He called the members of the communist left “extreme and sectarian leftists” or “extreme cosmopolitan leftists”, etc., which showed Trotsky’s distance from Marxism. Accepting

¹¹⁹ As source 117

¹²⁰ As above

the positions of the communist left as communist ones meant that Trotsky had lost his revolutionary stance and was moving towards counter-revolution. Contrary to Trotsky's claim that he considered Trotskyism to be the only revolutionary movement, the communist left not only remained loyal to Marxism, but theoretically contributed to its development and defended it not only against the Stalinists, but also against the Trotskyists and other leftist movements. The communist left criticized Trotsky's role in passing anti-labour laws when Trotsky was still in power, as well as his appeasement of the counter-revolution, and in this way, they demonstrated the baselessness of Trotsky's theories regarding the workers' government, bureaucracy, political revolution, the formation of fascism, etc. Such characteristics can indicate the uniqueness of the cadres of an intellectual trend, i.e., the communist left.

Trotsky prepared the programme and resolutions of the Fourth International in the summer of 1938, and he wanted to solve the crisis of the proletariat's leadership with a simple motivation. On 3 September 1938, a Trotskyist conference, which included representatives from 11 countries, was held on the outskirts of Paris to establish the Fourth International. As the communist left expected, the Fourth International was born dead, because not only could it not serve the clarity of proletarian positions, but it operated too much on bourgeois soil, causing further intellectual turmoil in the ranks of the revolutionaries and proletariat.

The chairman of the Trotskyist conference was Max Shachtman,¹²¹ and he voted on the reports of the commissions and resolutions, most of which were written by Trotsky. On Trotsky's

¹²¹ Max Shachtman was a member of the Communist Party of America, who was expelled from that party in 1928 for siding with Trotsky. He was one of the founders of the Socialist Workers' Party and Trotskyism in America, but soon separated from Trotskyism due to differences.

recommendation, the conference was called a constituent congress. The sections that made up the international were very weak, both in terms of the number of members and their influence in the political milieu. The most important section, in terms of the number of members, was the American one. None of the sections had been able to do serious work; the Trotskyists explain this as follows:

“Naville¹²² delivered the 'progress report', which was to justify the organizers' decision to proclaim the foundation of the Fourth International. Unwittingly, however, he revealed that the International was little more than a fiction: none of its so-called Executives and International Bureaus had been able to work in the past few years.”¹²³

During their founding congress, the Polish Trotskyists, although they accepted Trotsky's plan and positions, were against the formation of the Fourth International. Their argument was also logical; they argued that all previous internationals were formed in the conditions of the rise of class struggle and not in a period of extreme reaction and the decline of class struggle. Polish Trotskyists asserted that the working class of the countries of the world would not support the Fourth International and that the Fourth International would only be an empty gesture. In the report of the founding congress, we read:

¹²² Pierre Naville was a member of the French Communist Party. He was a member of the delegation that visited Trotsky in Moscow in 1927 and became a supporter of Trotsky, and was subsequently expelled from the French Communist Party in 1928. He participated in the establishment of the Fourth International, but separated from it in 1939. After changing parties several times, he finally went on to rebuild the United Socialist Party under the Fifth Republic.

¹²³ *The Prophet Outcast* – Isaac Deutscher - pages 340-341

“Polish section as a whole was opposed to the proclamation of the Fourth International.”¹²⁴

Trotsky gradually moved away from Marxism and a dialectical attitude and became immersed in idealism and voluntarism, and after that he shifted away from the realities of society. Trotsky optimistically imagined that the Fourth International would unite the masses in the revolutionary struggle for political power by the proletariat. Trotsky promised that the war would make the masses so desperate that they would inevitably choose the Fourth International as their leadership apparatus. He failed to understand the difference between the social conditions of World War I and World War II, to the extent that he apparently forgot even his experiences at the Zimmerwald Conference. Trotsky, who lived in Mexico and could not personally participate, wrote the following in a message to the constituent congress:

“Henceforth the Fourth International is confronted with the task of a mass movement It is now the only organization which has not merely a clear idea of what are the driving forces of this... epoch, but also a full set of day-to-day demands capable of uniting the masses for the revolutionary struggle for power... The disproportion between our strength today and our tasks tomorrow is clearer to us than to our critics. But the severe and tragic dialectic of our epoch is working for us. The masses whom [war will] drive to utter despair and indignation will find no other leadership than that which the Fourth International offers them.”¹²⁵

¹²⁴ Idem, page 341

¹²⁵ Idem, page 345

In a message to his American followers, Trotsky promised in a very confident tone that in the next 10 years, the Fourth International would include millions of revolutionaries, and they would be able to overthrow the earth and the sky. He wrote to them as follows:

“In the course of the coming ten years the programme of the Fourth International will gain the adherence of millions, and these revolutionary millions will be able to storm heaven and earth.”¹²⁶

When the prospect of world war became a reality, Trotsky asserted that the first victims of the war, along with fascism, would be the parties of the Second International and Third International. He promised a revolutionary movement that would be led by the Fourth International. Contrary to Trotsky’s argument, the victims of the imperialist war were not the parties of the Second International and Third International, but the victors of the war. The parties formed in the Second International, namely the social democratic ones, represented the Western Bloc, and the heirs of the Third International represented the Eastern Bloc, but both of them were against the working class. Trotsky argued as follows:

“Each new day will work in our favour. In the very first months of the war a stormy reaction against the fumes of chauvinism will set in among the working masses. Its first victims will be, along with fascism, the parties of the Second and Third Internationals. Their collapse will be the indispensable condition for an open revolutionary movement . . . led by the Fourth International.”¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Idem, page 345

¹²⁷ As above

The hard facts on the ground proved the opposite of Trotsky's assertion. Unlike World War I, there was no stormy reaction against the war. During World War II, the internationalists (communist left) who were against both fronts were weaker than those of World War I, and the Trotskyists used the workers as cannon fodder in the imperialist war. Contrary to Trotsky's argument, during the war, the Fourth International collapsed and the heirs of the Second International and Third International divided the world among themselves like the spoils of war.

In a meeting with Martin Kingsley, a journalist and editor-in-chief of the left-wing political magazine *New Statesman* in 1937, Trotsky firmly stated to him that the Fourth International would become a major power in the world in three to five years and said:

"I tell you that in three to five years from now the Fourth International will be a great force in the world."¹²⁸

Not only did the Fourth International fail to become a great power in the world, and not only did the working masses not accept the leadership of the Fourth International in their response to the war, but the Fourth International collapsed during the world war. After the end of World War II, the Trotskyists organized the Fourth International again, which suffered a crisis, disintegrated once more and was divided into small groups. Of course, this issue will be discussed in the next chapters. This is how Trotsky's vision and predictions are described by his heirs:

"Trotsky had expected a revolutionary wave at the end of the Second World War and he had expected the Fourth

¹²⁸ Idem

International to become the dominant force within the labour movement. There was a revolutionary wave. The Civil War in Greece, the resistance movement and the strikes in both Italy and France towards the end of the war and immediately after it, the Chinese revolution, the struggle for independence throughout the Colonial world, in Britain the landslide victory of the Labour Party in the 1945 elections, etc., all show that Trotsky's prognosis was correct.”¹²⁹

According to the Trotskyists, Trotsky's vision was confirmed, because the Fourth International became a great power in the world, due to the victory of the Labour Party in the British parliamentary elections, or that of the Maoists in China, or the struggle for independence in the colonies. Trotskyists have also smeared Trotsky's name. Even for the honour of Trotsky's name, this was not better, for they criticized the incorrect reasoning of their leader. But we cannot expect more from the left wing of capital.

We have already examined and explained Trotsky's incorrect attitude that the productive forces remain stagnant, and that the era of capitalist decline does not mean the lack of growth of the productive forces, but rather that it takes a destructive form. The fact is that the Trotskyists were loyal to their leader and did not imagine a period of economic prosperity. But the reconstruction resulting from the destruction caused by World War II followed a period of economic prosperity and showed the baselessness of the theories of Trotsky and Trotskyists, leading them to destruction. Certain Trotskyists explain the collapse of the Fourth International as follows:

¹²⁹ A Brief History of the International Marxist Tendency - In Defence of Marxism. 12 August 2006

“The leadership of the Fourth International had developed a theory that any boom was out of the question. This proved to be totally false...The destruction caused by the war meant a huge reconstruction programme was necessary. All this laid the basis for the biggest economic boom in the history of capitalism.

The leadership of the Fourth International couldn't come to terms with these new developments. They did not understand that a reappraisal of the situation was necessary. The fact is that they thought they could hold their forces together by promising revolution “round the corner”. Such a policy could only lead to the break-up of the International, and this is precisely what happened.”¹³⁰

¹³⁰ [The origins of the collapse of the Fourth International](#)

Trotskyism and the *Transitional Program*

Trotsky wrote the *Transitional Program*, which was actually the platform of the Fourth International, in 1938. Trotsky showed his departure from Marxism in the *Transitional Program* under the title “Mobilization of the masses around the demands of the transition as a preparation for seizing power”. The beginning of the transition period was possible only through smashing the bourgeois state machine. In fact, Trotsky had returned to the reformism of the Second International era, in the time of capitalist decline, by proposing minimum demands in the *Transitional Program*. Of course, part of Trotsky’s recommendations in the *Transitional Program*, such as the nationalization of banks in Eastern Europe, labour control in Yugoslavia, etc., became reality and were welcomed by Trotskyists.

Of course, Trotsky stated that since capitalism was unable to provide the reforms proposed in the *Transitional Program*, he was able to show the bankruptcy of capitalism to the working class and would pressure this class to destroy capitalism. Trotsky described the minimum and maximum programmes, as well as their flaws in his opinion:

“Classical Social Democracy, functioning in an epoch of progressive capitalism, divided its program into two parts independent of each other: the *minimum program* which limited itself to reforms within the framework of bourgeois society, and the *maximum program* which promised substitution of socialism for capitalism in the indefinite future. Between the minimum and the maximum bridge existed. And indeed Social Democracy has no need of such a bridge.”¹³¹

¹³¹ *The Transitional Program* – Leon Trotsky - page 5

When capitalism was still flourishing and the bourgeoisie was still playing a revolutionary role in society, it was possible to impose reforms on the bourgeoisie. The programmes of labour parties, which were known as social democratic parties at that time, consisted of two parts, including the minimum programme, relating to short-term demands, in other words, imposing reform on the bourgeoisie, and the maximum programme, meaning socialism. With capitalism entering the era of its decline, which is known as the era of communist revolutions or imperialist wars, it is no longer possible to impose lasting reforms on capitalism, the proletarian revolution becomes the order of the day for the proletariat, and the minimum and maximum programme of its concept collapses. But according to Trotsky, the problem was not in the minimum and maximum programme itself, but that there was no bridge between the minimum and maximum programmes. Trotsky, who was one of the creators of the October Revolution, returned to social democracy and wanted to solve the problem of social democracy. In other words, he aimed to solve the lack of a bridge between the minimum and maximum programmes through a series of transfer requests under the title of a transfer programme. Trotsky wrote:

“It is necessary to help the masses in the process of the daily struggle to find the bridge between present demand and the socialist program of the revolution. This bridge should include a system of *transitional demands*, stemming from today’s conditions and from today’s consciousness of wide layers of the working class.”¹³²

Trotsky emphasized that the old programme of social democracy, i.e., the minimum programme, would not be

¹³² As source 131

abandoned, because these demands (the minimum programme) had kept their vital force and the Fourth International would tirelessly defend democratic rights. But Trotsky replaced the old “minimum program” with the *Transitional Program* and updated it, changing the name from a “minimum program” to a “transitional program”, and returning to social democracy no longer needed all this fuss and distortion of Marxism. But Trotsky paid a heavy price for his return to social democracy and stepped away from his Marxist past. Isn’t Trotskyism the same as Stalinism in the opposition? Regarding the replacement of the programme with a transitional one, Trotsky wrote:

“The Fourth International does not discard the program of the old ”minimal” demands to the degree to which these have preserved at least part of their vital forcefulness. Indefatigably, it defends the democratic rights and social conquests of the workers. But it carries on this day-to-day work within the framework of the correct actual, that is, revolutionary perspective. Insofar as the old, partial, ”minimal” demands of the masses clash with the destructive and degrading tendencies of decadent capitalism — and this occurs at each step — the Fourth International advances a system of *transitional demands*... The old ”minimal program” is superseded by the *transitional program*.”¹³³

Of course, the Trotskyists emphasize that the *Transitional Program* is simply a series of demanding, democratic and transitional slogans, and the transitional period should never be considered synonymous with the dictatorship of the proletariat. This transparency was probably provided by the Trotskyists to reassure

¹³³ Idem, page 6

the socialist and “worker” parties in which the socialists apply the politics of entryism (infiltration), so as not to cause concern among them. The basic question that arises is, what is the difference between Trotskyism and social democracy? Do the social democrats not also raise demanding and democratic slogans? Trotskyists write:

“This programme comprises a series of immediate, democratic and transitional demands corresponding to the needs of the broadest sectors of the toiling masses, and to the logic of the development of the class struggle....this slogan is used in the *Transitional Programme* not as a synonym for the dictatorship of the proletariat, but as a transitional government formulation.”¹³⁴

If we skip some radical word propaganda from the *Transitional Program* of the Fourth International, the same programme of social democracy or Stalinists at least appears. The proposal for the national assembly, constituent assembly, national freedom, land reforms, etc., in the *Transitional Program* states that workers should be equipped with a democratic programme as the first step. It should be asked why the Bolsheviks and Trotsky at the head were against the constituent assembly in 1917 in Russia and believed that all power should be in the hands of the Soviets. Years later, Trotsky moved away from the positions of 1917, which indicates Trotsky’s departure from Marxism. He returned to social democracy and demanded a national assembly. Trotsky wrote:

“The slogan for a National (or Constituent) Assembly preserves its full force for such countries as China or India. This slogan must be indissolubly tied up with the problem of national liberation and agrarian reform. As a primary step,

¹³⁴ *The Fourth International-The Long March of the Trotskyists* - Pierre Frank

the workers must be armed with this democratic program. Only they will be able to summon and unite the farmers.”¹³⁵

The following questions now arose: how could a Trotskyist “government of workers and peasants” be achieved? Should there be a labour revolution to form a Trotskyist “government of workers and peasants”? Trotsky stated that in exceptional circumstances, such as war, defeat, financial bankruptcy, mass revolutionary pressure, etc., without a labour revolution, a “government of workers and peasants” can be created. It is no coincidence that after World War II and in the shadow of the occupation of the Eastern European countries by the Red Army, without a workers’ revolution taking place in them, these countries became workers’ governments, according to the Trotskyists. This issue can be extended to North Korea, China, Vietnam, Cuba, etc. Trotsky wrote:

“At the same time, we indefatigably develop agitation around those transitional demands which should in our opinion form the program of the ”workers’ and farmers’ government”. Is the creation of such a government by the traditional workers’ organizations possible? Past experience shows, as has already been stated, that this is, to say the least, highly improbable. However, one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.), the petty bourgeois parties, including the Stalinists, may go further than they wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie.”¹³⁶

¹³⁵ *The Transitional Program* – page 33

¹³⁶ *Idem*, page 28

Trotskyism and World War II

The war was not the product of the violent policy of one or more unconventional governments, but originated from the inherent need for capital, and it indicated that capitalism had resorted to the last resort to solve its crisis.

The danger of imperialist war represents a new phase in the life of capitalism and in the era of imperialism it is not possible to avoid war. For a World War to be possible, the following two conditions are necessary:

- two political blocs, economically and militarily.
- the working class must be defeated on a global level

We believe that World War II occurred because the working class was defeated at the global level, especially the Soviet working class, which was crushed by the counter-revolution. But for Trotsky, the Soviet Union was still a workers' state. Even in the 1930s, Trotsky argued that the military intervention against the Soviet Union was still under the orders of the bourgeois governments against the workers' government, as in 1918-1920, or in other words, the war would be in line with the military intervention of the bourgeois governments against the workers' one. Trotsky wrote:

“Every big war, irrespective of its initial motives, must pose squarely the question of military intervention against the USSR in order to transfuse fresh blood into the sclerotic veins of capitalism.”¹³⁷

Trotsky forgot the experience of World War I, even the Zimmerwald Conference, whose manifesto he himself compiled.

¹³⁷ *War and the Fourth International* – Leon Trotsky

When World War I broke out, the internationalists did not declare that the proletariat could not be “neutral”, but by condemning both sides of the imperialist war, they showed their opposition to the imperialist slaughter of the working class. In 1938, Trotsky argued that the proletariat could not be neutral and should take the side of China and the socialist Soviet Union in the war. Trotsky wrote:

“*Neutrality?*” - But the proletariat is nothing like neutral in the war between Japan and China, or a war between Germany and the USSR. ”Then what is meant Is the defence of China and the USSR?” Of course! But not by the imperialists who will spangle both China and the USSR.”¹³⁸

We already explained that Trotsky was not able to understand the difference between the social conditions of the formation of World War I and World War II, and for this reason, he metaphysically extended part of the experiences of World War I to World War II. According to Trotsky’s argument, since a wave of world revolution occurred at the end of World War I, there would definitely be a new one at the end of World War II. Trotsky wrote in relation to World War II that it would bring Europe closer to the revolution:

“The war would also bring revolution closer to Europé.”¹³⁹

In 1938, the *Transitional Program*, which was actually the platform of the Fourth International, was written, which put forward the prospect of World War II. Trotsky hoped that during the war millions of workers would be drawn to the Fourth International. He also anticipated that the war would create favourable conditions for

¹³⁸ *The Transitional Program* – page 24

¹³⁹ *The Prophet Outcast* – Isaac Deutscher - page 259

a proletarian revolt, similar to those which occurred during World War I. As a result, he recommended the creation of military schools to train commanders from among the working class themselves, which would be under the control of workers' and peasants' committees. Of course, no capitalist government can grant such a privilege to the working class, because acceptance of such a request calls into question the necessity of a government's existence. Saying such a thing on Trotsky's part was only an illusion about the nature of the bourgeois state and an expression of Trotsky's distance from Marxism. Trotsky wrote:

“Military training and arming of workers and farmers under direct control of workers' and farmers' committees; Creation of military schools for the training of commanders among the toilers, chosen by workers' organizations; Substitution for the standing army of a *people's militia*, indissolubly linked up with factories, mines, farms, etc.”¹⁴⁰

Trotsky believed that the danger of war and military defeat was a reality for the Soviet Union and only revolution in other countries could prevent it. The revolution was not on the agenda in other nations, but Trotsky argued that the war would alter this. So the fate of the Soviet Union was determined not on the maps of the army headquarters, but on the one of the class struggle, and as a result, the Red Army is of historical importance, because according to Trotsky, the Red Army was still the army of the world revolution, not the anti-revolutionary army, which had consolidated its victory over the ruins of the October Revolution. First, let us examine Trotsky's arguments, although they are somewhat long:

¹⁴⁰ *The Transitional Program* – page 25

“The danger of war and defeat of the Soviet Union is a reality, but the revolution is also a reality. If the revolution does not prevent war, then war will help the revolution. Second births are commonly easier than first. In the new war it will not be necessary to wait a whole two years and a half for the first insurrection [as it was after 1914]. Once it is begun, moreover, the revolution will not this time stop half way. The fate of the Soviet Union will be decided in the long run not on the maps of the General Staffs, but on the map of the class struggle. Only the European proletariat, implacably opposing its bourgeoisie...can protect the Soviet Union from destruction, or from, an 'allied' stab in the back. Even a military defeat of the Soviet Union would be only a short episode, if there were to be a victory of the proletariat in other countries. And, on the other hand, no military victory can save the inheritance of the October Revolution if imperialism holds out in the rest of the world....Without the Red Army the Soviet Union would be crushed and dismembered like China. Only its stubborn and heroic resistance to the future capitalist enemy can create favourable conditions for the development of the class struggle in the imperialist camp. The Red Army is thus a factor of immense significance. But this does not mean that it is the sole historic factor.”¹⁴¹

All of Trotsky's arguments and predictions turned out to be wrong, because all of his conclusions were volitional, metaphysical and lacked a Marxist attitude.

Unlike the end of World War I, the revolution during World War II and even at the end of it could not be included in the agenda of the proletariat. The historical defeat of the proletariat and its

¹⁴¹ *The Prophet Outcast* – Isaac Deutscher - page 260

vanguard in the 1920s and 1930s, which was much more devastating than in 1914, is proof of this. At the height of the period of historical failure, the expectation of revolution from the proletariat only showed how far this vision was from Marxism.

Contrary to Trotsky's assertion, the fate of the Soviet Union was determined not on the plan of the class struggle, but on those of the army headquarters, through which the Soviet Union brought Eastern Europe under its power. The Red Army "stubbornly and heroically" fought not against the capitalist enemies, but together with other imperialist armies and in defence of the Soviet imperialist interests, and dragged the workers to imperialist slaughter. After the war, this army suppressed class battles, and the defeat of the Hungarian rebellion and the crushing of the Prague one, etc., are only a few examples of the repressive performance of this anti-revolutionary army. But Trotsky argued against these facts. If the revolution did not happen and the war started, the defeat of the Soviet Union would be inevitable and the regime that arose from the October Revolution would collapse. He wrote:

"Can we, however, expect that the Soviet Union will come out of the coming great war without defeat? To this frankly posed question, we will answer as frankly: If the war should remain only war, the defeat of the Soviet Union would be inevitable. In a technical, economic, and military sense, imperialism is incomparably more strong. If it is not paralyzed by revolution in the West imperialism will sweep away the regime which issued from the October revolution."¹⁴²

Trotsky failed to understand that the Soviet Union had reintegrated into the camp of capital and was itself becoming one of

¹⁴² *The Revolution Betrayed*: Chapter 8 - Trotsky

the main players in the imperialist games. Years before World War II and in 1933, in an interview with Belgian writer Georges Simenon, Trotsky stated that if danger threatens his country, he is ready to return to his country and serve there:

“Given the current policies of Russia I would be ready to serve again if any danger threatened the country.”¹⁴³

Trotsky was not only prepared to serve his country, one where workers and communists were oppressed, but also considered it the primary and mandatory duty of every labour organization to defend the Soviet Union. In other words, any labour organization whose main obligation was to fight against capitalism must replace the task of defending an imperialist (Soviet) government with the fight against capitalism. Was the primary duty of the repressed workers of Petrograd, Kronstadt and the members of concentration camps also to protect the Soviet Union? Trotsky wrote:

*“Defence of the Soviet Union from the blows of the capitalist enemies, irrespective of the circumstances and immediate causes of the conflict, is the elementary and imperative duty of every honest labour organization.”*¹⁴⁴

Trotsky believed that, despite its services to the counter-revolution, as long as the monopoly of foreign trade was in the hands of the Soviet rulers, the ruling regime in the Soviet Union would remain an irreconcilable enemy in the eyes of the world bourgeoisie and German National Socialism a friend. The Soviet Union became not only an irreconcilable enemy, but also a close friend of the imperialists. They united like criminals to defeat

¹⁴³ [Interview by Georges Simenon](#)

¹⁴⁴ *War and the Fourth International* – Leon Trotsky

another, that is, fascist Germany. Like all other villains, when the rival was removed from the field, they fell out over imperialist interests and the Cold War began. Trotsky wrote:

“The Soviet Union, in spite of all the services of its ruling stratum, remains in the eyes of the bourgeoisie of the whole world an irreconcilable enemy, and German National Socialism a friend.”¹⁴⁵

Trotsky had lowered his belief in the workers' government in the Soviet Union to the level of a religious one, so that whatever crimes the Soviet government committed and whatever policies it adopted, in Trotsky's opinion, it still remained a workers' government. He was sure that Stalin's dictatorial rule over the Soviet Union would not prevent it from remaining a workers' country, and since it was a workers' country, it must be unconditionally defended against its enemies. He gave Stalin the right to bargain with Hitler, but advised that doing so would not be of any importance to the Soviet Union, and on the other hand, he advised it to form an alliance with the West. This was a person who, at the time of peace and the conclusion of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, before the negotiations, opened a suitcase containing revolutionary texts and publications for the German soldiers, and at the same time stated that their enemies were also free to advertise among the soldiers. Trotsky, this revolutionary man who was not silent for a moment, had fallen into the abyss of collapse and decay, and it was very painful to see the fall of one of the heroes and creators of the October Revolution. Trotskyists explain this issue as follows:

¹⁴⁵ *The Revolution Betrayed* - The League of Nations and the Communist International - Trotsky

“Trotsky insisted with the utmost firmness that the Soviet Union remained a workers’ state, entitled to be unconditionally defended against all its capitalist enemies, fascist and democratic. He did not even deny Stalin the right to bargain with Hitler, although he himself thought that the Soviet-German Pact had not brought the Soviet Union any significant advantage; he would have preferred a Soviet coalition with the West. But he held that the question with whom the Soviet Union should align itself should be decided solely on grounds of expediency.”¹⁴⁶

Trotsky invited the international proletariat to join the defence of the Soviet Union and emphasized that even if the Soviet Union entered into a military alliance with the imperialists, this killing was necessary to defend the workers’ government. We will discuss the concept of imperialism from the point of view of Trotsky and Trotskyists later. But for now, it is necessary to point out how for five years the Trotskyists asked the workers of all countries to massacre each other in the imperialist war, i.e., World War II, and in defence of the Soviet Union. World War II was the deadliest war in human history, slaughtering the proletariat in an even more deadly fashion than World War I. Trotsky wrote:

“The international proletariat will not decline to defend the USSR even if the latter should find itself forced into a military alliance with some imperialists against others.”¹⁴⁷

In 1934, at the height of the anti-revolution period and the repression of the communists by the counter-revolution, Trotsky evaluated the anti-revolutionary and repressive government not only

¹⁴⁶ *The Prophet Outcast* – Isaac Deutscher – pages 371-372

¹⁴⁷ *War and the Fourth International* – Leon Trotsky

as a workers' government, but also considered the repressive government the only military training ground for the world revolution. Does throwing dust in the eyes of the working class get any worse than this? Trotsky claimed that the proletariat does not defend the Soviet Union, but the socialist dictatorship. It was Trotsky with such agitation who used the workers in the imperialist massacre. Trotsky wrote:

“The isolated workers' state is not a self-sufficing entity but only a ***drill ground for the world revolution***. Defending the USSR, the proletariat defends not national boundaries but a socialist dictatorship temporarily hemmed in by national borders.”¹⁴⁸

Trotskyists and sympathizers of the Fourth International became good soldiers for bourgeois democracy and counter-revolution Stalinists during World War II and made the workers cannon fodder in the imperialist slaughter. By turning Trotskyists into bourgeois soldiers during World War II, they were in fact irreversibly integrated into the bourgeois camp. In the following chapters, we will see that the Trotskyists used the workers as cannon fodder in imperialist conflicts in all the wars after World War II, a performance that stemmed from their theoretical positions.

¹⁴⁸ *War and the Fourth International* – Leon Trotsky

Trotskyism and the Concept of Imperialism

For more information about the positions of the internationalist voice in relation to the concept of imperialism, the national question, liberation movements, etc., refer to the pamphlet titled *Nationalism Is a Deadly Poison for Class Struggle*.

The left of capital defines imperialism as the manifestation of a major economic, military and repressive power such as the US, Japan and the UK. The consequence of this definition is to mobilize the working class behind the weakness of imperialism.

If imperialism is not a manifestation of a major economic, military and repressive power such as the US, then what is the Marxist definition of imperialism? The fact is that such a definition is based on an understanding of world capitalism's development into decadence. Imperialism became a way of life in the capitalist system during its decadent period. Imperialism is not a specific policy carried out by any particular state. It can only exist on an international scale.

A free capitalist state and nation cannot exist in the era of capitalist decline; all states are forced to integrate into the capitalist world system. The undeniable fact is that capital cannot accumulate in **absolute isolation** and no state can escape from it. This means that the new countries that arise from national movements, regardless of their size or economic power, will soon become imperialist countries. These are forced to integrate themselves into the capitalist mode of production and participate in the world market. World War I was the result of the entire capitalist system worldwide entering a period of decline and there could be no more progressive wars. The killings that take place under the name of "national liberation wars" with the words "socialist" are actually nothing but tension between various imperialists. In the age of

imperialist decadence, it is the class struggle alone that is progressive, because it will challenge the bourgeois state in its evolutionary process through social revolution.

But for Trotsky, there were only a few imperialists in the world, and most of the world's countries were victims of imperialism. As a result, according to Trotsky, the duty of the international proletariat was to help the oppressed countries in the war against the oppressors. In other words, Trotsky made the workers cannon fodder in imperialist conflicts and in defence of weak imperialism against the strong type. Trotsky wrote:

“But not all countries of the world are imperialist countries. On the contrary, the majority are victims of imperialism... It will be the duty of the international proletariat to aid the oppressed countries in their war against oppressors.”¹⁴⁹

Trotsky's intellectual confusion led him to strange results. France, which was one of the imperialist and colonial powers that had colonized many countries around the globe and had committed many crimes around the world and as a result was a cruel country, at the height of World War II, according to Trotsky, was suddenly becoming an oppressed nation. That is because France was occupied by Germany. Trotsky wrote:

“France is being transformed into an oppressed nation... (Imperialist democracy) cannot be “saved” from fascism.”¹⁵⁰

We will return to this issue in the chapter “Trotskyism and Imperialist Wars” which describes how, according to Trotsky's assertion, the oppressed France became the oppressor again and the

¹⁴⁹ *The Transitional Program* - page 25

¹⁵⁰ *The Fourth International-The Long March of the Trotskyists* - Pierre Frank

oppressor Germany an oppressed nation once more, and with this non-Marxist argument, led workers to imperialist slaughter. Trotskyists also make new discoveries. In their opinion, peasants play a more radical and decisive role in anti-colonial revolutions than what Marxist theory predicts about them and, essentially, they have a different social nature from traditional ones. Perhaps these “peasants” the Trotskyists had identified were another revolutionary class that Marx and the Marxists had failed to discover. Trotskyists write:

“Peasants, in the form of expanding guerrilla movements, have undoubtedly played a more radical and decisive role in the anti-colonial revolution than what Marxist theory predicted. These peasants have proven that they have a different social nature compared to the traditional peasant classes of advanced capitalist countries”.¹⁵¹

Trotskyists are explorers and make new discoveries one after another. The next finding of the Trotskyists is that what plays a key role in the process of world revolution is not the working class and the proletarian revolution, but the anti-colonial revolution, including in the era of capitalist decline. According to the Trotskyists, the world revolution is not a global process, but a matter related to the peripheral capitalism that is engaged in anti-colonial revolution. In the interpretation of Trotskyists, the anti-colonial revolution turns into a permanent one, or in other words, the revolution started with land reforms, then nationalized trusts and properties, and finally progressed to the formation of a workers’ state with a planned economy. Trotskyists tell stories like this:

¹⁵¹ *The Fourth International* – Pierre Frank, page 249 (Persian edition.).

“In conjunction with the world crisis of Stalinism, the colonial revolution is now playing a key role in the world revolutionary process. Within little more than a decade, it has forced imperialism to abolish direct colonial rule almost completely and to turn to indirect rule as a substitute... The colonial revolution therefore tends to flow into the channel of permanent revolution, beginning with a radical agrarian reform and heading towards the expropriation of imperialist holdings and 'national' capitalist property, the establishment of a workers state and a planned economy.”¹⁵²

Now we must ask if this nonsense has the slightest connection with Marxism, the concept of social revolution and the dialectical view of social events. In 1917, did the Bolsheviks and Trotsky at the head have such an attitude towards social events? Where do the working class and the workers' councils fit in this Trotskyist narrative? What do nationalization or statehood have to do with socialization? Why should Marxism be dragged into the mud, due to the nationalization? Have the Trotskyists muddied Marxism to a lesser extent than the Stalinists?

We continue our exploration and investigation in relation to the material force of the socialist revolution from the perspective of the Trotskyists, in order to remember that Trotskyism is the opposite of Marxism and represents the left wing of capital. This is the subject of the discussion in the next chapter.

¹⁵² *The Fourth International-The Long March of the Trotskyists* - Pierre Frank

Trotskyism and the Material Force of the Socialist Revolution

Capitalism causes the growth of productive forces, and this also creates a key contradiction, so that on the one hand, productive forces are collective, but on the other, there are private production relations (private ownership of the means of production). In other words, in the capitalist era, the growth of productive forces creates a conflict between labour and capital, and this provides the material conditions for the communist revolution.

The communist revolution is the first revolution in the history of mankind in which the exploited class, i.e., the working class, with its class consciousness and relative knowledge of future production relations, as well as its capability to eliminate the contradiction between productive forces and relations, started a revolution. But Trotskyists believe that Trotsky has effectively demonstrated that the victory of a “revolution” is possible even with “non-Marxist leadership” and the post-World War II period has also shown several cases of such revolutions. Trotskyists write:

“Trotsky shows that ...the possibility of exceptional cases in which, because of extraordinary objective conditions, the revolution could win even under a leadership that might not be revolutionary Marxist. The post-war period has produced a few cases of this type which Trotsky estimated as scarcely probable but not impossible.”¹⁵³

Trotskyists have not provided a list of countries in which revolutions without Marxist leadership have occurred after World War II, so we continue our review of the revolutions desired by

¹⁵³ *The Fourth International-The Long March of the Trotskyists - Pierre Frank*

them. They have announced that the perspective of the labour movement has changed in the post-World War II period. In other words, the working class is no longer the material force of the social revolution, and in the new era, the colonial revolution, which will take the form of a permanent revolution, will be an integral part of the world revolution. In other words, the material force of the world revolution will not be the working class, but the partisans of the colonial revolution. According to Trotskyists, the material force of the anti-colonial revolution is the people, including workers and peasants, as well as the petite and national bourgeoisie. Now we better understand what the Trotskyists mean by “revolution” and its material force, which could have won without Marxist leadership in the post-World War II period. Trotskyists argue:

“The congress's document on the colonial revolution... stressed the fact that it was the dominant feature of the post-war period; it had upset all the perspectives that had been made since the origin of the working class movement, even those made after the October Revolution, because all the perspectives had been based on the victory of the revolution in the West before it could triumph in the East. The document pointed out that the colonial revolution could triumph only as a permanent revolution; that it was thus an integral part of the world revolution; that it constituted at a given stage the link between October and the victory of the world revolution... Already emphasised was the importance of guerrilla warfare in colonial countries, not only as a military factor but also as a factor in the organisation and political education of the masses.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ *The Fourth International-The Long March of the Trotskyists* –Pierre Frank - pages 56-57

Before continuing the discussion, it is necessary to emphasize that, in our opinion, after capitalism entered its period of decline, the bourgeoisie lost its progressive role all over the world and became a counter-revolutionary force everywhere. In other words, in the era of capitalist decline, the material basis for the bourgeois revolution has disappeared and it cannot take place. All the “revolutions” that are called a “bourgeois revolution” or “anti-colonial revolution” by the left of capital are actually part of the imperialist tensions in which the left of capital makes the workers cannon fodder in imperialist conflicts. Of course, the Trotskyists also mention the real revolution, that is, one whose material force is the working class and whose leadership is provided by the Marxist party, and we will comment on a few of them here. The first of the real revolutions, according to Trotskyists, was the “real revolution” of Yugoslavia. Trotskyists do not argue how and under what conditions a real revolution took place there, but like religious people, they only rule that it occurred and there is no room for any question.

“For the particular case of Yugoslavia, which had gone through a genuine revolution, a special resolution was adopted that traced the various phases of the revolution from the time of the partisan struggle.”¹⁵⁵

The next case is China, where the anti-revolutionary policies of the Comintern led to the terrible suppression of the Chinese revolution, so that the Chinese proletarian revolution was drowned in the blood of Shanghai and Canton workers. After the massacre of the working class by the bourgeoisie, the last revolutionary flickers in the party of the working class were essentially extinguished. During World War II, Mao was able to purge the party from the opposition and dominate the party during an operation called the

¹⁵⁵ Idem, page 46

“Reformation Operation”. Mao was the main architect of this movement. In the context of the imperialist war, “corrective operations” coincided with a turn toward the United States. Two months after the Yalta Conference and the decisions of the imperialist powers, it was decided that the Soviet Union would declare war against Japan. According to the previous agreements, the Soviet attack on Japan started through China, and for this reason, the Chinese Communist Party had to implement the Soviet orders. Mao crept into Stalin’s camp not voluntarily, but temporarily, as a new division between the great imperialist powers had formed. In the final years of World War II, the imperialist competition between the United States and the Soviet Union had not yet taken an obvious form. At first, both the US and Soviet imperialist powers tried to create an alliance between the People’s Liberation Army and the Kuomintang. In line with such a policy, the victories of the People’s Liberation Army over the Kuomintang were not included in Soviet newspapers for many years.

On 1 October 1949, in the Tiananmen Square of the People’s Republic, Mao founded the four-class republic, which was actually a new type of wage slavery in line with the interests of capital and its accumulation¹⁵⁶. Of course, it should not be forgotten that capital in a state of fragility tends to become statehood, and this issue can include peripheral capital as well as the metropolitan type. The Trotskyists are demagogic and slanderous, ranting about Mao’s victory and the formation of state capitalism in the following way:

“October 1949 saw the victory of the Chinese revolution ...
The victory of the Chinese revolution had immense

¹⁵⁶ For more information about the positions of internationalists in relation to the Chinese revolution and Maoism, refer to the booklet published by Internationalist Voice under the title *Maoism, the Real Child of Stalinism*.

repercussions, which have developed through the years and which we shall summarise as follows:

- A huge shift in the overall relationship of forces on an international scale, to the advantage of socialism
- A tremendous impetus to the colonial revolution, which thenceforth would spread from one colonised continent to another; outbreak of the Korean war in 1950;
- continuation of the Vietnamese revolution, first against French imperialism, later against American imperialism; extension of the colonial revolution to Latin America and victory of the socialist revolution in Cuba in 1959;
- extension of the colonial revolution to the Middle East, to North Africa in the 1950s, then to Black Africa from 1960 on.”¹⁵⁷

In the 1970s, at the height of the Cold War, the Eastern Bloc supported North Vietnam and the Cambodian Khmer Rouge, and the Western Bloc backed South Vietnam and the Cambodian government. Finally, the Chinese-backed Maoists, who had the title “Khmer Rouge”, seized power and orchestrated a shocking unbridled crime. Organized killings due to the proxy war between the Western Bloc and Eastern Bloc in Vietnam itself represent another story of capitalist crimes. But for Trotskyists, these offences are considered to be raising the flag of the socialist revolution. The Trotskyists have no limits in Yavesarai. They are partners in these crimes and their hands are stained with the blood of the working class and the people. The Trotskyists state this kind of nonsense and smear the socialist revolution:

¹⁵⁷ *The Fourth International*-The Long March of the Trotskyists – Pierre Frank-
pages 38-39

“The flag of the socialist revolution has been raised victoriously over the cities of Phnom Penh¹⁵⁸ and Saigon,¹⁵⁹ and this is a source of encouragement for the revolutionary movements of the entire Southeast Asian region. This event is one of the victories of the world socialist revolution and the new expansion of the workers’ state”.¹⁶⁰

The Trotskyists are not ashamed and consider the organized killing by the “Khmer Rouge” Maoists, which is written by the bourgeois propaganda apparatus, in the name of communism, as a source of encouragement for the revolutionary movements. They therefore view it as one of the victories of the world socialist revolution, which leads to the expansion of new labour governments. Is it better to drag communism into the mud and equate it with the crimes and brutality of the Khmer Rouge Maoists?

The next case regarding the demagoguery of the Trotskyists is the country of Cuba, which seems to have turned a deaf ear to the birth of socialist Cuba in America by the Trotskyists. We will examine this issue. Fidel Castro attempted to overthrow the Batista regime in 1953, but failed and was imprisoned. After his release from prison, he went to Mexico, where he coordinated a guerrilla group that had very heterogeneous and contradictory positions. The members of this group reached Cuba by boat and organized a guerrilla struggle. It is important to note that the US had a disagreement with the Batista regime and imposed an arms embargo on it due to corruption. In this context, on the one hand, the guerrillas had the support of a number of the peasants, and on the

¹⁵⁸ Phnom Penh is the capital and most populous city of Cambodia.

¹⁵⁹ This was the capital of South Vietnam, which was renamed Ho Chi Minh after the unification of Vietnam.

¹⁶⁰ *The Fourth International: The Long March of the Trotskyists*, Pierre Frank page 190 (Persian edition).

other, they benefitted from the indirect aid of the US due to the arms embargo that the United States inflicted on the Batista regime. Guerrillas entered Havana on 2 January 1959, and with Batista's escape, a new regime came to power.

At the beginning, Castro emphasized that he was not looking for communism or Marxism, but for democracy and social justice. America was among the first governments that immediately recognized the new government. Three months after the new government took office, Castro went to America and met with Nixon at the White House. But the US later had a disagreement with the Castro regime. Relations with the US gradually became strained, and finally, two years after the new regime came to power, America's relations with Cuba were severed. This issue brought Cuba closer to the Eastern Bloc and at the head of it the Soviet Union, and in the process turned Cuba and Castro into actors in the Cold War.

After the new regime took office, the old Communist Party joined the 26th of July Movement (the Castro movement) and in the process of their unification, they formed the United Party of the Cuban Socialist Revolution. Finally, in 1965, six years after the inauguration of the new regime, the United Party transformed into the Communist Party of Cuba, which until now has implemented the state capitalist party dictatorship.

In Cuba, contrary to the demagogues of the right and left tendencies of the capital, the social revolution did not happen, but the regime change was accomplished not through the parliament, which is a common tradition in metropolitan capitalist countries, but through guerrilla rebellion, which is the appropriate procedure in peripheral capitalism. In Cuba, with the change of regime, the capitalist system and wage slavery continued and despite the anti-imperialist gestures, Cuba has been an imperialist country. In 1959, the proletariat had not yet been able to recover from the defeat of

the wave of world revolution, and it was at the peak of the black era of counter-revolution. In such conditions, it was not possible to realize the communist revolution.

But there is no limit to the demagoguery and nonsense of the Trotskyists, and they have always been busy throwing dust in the eyes of the working class. Trotskyists announced the birth of socialist Cuba in the Americas when a new labour government was added to the Soviet Union and wrote:

“On the American continent, socialist Cuba was born. To the Soviet Union were added workers states.”¹⁶¹

Since the Third International was established to lead the world socialist revolution, and given the material power of the world working class, the decline of the Comintern does not diminish the importance of its formation and its great achievements. The question that arises is, what are the duties of the world organization of Trotskyists? And what are the material forces for fulfilling its tasks? In response, it should be said that not every international organization is internationalist. The Fourth International was born and formed precisely by betraying internationalism and dragging the workers into an imperialist slaughter. The guerrilla fighters of the forests, the rebellious peasants, the African-Americans of the United States, the revolutionary fighters of the Middle East, etc., constitute the material force of the world organization of Trotskyists. If the worker is mentioned anywhere, it is only for propaganda and recruitment, and like other bourgeois factions, the worker is in line with the realization of the bourgeois and anti-labour goals of the Trotskyists. Trotskyists describe the material force for

¹⁶¹ *The Fourth International*-The Long March of the Trotskyists- Pierre Frank - page 39

achieving the goals of their world organization (the Fourth International) as follows:

“The Fourth International is a unity that, by the actions of its members, forges connecting links among the guerrilla fighters and the rebelling peasants of Latin America, the blacks of the United States, the fighters of South Africa, the peoples of Black Africa and North Africa, the revolutionary militants of the Middle East, the militants in many Asian countries, the vanguards in the workers states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, the workers and the vanguard youth of Western Europe, etc.”¹⁶²

¹⁶² Idem, page 90

Trotskyism and the Crisis in the Counter-Revolutionary Camp

After the victory of the Allies in World War II, it was time to divide the world again. These new divisions led to the formation of two power blocs and the Cold War. Eastern Europe gradually came under the control of the Soviet Union. In the beginning, it seemed that Stalinism would have undisputed dominance over the anti-revolutionary camp, but a crisis soon began and we witnessed the birth of new “Isms” in that camp. At the start, Stalinism and Trotskyism represented the two poles of its front, so that Stalinism was in power and Trotskyism was in the opposition. The crisis in this camp started with “Titoism”. In 1948, the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers’ Parties (Cominform) was formed and its headquarters established in Belgrade. But due to Tito’s disobedience to Stalinism, when Yugoslavia began to remove itself from the direct economic, political and military control of the Soviet Union, this country was expelled from Cominform and the headquarters of Cominform moved to Bucharest in Romania, and as a result, a period of tensions arose between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

The tension between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union created a lively atmosphere for the Trotskyists. Trotskyists considered Tito “an unconscious Trotskyist” and assumed the duty of defending a living revolution against Stalinism. The Trotskyists affiliated with the Fourth International served Titoism by forming youth groups and sending them to Yugoslavia, and played a major role in building “Tito’s socialism”, that is, the monstrosity of state capitalism. Trotskyists write:

“As soon as this split became public knowledge, the leadership of the Fourth International understood that the international crisis of Stalinism would for the most part thenceforth be out in the open; that the Kremlin's incompatibility with a living revolution was clearly evident; that it was necessary to help the Yugoslavs resist the Stalinist attacks;... The Trotskyist organizations very quickly mobilized to help the Yugoslav revolution answer the torrent of slander emanating from Moscow and the Communist parties. Campaigns were launched in numerous countries. Leaflets, pamphlets, meetings were used in the fight against Stalinism. In several countries it was the Fourth International's organizations that initiated the youth brigades that went to Yugoslavia - - brigades of inquiry, support and work in the service of the Yugoslav revolution.”¹⁶³

The Trotskyists were able to take advantage of the crisis between the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia for a short time. But in 1950, Yugoslavia's stance on the Korean War puzzled and confused the Trotskyists. The leaders of “a living revolution” and “a real revolution” in the belief of the Trotskyists called for the military intervention of the United Nations in Korea. In the United Nations General Assembly, Yugoslavia voted in favour of military intervention against North Korea. Yugoslavian policy failed the Trotskyists' plan to gather forces around the Yugoslavian and Soviet crisis. They state:

“For a short period, the sections of the Fourth International, profiting from the Yugoslav crisis, became stronger. But this process was interrupted during 1950 when, at the beginning

¹⁶³ *The Fourth International-The Long March of the Trotskyists* –Pierre Frank - page 44

of the Korean war, the Yugoslav leadership -- which until then had made progress in many areas of domestic policy (self-management, etc.) and in its criticism of part of the Stalinist past -- took a disgraceful position on the international scene. In the United Nations General Assembly, Yugoslavia voted for UN military intervention against North Korea. This position succeeded in alienating many of Yugoslavia's defenders. The hopes of recruiting a larger revolutionary vanguard because of the Soviet-Yugoslav dispute were thus destroyed, until such time as the crisis of Stalinism would erupt elsewhere.”¹⁶⁴

Following Yugoslavia's new international policies, i.e., taking a position on the front of the Western Bloc, or in the language of the Trotskyists, a “disgraceful position”, China spoke of the return of capitalism in Yugoslavia. The Trotskyists stated that such a return to capitalism cannot be done peacefully. But in their view, Yugoslavia remained a workers' state despite its “disgraceful position” in the field of international politics. Trotskyists argue:

“For the particular case of Yugoslavia, which had gone through a genuine revolution, a special resolution was adopted.... the Fourth international's response to Chinese and Cuban charges that capitalism has been 'restored' in Yugoslavia, in Czechoslovakia, etc., was not improvised for the occasion.”¹⁶⁵

In 1959, when there was tension on the border between China and India, China expected that the Soviet Union would support it against India, but the Soviet Union backed India in line with its

¹⁶⁴ As source 163

¹⁶⁵ As above

imperialist interests to weaken America's position in the region. This issue caused a crisis in the relations between the two countries. It was not acute or public, but following the conclusion of the agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States that nuclear weapons should be limited only to the countries that possessed them, Mao's regime called it "an important conspiracy to maintain the monopoly of nuclear weapons in the hands of the Great Powers", condemned it and spoke of the return of capitalism to the Soviet Union, which made the crisis in the relations between the two countries more serious. The Trotskyists tried to take advantage of this predicament, thus evaluating China's position as more progressive than the Soviet position, and stood up to defend China. They explained their defence as follows:

"During 1959-60, when the Sino-Soviet conflict began to be publicly revealed as a conflict between two parties in which political differences were of prime importance, the International almost unanimously reacted by giving critical support to the Chinese, whose positions on a certain number of basic questions (colonial revolution, peaceful and parliamentary roads to socialism, peaceful co-existence) were progressive compared to those of the Soviet leadership."¹⁶⁶

In the late 1970s, after the death of Mao, China cut off its economic aid to Albania, causing a crisis in the relations between China and Albania. The cut-off of China's economic aid to Albania made Anwar Khoja argue that China had become imperialist and he used the term "social imperialism" in relation to China. In other words, it caused Anwar Khoja to view the relations of production in

¹⁶⁶ *The Fourth International*-The Long March of the Trotskyists – Pierre Frank - page 60

China, which he had previously considered socialist, as capitalist. It was in such a context that “Khojaism” was developed, which took the form of an international radical-phrase trend in Stalinism. Khoja considered the Soviet Union and China to be social-imperialist and believed himself the only true heir of Stalinism (Marxism-Leninism). We have already seen that in the United Nations General Assembly, Yugoslavia voted in favour of military intervention and against North Korea. After that, China announced the return of capitalism in Yugoslavia, but the Trotskyists stated that such a return to capitalism could not be done peacefully. Now a question for the Trotskyists arose: was the announcement of the return of capitalism to China by Anwar Khoja and the change of the relations of production simply an irresponsible statement? Did the Trotskyists, who also believed that capitalism in China could not return peacefully, still consider China a workers’ state?

The fact is that Trotskyists have appeared everywhere as the opposition to Stalinism. But their appearance as the Stalinist opposition not only cannot show the truth and righteousness of the Trotskyists, but like other bourgeois trends, which were in the opposition, played an important role in the consolidation of capitalism, throwing dust in the eyes of the working class. They have played a role in smearing Marxism, even though they were in the opposition.

Trotskyism and the Imperialist Wars

War and the stance taken in relation to it determine the intellectual position and, more importantly, the class affiliation of an intellectual or political trend. War and internationalism represent a touchstone that shows where an intellectual trend stands in the inverted world of capitalism. During World War I, the majority of social democratic parties betrayed the proletarian positions and joined the camp of capital forever, turning the workers into cannon fodder in the imperialist war, and only the Bolsheviks and a handful of minorities in European countries remained loyal to the proletarian positions. Following the decline of the Comintern and the parties organized in it, during the late 1920s and World War II, the workers became the cannon fodder in the name of “Communism”. Only internationalist communists (the communist left) remained loyal to proletarian positions in absolute isolation and described the war as imperialist.

In the era of imperialist decline and in general in the age of imperialism, there is no progressive war. All wars are imperialist and only social revolution is progressive. The basic question that arises is, what was the position and direction of the Trotskyists against the imperialist wars? Trotskyists, without exception, under the arguments of “defence of the revolution”, “defence of democracy”, “struggle against fascism”, “national liberation”, “liberation war”, “right to self-determination” and so on in all imperialist wars, have turned workers into cannon fodder and led them to imperialist slaughter.

We already discussed how, according to Trotsky, France became an oppressed country in 1940 because it was occupied by Germany. It was after this date that the choice of Trotskyists was

between the oppressor and the oppressed, or between “bad” and “worse”.

Now we follow this discussion with a few other points. France in 1939 was a cruel country because it oppressed other countries (colonies). In 1940, Germany occupied France, and according to the Trotskyists, France changed its nature from an oppressive country to an oppressed one, and the duty of the Trotskyists became to defend the French anti-occupation movement. But after a few years, France along with the Allies occupied Germany. This time, France became an oppressor and Germany changed its nature from an oppressor country to an oppressed one. This time, the task of the Trotskyists was to fight against the French occupiers to free Germany from occupation. The same is true for Japan. Japan attacked China and the Trotskyists stood up to defend the oppressed “Chyankai Chak” against the oppressor Japan. In 1937, Trotsky wrote about the progress of the war and that the duty of the working class of the world was to defend China against Japan by any means:

“A Japanese victory will serve reaction. A Chinese victory would have a progressive character. That is why the working class of the world supports by all means China against Japan.”¹⁶⁷

But at the end of World War II, America started to occupy Japan, so now the task of Trotskyists was to defend the oppressed Japan against the American invaders. Vietnam, which was under the occupation of the aggressor America for many years and was considered an oppressed country, attacked and occupied Cambodia in January 1979 and became an oppressive one. In these new conditions, the duty of the Trotskyists was to defend the oppressed

¹⁶⁷ [International Notes](#)

people of Cambodia and fight against the Vietnamese invaders. In December 1979, the Soviet labour government appeared in the role of a tyrannical and occupying country and entered Afghanistan. At this time the Trotskyists stood up to defend the oppressed. That is, the Mujahideen, supported by the United States and Britain, was against the occupation of the workers' state. This list can be extended. And so it continued because the Trotskyists believe that the duty of the proletariat is to sacrifice itself under the title of "helping in a just and progressive war" (see the *Transitional Program*).

The trait of using workers as cannon fodder in the imperialist conflicts lies in the genes of the Trotskyists and in their DNA. There is no imperialist war in which the Trotskyists did not lead the workers to imperialist slaughter. In the Iran-Iraq war, the Trotskyists asked the workers to defend the occupied country of Iran (the oppressed) against the Iraqi invaders (the oppressors), and for the same reason, the hands of the Trotskyists were stained with the blood of the workers. A few years later, during the Gulf War, Iraq, the former occupier, became an oppressed country, and under the title of an anti-imperialist struggle, the Trotskyists asked Iraqi workers to butcher themselves in the imperialist Gulf War and stand up to defend Saddam. In relation to the imperialist war in Syria, Trotskyist groups have had contradictory positions. A group under the name of choosing between bad and worse defended the Assad regime, while another supported the US regime with the slogan that the problem in Syria was the Assad regime, not the intervention of the United States of America, and took similar reactionary and confusing positions. But the common denominator of all the positions adopted by the Trotskyists is utilizing workers as cannon fodder in imperialist hostilities under the title of a "Syrian Revolution". If you sided with the Assad regime, or with America and the Western countries, or with the most brutal jihadi groups, it

would all end in the same place, and that is the participation of workers as cannon fodder in imperialist hostilities.

The Trotskyists also led the Kurdistan workers to an imperialist massacre under the title of the “Rojava Revolution” and thus they sided with America and other Western countries.

In the same way as the galaxy has no boundaries, neither does the Trotskyists’ imperialist slaughter of workers. They truly have an extraordinary skill in using the workers as cannon fodder in imperialist tensions, and it must be admitted that the blood of the workers is dripping from the hands of the Trotskyists!

Trotskyism and the Trotskyists

The sad fate of Trotskyism is such that the Trotskyists, instead of the teachings, in addition to the greatness and revolutionary value of Trotsky, have retained and absorbed only Trotsky's weaknesses, errors and intellectual confusion. As a result, Trotsky and Trotskyism can be considered two separate phenomena. And following that, Trotsky and Trotskyists belong to two opposing camps.

The subject of this section is not an examination of Trotskyist currents and movements, which is neither logical nor possible considering the number of branches, but rather a look at the general process of the Trotskyists' performance, and how they perform their duties as a part of capitalism's political apparatus. Trotskyists, unlike Stalinists and Maoists, lacked government power that they could rely on, justify the existence of, and follow. The presence of such a feature has enabled the Trotskyists to more easily play the roles and positions of a thousand faces and perform or adopt and more easily blend in with different bourgeois movements.

The first crisis of the Trotskyists occurred during Trotsky's lifetime. A trend in the United States represented by Shachtman, who was one of the founders of the Fourth International, split from the Fourth International in protest at its position regarding the Soviet pact with Nazi Germany.

Trotsky's assassination and the disappearance of his political authority, as a unifying force of the Fourth International, accelerated its decline during World War II. After the war, the Trotskyists tried to rebuild the Fourth International, and after two years of effort they finally held the Second Congress of the Fourth International in April 1948. The existing crisis following the third congress in 1951 was such that it led to the division of the Fourth International in 1953, with one side becoming the "International Committee" and the other

the “International Secretariat”. Of course, in between, smaller sects also claimed to be the Fourth International. But the Trotskyists again tried to hold a unity congress, resulting in the formation of the “United Secretariat of the Fourth International”, which naturally faced the non-participation of some Trotskyist groups in the unity congress.

For Trotskyists, the working class is not the force of social change and humanity’s progress towards the future. They deny the key role of the working class in the revolutionary process, but claim the legacy of Marxism and to be the heirs of the Communist International. This issue can be confusing, especially for young generations who are oriented towards communist positions. When the Fourth International had not yet collapsed again, the Trotskyists described its successes as follows:

“The activity of the Fourth International has now reached a stage which it never attained in the past. Support for the Vietnamese revolution, solidarity with Chile, intervention in strike movements, in the struggle for women's liberation, in election campaigns, in anti-militarist work -- the sections of the Fourth International now intervene in all these areas, so that hardly a day now goes by without the mass media reporting some Trotskyist action, intervention or demonstration in this or that country.”¹⁶⁸

The Trotskyists have spread illusions and sprinkled dust in the eyes of the working class at every possible opportunity, in relation to parliamentarism, so that they have played their role as the left wing of capital well, to direct the protests and anger of the workers, and lead to legal channels. With demagoguery and sycophancy, they

¹⁶⁸ *The Fourth International*-The Long March of the Trotskyists - Pierre Frank-
page 84

considered spreading their illusions to be communist propaganda. For example, in 1969, while the French Trotskyist Alain Crevin was a candidate for the presidency, they claimed that the main force of the revolutionary left was the Trotskyists, who were able to mobilize a demonstration of 10,000 people:

“Shortly after the world congress, the Ligue Communiste showed the big gain made by the Trotskyist movement in France through the extraordinarily successful election campaign of Alain Krivine, the Ligue's presidential candidate. This campaign went far beyond the borders of France and made the International known to large sectors throughout Europe.”¹⁶⁹

Today, Trotskyism, after hundreds of divisions into many Trotskyist sects with conflicting opinions and positions, has collapsed in the left movements of the capitalist political system. They are not trying to liberate the working class, but to establish state capitalism. In the new system, like the previous one, the working class must produce surplus value by exploiting itself. Another technique of the Trotskyists is to use radical phrases¹⁷⁰ to throw dust in the eyes of the working class. By playing the role of the left wing of social democracy, as Stalinists or other bourgeois movements, they removed these parties and currents from the target of the working class's attack. Thus, in the eyes of the working class, they give credit to the left bourgeois parties. Honourable people protesting the brutality of capital in the ranks of Trotskyists can

¹⁶⁹ Idem, page 81

¹⁷⁰ The radical phrase part of the left of capital refers to tendencies from the left of capital that use revolution, class struggle, communism, etc., in their literature, but in reality, their effort is for the survival of wage slavery and the brutal system of capitalism, in the form of state capitalism.

overcome their confusion and move towards communist positions only by criticizing the bourgeois nature of Trotskyism.

Natalia Trotsky, Trotsky's widow, was one of the Trotskyists who announced her separation from the Trotskyists in a letter to the executive committee of the Fourth International in May 1951. Although she could not criticize the main root of the anti-revolutionary positions of the Trotskyists, that is, Trotskyism, she did not agree to become a partner of the reactionary and bourgeois actions of the Trotskyists or to be recognized or considered in the continuation of their anti-revolutionary policies. Natalia wrote in her letter to the executive committee of the Fourth International:

“The position you have taken on the important events of recent times shows me that, instead of correcting your earlier errors, you are persisting in them and deepening them. On the road you have taken, you have reached a point where it is no longer possible for me to remain silent or to confine myself to private protests. I must now express my opinions publicly.

The step which I feel obliged to take has been a grave and difficult one for me, and I can only regret it sincerely. But there is no other way. After a great deal of reflections and hesitations over a problem which pained me deeply, I find that I must tell you that I see no other way than to say openly that our disagreements make it impossible for me to remain any longer in your ranks.”¹⁷¹

¹⁷¹ Natalya Trotsky breaks with the Fourth International

Trotskyism in Iran

Iran's border with tsarist Russia has always had political advantages and disadvantages for Iran's political movement. In the early 20th century, the backwardness of Iran and the late development of capitalism, on the one hand, led to the low growth of productive forces. On the other hand, social democracy could not have influence in Iran. In such a situation, many workers and immigrants left Iran for Russia. A large number of these workers and immigrants were attracted to the Russian social democracy, and some of them even participated in the October Revolution, including Sultan-Zade, who was in Petrograd during the uprising. The victory of the October Revolution influenced Iranian workers and immigrants, and after that, the first Communist Party of Iran was formed, which was led by the left-wing Sultan-Zade.

Following the defeat of the wave of the world revolution and the rise of the counter-revolution on the ruins of the October Revolution, the "Iranian" communists who did not submit to Stalin's counter-revolution were also bloodied.

After those events, the history of Iran's political milieu has been that of the dominance of the left of capital's political apparatus, especially the undisputed dominance of Stalin's counter-revolution. According to Stalinist propaganda, Trotskyism was defined as the "betrayal of Marxism" and "anti-revolutionary", with reference to the "spies of imperialism" and so on. In such an environment, Trotskyism absolutely could not find a foothold in Iran's political milieu.

With the developments of 1979, Trotskyism also entered the political milieu of Iran. Although it was very difficult, it was able to find a foothold for itself and appeared in the form of the "Socialist Workers' Party".

The Socialist Workers' Party was created from the merger of three groups, namely the "Europe Group", "Sattar Group" and "Iran Group". Students who were in Europe and attracted to Trotskyist ideas founded the group "Iranian Trotskyists in Favour of the Fourth International in Europe and the Near East" in Europe and published a magazine called *Kendukav*. Since 1978, with the coming and going of Iranian students, the Europe Group was able to create connections in Iran, which became known as the "Iran Group" there. On the other hand, the students who were in America and were inclined towards Trotskyism under the influence of the Fourth International formed the "Sattar Association" and published the *Student Message* publication.

The formation of the "Socialist Workers' Party" was announced during a controversial press conference at the five-star Intercontinental Hotel (now the Laleh Hotel). After some time, the party split, and a faction led by Babak Zahrai rose to defend the Islamic bourgeoisie and called itself the "Revolutionary Workers' Party". The Babak Zahrai faction did not only serve the regime, but fell to the level of intelligence appendages of the Islamic bourgeoisie. Therefore, our investigation will consider the radical phrase faction of the "Socialist Workers' Party". Although this group was not involved in intelligence cooperation with the Islamic bourgeoisie, its case is full of treachery and black like other parts of the left of capital.

The left of capital played an active role in the consolidation of the Islamic bourgeoisie, and this issue also includes the Trotskyists. Trotskyists also rushed to welcome Khomeini, calling a criminal like Khomeini "Imam", and wrote:

"Imam Khomeini's declarations and the attacks of his appointed government, that is, the government of the merchants, to the Ayandegan (newspaper), Tehran Mosevar

(newspaper), Peygame Emroz (newspaper), Ahangar (newspaper), address the issue of life and death of freedom. The revolution has given birth to freedom, created the possibilities of its fertility and growth”.¹⁷²

Instead of the slogan “Workers of the world unite!”, the Trotskyists wrote “In defence of the Iranian revolution, in the fight against imperialism” on the top of their publication, i.e., *Socialist Workers*, and decorated it with this motto. Trotskyists believed that an anti-imperialist revolution had taken place in Iran and their duty was to defend the anti-imperialist revolution and fight against imperialism. Trotskyists, like other movements of the left of capital, considered the Islamic bourgeoisie “anti-imperialist” and in this way threw dust in the eyes of the working class.

“The Iranian revolution was compared with other “anti-imperialist” revolutions of the last century... Such regimes are only “anti-imperialist” to such a level that they want to obtain concessions from imperialism”.¹⁷³

After gaining power, the Islamic bourgeoisie planned to hold its constituent assembly under the title of the Assembly of Experts, and the representatives of the Assembly of Experts would finalize the constitution of the Islamic bourgeoisie. Unlike other radical phrase parts of the left of capital, Trotskyists wanted to participate in the elections of the Assembly of Experts and choose their own candidates for the Assembly of Experts. They demagogically declared that, in contrast to the capitalist parties, the Socialist Workers’ Party offered a solution to the working class to solve the

¹⁷² Statement of the executive board of the Socialist Workers’ Party on 16 May 1979.

¹⁷³ According to the history of the party, from the archive site of the party.

basic problems of the society through participation in the elections of the Assembly of Experts, and they wrote:

“The Socialist Workers’ Party has announced its candidates for the elections of the Assembly of Experts and the points of its programme to participate in these elections. By participating in this election, the Socialist Workers’ Party puts the solution of the working class in front of the pro-capitalist parties to solve the basic problems of the society”.¹⁷⁴

Iranian Trotskyists, as the left wing of capital, tried their best to create intellectual turmoil in social protests and in this way prevent the radicalization of social protests and push them into the channel of parliamentarism in order to better establish the Islamic bourgeoisie. Of course, as demagogues, they considered their participation in the electoral circus of the Islamic bourgeoisie, namely the Assembly of Experts, to be in the traditions of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky, when by doing this, they not only smeared the communist traditions, but also sprinkled dirt in the eyes of the working class and wrote that:

“Today, on the eve of the Assembly of Experts elections, Iranian socialists are participating in these elections based on the traditions of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky”.¹⁷⁵

At the next stage, the Trotskyists, that is, the heroes of parliamentarism, abandoned the revolutionary mask and wanted to participate in the election circus of the Islamic Council (the parliament of Iran). They gave life to the election circus of the Islamic bourgeoisie, heated up its election campaign and created

¹⁷⁴ *Workers’ Socialist Weekly* No. 9.

¹⁷⁵ As above

illusions about the parliament circus with demagoguery. They advised everyone to put aside sectarian interests and support progressive candidates. The Trotskyists wrote about this:

“We invite everyone to put aside organizational and sectarian interests and support all progressive candidates for the nationwide unity of labour and revolutionary forces in the elections”.¹⁷⁶

During the presidential elections in Iran, other leftist movements boycotted the elections. But the Trotskyists accused other capitalist left movements of passivity and called for a united front to present the left alternative. They wrote:

“In such a situation, the dishonourable ruling body is forced to hold presidential elections... This situation provides the best possible conditions for the intervention of labour forces and giving direction to independent mass struggles. The election period is a favourable opportunity to fight against reactionary attacks on democratic rights and political freedoms, to expose the reactionary methods of the ruling body in holding elections and gaining the right to democratic elections... In order for such struggles to be as effective as possible, labour forces, parties, organizations and groups that consider themselves dependent on workers and toilers should form a united front, so that they can present a real alternative to the ruling body”.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Islamic Council elections: our proposal to the progressive forces, relying on the working class, *What should be done?* No. 11, second period.

¹⁷⁷ Presidential elections, *What should be done?* No. 9, second period.

Using the workers as cannon fodder in the internal disputes of the bourgeoisie is one of the characteristics of the Trotskyists. As we have already seen, the Trotskyists in Spain, China and then in World War II led the workers to imperialist slaughter. The Iranian Trotskyists also remained faithful to this tradition and with the start of the Iran-Iraq imperialist war, they participated in it under the title of “Defence of the Revolution” and made the workers cannon fodder in the imperialist hostilities. If the majority organization (a Stalinist current that advanced to the level of the intelligence appendage of the Islamic bourgeoisie) aimed to equip the Revolutionary Guards with heavy weapons in order to fight better on the war front, the Trotskyists also wanted the workers to undergo military training before being sent to the war front and wrote:

“In the first issue of the Socialist Workers magazine, 23 September 1980, at the beginning of the war, we announced that since the issue of the war has become an issue of the workers, the workers who voluntarily go to the front in droves and those who believe in the leaders of the regime should ask them to arm them and give them military training so that “we can defend the revolution through our councils!””¹⁷⁸

The Trotskyists accused the leaders of the Islamic Republic of not only failing to take the smallest step towards the armed mobilization of workers and labourers to confront the Iraqi military invasion, but also creating obstacles in the way of mobilizing them. For the better mobilization of the workers for the imperialist war, their use as cannon fodder in the imperialist hostilities, and their more effective massacre in the reactionary war, the Trotskyists appeared as advisers of the Islamic bourgeoisie and tried their

¹⁷⁸ *Socialist Workers* No. 58, page 9.

hardest to give the best advice to the Islamic bourgeoisie and it was in this way that their hands were stained with the blood of the workers. The Trotskyists, as military advisers of the Islamic bourgeoisie, announced the united and armed mobilization of all workers, labourer and oppressed people as the only way to push back the military invasion and wrote in an article entitled “War of Resistance”:

“The way to counter the imperialist military invasion of the Iraqi government was clear from the beginning. United and armed mobilization of all the workers, toilers and oppressed people of Iran, against the military invasion, military training of the toilers and oppressed people, and the formation of armed units of labour resistance, under the control of the councils of elected representatives of the workers. It is still the only way to push back the imperialist military invasion. But the chieftains and leaders of the Islamic Republic regime not only did not take the smallest step in the path of armed and united mobilization of all the toiling and oppressed people of Iran, but also created barriers and obstacles in the way of such a mobilization”.¹⁷⁹

The title “What’s happening on the front?” was constantly included in the *Socialist Workers’ Journal* by the Trotskyists, in which the news and victories of the “Military Resistance Force” were discussed, as well as the weaknesses and strengths of the “Resistance Front”. Sometimes necessary recommendations were also given:

“Iran’s recent victories on the war front showed that defeating the Iraqi army is not a difficult task. But in any case, the

¹⁷⁹ *Socialist Workers* No. 16.

successful promotion of the resistance war requires a coordinated and coherent command of all the forces, which can organize and coordinate all aspects of the resistance forces, from military operations to the activities behind the front, and the maximum forces to enter the war of resistance unitedly and coherently”.

A few months after the continuation of the war and the imperialist slaughter, the Trotskyists expressed their dissatisfaction with the course of the war and the number of victories. Apparently, the Trotskyists’ advice to the Islamic bourgeoisie had not been effective, and the Trotskyists’ voices were raised. Trotskyists were not satisfied with the leadership of the war by the ruling body and wanted to change it. They declared that there would be no news of victory as long as the ruling body led this war. Therefore, to win, the working class must take over the leadership of the war. For this purpose, in an article entitled “What is the only way to win the war?”, they wrote:

“From the beginning, the masses tried with all their might to win the war and push back the invasion, and defend the achievements of the revolution, and with these goals they decisively participated in the war. But the ruling body participated in the war with interests contrary to the interests of the masses... Instead of mobilizing and arming the masses, the ruling body disarmed them... The ruling body participated in this war with reactionary goals and the workers with revolutionary goals... For this reason, despite all the bravery of the masses, the war has not reached a successful conclusion... As long as the ruling body leads this war, there is no news of victory or real peace... True victory and peace

are impossible. The working class must take the leadership of this war”.¹⁸⁰

After the unbridled repression by the Islamic bourgeoisie, a bourgeoisie which the Trotskyists had played a major role in consolidating, the Socialist Party disintegrated. Some of them, who took refuge in France between 1982 and 1987, published the magazine *Socialism and Revolution* in eight issues over two periods. After that, the Iranian Trotskyists continued the reactionary and anti-revolutionary policies of the Socialist Party, in the form of groups called the “Union of Revolutionary Socialists of Iran” and “Project to Create a Bulletin of Revolutionary Socialists”, but following the crisis of the Trotskyists, the activists of the union finally organized under the title “Tendency of Revolutionary Marxists of Iran”. Recently, there has been a branching of the “Tendency of Revolutionary Marxists of Iran” and the branches call themselves the “Bolshevik Leninist Tendency of Iran”.

The consecutive crisis of Iranian Trotskyists and their essential collapse in the political atmosphere of Iran is a reflection of the crisis in global Trotskyism. Apart from the different forms that Iranian Trotskyists took in exile and emigration, they were loyal to the basic principles of Trotskyism and continued the same policies as the Socialist Party of Iran with reforms and sometimes with radical phrases. They adapted the previous policies to the new conditions and fulfilled their duty as the left wing of capital, of course, in the opposition. They also demanded the formation of a “democratic and revolutionary Constituent Assembly” and on the other hand, under the title of defending labour organizations, they became defenders of unions.¹⁸¹ In Iraqi Kurdistan and other

¹⁸⁰ *Socialist Workers* No. 19.

¹⁸¹ The introduction and defence of the “Independent Union of Iranian Workers” by the Trotskyists was not a political scandal, but the crystallization of their ➡

imperialist wars, the workers were made cannon fodder, and they demanded an alliance with the bourgeois currents. They always propagated the united front tactics and demagoguery about fascism.

performance and practice. A political swindler launched a fictitious union under the title “Independent Union of Iranian Workers”, which the left currents introduced under the name of labour activities. The news of the fictional union, which had entered the political milieu like a meteor, disappeared in a flash.

Summary and the Last Word

The fundamental question that has arisen is how, from one of the main creators of the glorious October Revolution, from the famous orator of the Communist Revolution and from one of the heroes of the Civil War, a counter-revolutionary and anti-communist ideology called Trotskyism was formed. The bitter truth is that Trotsky himself was the original architect of Trotskyism, and integration of Trotskyism into the left of capital began during Trotsky's lifetime and was completed irreversibly during World War II. It should be noted, however, that Trotsky died as a revolutionary, despite all the mistakes and confusion at the time of his death.

Therefore, Trotsky and Trotskyism belong in two different camps. If Trotsky had not been assassinated, he might have distanced himself from Trotskyism. We have seen that Natalia Trotsky distanced herself from the Trotskyists and did not want to be known for the counter-revolutionary actions of the Trotskyists.

Trotsky, as chairman of the Petrograd Workers' Councils, played a key role in councils in both 1905 and 1917. It is safe to say that after Lenin, Trotsky was the most important figure in the glorious October Revolution. Nevertheless, although Stalinism was the gravedigger of the October proletarian revolution, Trotsky was instrumental in implementation of the most brutal anti-labour policies, such as the militarization of labour, crushing of the Petrograd strike movement, the Kronstadt uprising, and so on, until he emerged as the opposition in 1923. For a long time, Trotsky was silent in the face of the counter-revolutionary rise, appeasement with power and Stalinism.

Referring to his successes in the Civil War, Trotsky stressed that these experiences could be used on the labour front as well, and

that “militarization of labour” for the entire working class could be developed and applied to the reconstruction of Russia. Following the inefficiency of war communism, of which Trotsky was one of the main founders, Trotsky became a staunch supporter of the new economic policy (NEP). He played a major role in approving the ban on factionalism and was a key figure in approving the “United Front” tactic.

Trotsky could not understand the changes in capitalism and consequently could not understand the decline of capitalism. He failed to understand that the form of organization of the working class is determined not by the working class but by growth and development of capitalism. In the growing age of capitalism, trade unions were workers’ organizations, but as capitalism entered its age of decline, trade unions merged into the capitalist state.

Some of Trotsky’s supporters, including Mandel, have argued that Trotsky had a correct Marxist understanding of the transition period (dictatorship of the proletariat), socialism and communism. By referring to Trotsky himself, we have shown that the Trotskyists’ claim is not true and that Trotsky has been confused in this regard.

The Trotskyists claim that Trotsky was a serious critic of the anti-Marxist thesis of “socialism in one country” and fought against it throughout his life. But this is not true, and Trotsky not only has ambiguities in this regard but also occasionally loses his Marxist horizon and appears in the role of defender of “socialism in one country”.

We have shown that Trotsky abandoned the idea of workers’ councils as a proletarian power, in favour of party dictatorship, and he strongly advocated substitutionism, that is, party dictatorship instead of working-class dictatorship. The fact is that party dictatorship is an unconscious privilege of parliamentarism.

During Lenin’s struggle against the dangers of the revolution, Trotsky did not stand by Lenin, and he remained silent and

practically appeased the ruling power and Stalin. Trotsky not only obeyed Stalin but also promoted a culture of obedience and appeasement.

For Trotsky, nationalization was tantamount to socialization, so for him, the main task of socialism was not abolition of wage labour but expropriation of the bourgeoisie. It was in this context that, for Trotsky, private property in the hands of private capitalists was characteristic of capitalism, and state ownership was characteristic of socialism. Trotsky was unable to recognize that the bureaucracy he was talking about was a new ruling class with the means of production and, collectively, appropriation of the surplus value of exploitation of the working class. The resulting surplus value was to be divided among the members of the ruling class, the bureaucracy. The whole process was done collectively.

Trotsky saw the basis of Stalinism as the workers' state. Trotsky considered the gravedigger of the October proletarian revolution, Stalinism, proletarian. The counter-revolutionary, who celebrated his victory over the ruins of the glorious October Revolution, became a stronghold of the counter-revolution and the greatest obstacle to advancement of proletarian positions.

For years, the main focus of the Trotskyist struggle was reform of the international communist, in other words, the struggle and attempts to resurrect the stinking corpse. But the aim of the Communist Left was not to revive the stinking corpse; rather, to form a faction, defend the proletarian and communist positions and fight against the Comintern, which had now become the centre of the counter-revolution.

Until 1934, there was some connection between Trotsky and Trotskyism with the Communist Left, but in that year, the rift and break were finalized. The Communist Left had come to the conclusion that following the merger of the Comintern with the capital camp in 1928, along with the temporary defeat of the

proletariat and being defensive of the class struggle, a new party could not be formed on the basis of the proletariat agenda. Because party formation is not voluntary but the product of certain conditions of class struggle, in which existing organizations and groups are unable to meet the need for class struggle, the formation of a world party is going to be on the agenda. The Communist Left stated that what was needed was formation of communist factions, to defend proletarian positions and programmes so that they could form a new party when the conditions for a global class struggle demanded it.

If we look beyond some of the radical rhetoric from the Transitional Programme, the Fourth International Programme (the same minimum programme of the Social Democrats or the Stalinists) can be seen to emerge – the proposal of the National Assembly, the Constituent Assembly, national freedom, land reform, and so on. The transition programme states that workers must be equipped with a democratic programme as the first step. Why did the Bolsheviks, led by Trotsky himself, oppose the Constituent Assembly in Russia in 1917 and believe that all power should be in the hands of the Soviets? Trotsky's transition programme reflects Trotsky's departure from Marxism and his return to social democracy.

Trotsky called on the international proletariat to be cannon fodder in defence of the Soviet Union. For five years, the Trotskyists called on workers in all countries to massacre one another in the imperialist war, in World War II and in defence of the Soviet Union. The Trotskyists became good soldiers for bourgeois democracy and Stalinist counter-revolution and turned workers into cannon fodder in imperialist slaughter. As the Trotskyists became soldiers of the bourgeoisie during World War II, the Trotskyists were irreversibly integrated into the bourgeois camp.

The Trotskyists declared that the post-World War II era had changed the prospects of the labour movement; in other words, that

the working class was no longer the material force of the social revolution. In the new age, colonial revolutions that would take the form of permanent revolutions would be part of the world revolution. In other words, the material force of the world revolution would not be the working class but the partisans of the colonial revolution.

In the age of imperialist decline, in the age of imperialism, all wars are reactionary; all wars are imperialist, and only social revolution is progressive. The fundamental question that arises is what was the position and orientation of the Trotskyists in the face of the imperialist wars? The Trotskyists, without exception, under the banners of “defending the revolution”, “defending democracy”, “fighting fascism”, “national liberation”, “liberation war” and “the right to self-determination”, etc., in all imperialist wars, have slaughtered workers, treated workers as cannon fodder and dragged the workers to imperialist slaughter.

Treating workers as cannon fodder in imperialist conflicts lies in the genetics of the Trotskyists, in their very DNA. There has never been an imperialist war in which the Trotskyists have not led the workers into imperialist slaughter. Workers’ blood drips from the hands of the Trotskyists.

Today, Trotskyism, after hundreds of splits, has collapsed into sects with conflicting beliefs and positions. These groups are the political apparatus of the left of capital. They are working, not for the emancipation of the working class, but for state capitalism.

Natalia Trotsky, Trotsky’s widow, was one of the Trotskyists who refused to join in with the reactionary and bourgeois actions of the Trotskyists and to be known or considered a Trotskyist in the continuation of Trotskyist counter-revolutionary policies. However, she failed to critique Trotskyism itself, the root cause of the Trotskyist counter-revolutionary positions.

The process of this study showed that the true heirs of communism – the Communist Left (although in absolute isolation and in the most difficult conditions and despite weaknesses and ambiguities in all social events) – were loyal to proletarian positions, presented proletarian horizons, tried to enrich Marxism and have become an important part of the historical memory of the proletariat. Therefore, the Communist Left will be the only possible alternative in the future world revolution.

Internationalist Voice

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Basic Positions:

- The First World War was an indication that the capitalism had been a decadent social system. It also proved that there were only two alternatives to this system: communist revolution or the destruction of humanity.
- In our epoch, the working class is the only revolutionary class. Furthermore, only this social class can deliver the communist revolution and end the barbarity of capitalism.
- Once capitalism entered its decadent period, unions all over the world were transformed into organs of the capital system. In turn, the main tasks of unions were to control the working class and mislead them about its class struggle.
- In the epoch of decadent capitalism, participating in the parliamentary circus and elections only strengthens the illusion of democracy. Capitalist democracy and capitalist dictatorship are two sides of the same coin, namely, the barbarity of capitalism.
- All national movements are counterrevolutionary, against the working class and the class struggle. Wars of national liberation are pawns in imperialist conflict.
- The reason for the failure of the October Revolution was the failure of the revolutionary wave, particularly the failure of the German Revolution, which resulted in the isolation of October Revolution and afterwards its degeneration.
- All left parties are reactionary: Stalinists, Maoists, Trotskyists and official anarchists etc. represent the political apparatus of capital.

- The regimes that arose in the USSR, Eastern Europe, China, Cuba etc., while being called “socialist” or “communist”, only offered a particularly brutal and barbaric form of capitalism: state capitalism.
- The revolutionary organization constitutes the avant-garde of the proletariat and is an active factor in the development and generalization of class consciousness. Revolutionary organizations may only take the form of revolutionary minorities, whose task neither is to organize the working class nor take power in its stead, without being a **political leadership**, or a political compass, where revolutionary organizations’ political clarity and influence on the working classes are **the fundamental elements for the implementation of a communist revolution**.

Political belongings:

The current status, positions, views and activities of the proletarian political tendencies are the product of past experiences of the working class and the effectiveness of the lessons that political organizations of the working class have learned during the history of the proletariat. Therefore, Internationalist Voice can trace its own roots and origins back to the Communist League, the First International, the left wing of both the Second International and the Third International, and the fractions that defended proletarian and communist positions against the degenerating Third International, which was represented by Dutch-German fractions, and **particularly Italian Fraction of the Communist Left** and the defence of Communist Left traditions.