

# J. POSADAS



**THE ALTERNATIVE  
OF THE  
REVOLUTIONARY STATE  
IN THE CONSTRUCTION  
OF THE  
WORKERS STATE  
IN EUROPE**



International Scientific Cultural & Political Editions

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**On the progressive role  
of military teams  
in the revolution**



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### Notice:

*The vast majority of J Posadas' writings emanates from the author's speeches in Spanish. These were first recorded on magnetic tape, transcribed, translated and then published. This explains the particular form of the texts. In this way, the author could all at once proceed with the deepening of his theoretical elaborations, speak at conferences and events, and address the functioning of the Trotskyist-Posadist IV International. This is how J Posadas lived and worked.*

*Edit. Board.*

## **CONTACT US**

**Log on to our site:**

<https://quatrieme-internationale-posadiste.com>  
[info@quatrieme-internationale-posadiste.com](mailto:info@quatrieme-internationale-posadiste.com)

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# PRESENTATION

We republish here four texts by J. Posadas dealing with the author's concept of the *Revolutionary State*. That concept is closely linked with the role played in the world by progressive teams of revolutionary soldiers in the armies of the capitalist system.

As those revolutionary soldiers take the power (or government) in various countries of Latin America, Africa and Asia, they contribute to the consolidation of the anti-imperialist, anti-colonial forces of humanity. With the economic support of Russia and China for example, and now the military-political support of Russia itself, the governments of Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali give birth to continental forms of economic, military & cultural integration that challenge the hegemony of global corporate financial imperialism with the US, EU, Nato and their allies at its core.

In Burkina Faso today, in Niger and Mali, teams of progressive soldiers take power in their respective countries. Thanks to the mass support they find in the world, and in their populations, they expel from their territories the French and North-American imperialist soldiers and military bases. They take control of their own governments, their economies, their trading choices and their finances. They take measures that break their dependency on the CFA Franc, the Euro, the dollar. They create new economic and cultural forms of continental integration between themselves, as well as with Russia, China and the world in liberation.

Nowadays, the "*Partenariat Alternatif Russie-Afrique pour le Développement Économique*" (PARADE) spans 16 Francophone African countries. In April this year the PARADE's leaders held a conference in Moscow to tighten their common economic and diplomatic ties. As part of this, South Africa, Angola, Mali, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia and Sudan have developed 'security interaction' and military agreements with both Russia and China.

Mostly thanks to the support of Russia and China too, these West African countries can start complementing each other's economies. Their young people should no longer have to drown in the world's oceans in search of the means of life. From now on, revolutionary military teams in Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, will defy colonial reprisals jointly: On 11 April 2024, a Russian military cargo-plane arrived in Niamey (Mali) with Russian military trainers and the promise of aerial means of defence. The Military officer and President of Mali, Abdourahamane Tchiani, says that from now on, Africa's natural gas<sup>1</sup> must go to supply Africa before being exported. Inside those countries, internal processes of dual power turn them into Revolutionary States.

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<sup>1</sup> Africa already exports gas to Europe. A new French-and-EU dominated project, the Trans-Sahara-pipeline, is supposed to export gas from Nigeria to Europe. It would run through Niger, Algeria and all the already-existing under-sea infrastructures.

In Latin America, there have been and there are many examples of such progressive military teams in the capitalist armies. The example J Posadas took as model was the first administration of General Peron in Argentina in 1946. And then, although never acknowledged by the world at large, a 'Revolutionary State' was made in Peru in 1968 with General Velasco Alvarado. The same went for the General Juan José Torres in 1970 Bolivia. In 1999-2001, the entire capitalist army of Venezuela welcomed and endorsed the presidency of *Commandante* Hugo Chavez. The country became a Revolutionary State - and still is. There have also been many Revolutionary States in other parts of the world.

Regarding progressive military teams taking power (as now in Africa), the author had long ago noted how these teams emanate *from the capitalist regime*; from the army of the capitalist regime, generally in the ex-colonial world. But in his text that we reproduce here: "*The alternative of the Revolutionary State in the construction of the Workers State in Europe*", 29.9.1972, J Posadas foresaw that the Revolutionary State could also happen in imperialist countries. And so, it did! Only 2 years later, in 1974, in Portugal! Here, the main actors were the anti-imperialist revolutionary soldiers of imperialist Portugal, influenced and won by the tenacious and victorious struggles of the colonial Liberation Movements in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe – all this thanks to the support of the USSR and Cuba, along with staunch Movements for Colonial Freedom in many capitalist countries themselves.

From April 1974 until June 1976, Portugal was a Revolutionary State in Europe! It was forced back due to a lack of conscious revolutionary leadership on the part of the USSR, on the part of the Communist Parties, and due also to conditions where Deng's China had remained silent and quietly opposed.

Today, the more elevated world policy of Russia & China, particularly in Latin America and Africa, lays the conditions for the formation of new Revolutionary States in the world, and even in Europe. The conditions now exist for the Revolutionary State to start fusing with the growing anti-imperialist, anti-colonial and anti-capitalist unification of Russia, China, Cuba, etc. The conditions that have crippled and failed 'socialist construction in one country' have gone.

The upcoming Workers States will now be free, or freer, to retake the path of socialist construction on the only road that can succeed, the world road.

The Editors,  
2 May 2024

# THE ALTERNATIVE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY STATE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORKERS STATE IN EUROPE

J POSADAS  
29 September 1972

The Revolutionary State is the culmination of an objective process, and it is also the result of it. It is not really conducted by leaders: it depends more on a series of factors than on individuals; it is an objective process where the economic structures of a country have acquired the ability to sway a part of society. These structures carry economic, social and political relations capable of generating further relations, new and outside the control of the capitalist system. In the *Revolutionary State*, it is these structures that incline the State to the left, forcing it forward. It is not the leaderships that do this. Indeed, the latter do not deliberately plan to make a Workers State, even less to pass from any Workers State to Socialism. The *Revolutionary State* is an intermediate stage between capitalist State and Workers State.

This process corresponds to what Bonapartism had been in previous times. Even then, the most elevated Bonapartist process had never built a structure comparable to what we call a *Revolutionary State* here. The government of Cardenas<sup>2</sup> was Bonapartist. In Russia, so was that of Kerensky<sup>3</sup> too. He wanted no more than the power to oppose Czarism. But in his case, the situation demanded more. It demanded the end of the war, and not just the end of the Czar. Things had come to the point where only the taking of power could put an end to the war, and bring peace.

Today, there are no more Bonapartist processes of the Kerensky type.

## **A Revolutionary State stands defined independently of its leadership**

*Revolutionary States* have mainly happened in the so-called 'backward' countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. In the places where they happen, the revolutionary upheavals implicate social layers, social sectors and social organs of the *bourgeois camp*. Not of the working class! Bolivia and Mexico are examples.

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<sup>2</sup> Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexico 1895-1970. Carried out a large programme of agrarian reform, nationalised the oil industry and defended Castro when Cuba was invaded at the Bay of Pigs. But he stayed within the confines of the capitalist state.

<sup>3</sup> Alexander Kerensky, 1881-1970. Served as Minister in the Provisional Government of Russia, July-Nov 1917.

With its large Communist and Socialist parties, Chile has created an economic structure that escapes the control of the capitalist system. The government<sup>4</sup> is not Bonapartist because – unlike what happens in the case of Bonapartism – it is led by a firm and resolute political team that is solid about its aim. It openly declares its aim to be socialism or a Workers State, but its policies set out no plan to pass from the capitalist State to the Workers State. The Allende government nationalised-statised<sup>5</sup> many important branches of the economy, but the judicial structure of the country goes on being bourgeois.

### **To pass from Revolutionary State to Workers State, a conscious leadership is wanted**

A *Revolutionary State* stands defined independently of its leadership. It is defined by established structures of economic and social relations. It is defined by ties between the social relations and the judicial structures - and this quite independently of who is in charge of the country. Chile has nationalised a lot of important enterprises, but not the land. It may continue to nationalise, but if it does not destroy the judicial structures, the country will stay at *Revolutionary State* level. If, on the other hand, Chile (or any other country) destroys the bourgeois juridical structures and the leadership is revolutionary, it can become a Workers State straightaway. This is what Lenin did.

When it comes to making the Workers State – i.e., to destroy the judicial structures – you cannot do without conscious leadership and programme. The creation of leadership and programme happens in a world context and every revolutionary leadership must take account of it.

Take Panama<sup>6</sup> for instance. It is a very small country where agricultural development and industrial production are weak. Yet this is also the country that has put up a great fight against the Yankee imperialists. It achieved a lot that way. However, the profits the imperialists made in Panama's "free zones" were never reinvested in Panama. Perhaps imperialism had meant to set up adjoining key industries, but in the end, Panama was not allowed to develop an industry, and very little else was organised instead.

Panama resists Yankee imperialism staunchly. Where does it find the force? It finds some force in the fact that imperialism needs it anyway; but Panama's greatest source of confidence comes from the Soviet intervention. Cuba too is another great source of strength for Panama, along with the revolutionary processes of Latin America. All these factors hamper imperialism. Any *Revolutionary State* must take these things into account.

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<sup>4</sup> Government of Chile Sept 1972: The Communists, part of the Socialists and parts of the Christian Democrats formed a *Popular Unity Coalition*. At its head, **Allende** organised a land reform, controlled prices, increased wages, reduced taxes on the poor, got free milk distributed in the schools and carried out a programme to fight unemployment. Fidel Castro toured Chile in 1971.

<sup>5</sup> Statised. This word could be translated as meaning State-ownership and public control.

<sup>6</sup> Panama: When this was written, Panama was led by Omar Torrijos (1929-1981) as Commander of the National Guard, 1972-1981. He negotiated Panama's sovereignty over the canal in 1977.

## The world conditions determine the local ones

The world situation does not decide everything of course, but it has a lot to do with what can be achieved in a given country. For this to be properly assessed and utilised, Party, programme, and audacity are required. It is the Party<sup>7</sup> that studies such matters, analyses them, learns to take advantage. The role of the Party is to interpret the world process, to see how to limit imperialism and capitalism, encourage the greater action of the masses.

In any country, the existence of a Communist Party stands in the way of the bourgeoisie and the decisions it takes. Its presence perturbs the internal cohesion of the local bourgeoisie. A small group can triumph, and this is what Lenin did.

Peru<sup>8</sup> has nationalised its main sources of production. Even some of its judicial structures are no longer bourgeois. But in Peru as much as in Chile, what remains to be overcome is the *bourgeois judicial concept* of the relation between the economy and society. This is more remarkable in Chile than in Peru because in Chile, the judicial structures are all bourgeois: parliament, judges, army, police – nothing changed! In Peru, important advances have been made. A lot of land has been expropriated and the government has created for itself a new legal code in property matters. This makes Peru more advanced than Chile in this sense. But seen from a global point of view however, Chile is much more advanced than Peru. This is due in Chile to the more conscious political orientation of its leadership. It might yet achieve more, because the masses of Chile intervene as the constitutive protagonists of their struggle.

This is the process which we call “the *Revolutionary State*”. The Revolutionary State is neither a capitalist State nor a Workers State. The dynamic within its structures leaves it with no alternative: it must answer favourably to the forces that are propelling it, because if not, it will be crushed.

From its very structures, the *Revolutionary State* encourages the rise of superior social and economic relations in the mentality of the petit-bourgeoisie and of the peasantry. Processes like the one we described in Chile are bound to recur in Latin America, Africa and Asia. We believe that they can even get hold of a big capitalist country like Italy, where the example of Chile might be repeatable. There are similarities between Chile and Italy.

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<sup>7</sup> The Party: In the texts of J Posadas, ‘the Party’ refers either to the Communist Party, to a Revolutionary Party in construction, to the need for a scientific revolutionary Party, or to a Posadist section – depending on context.

<sup>8</sup> Peru in Nov 1972: Juan Velasco Alvarado, 1910-1977, was President of the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces (1968-1975). He nationalised IPC petrol, fisheries, mining, communications and power; introduced free education for all; made Quechua one of the official languages in 1975 (Aymara eventually too); carried out a large programme of agrarian reform, expelled the US Peace Corps in 1973. Linked with the USSR and Cuba.

## **The Revolutionary State could happen in France, Italy or Britain**

Chile is a country relatively backward, but the essential bases for its retardation come from the Communist Party of Chile – the latter being a backward, colonial Party. Not a Party that responds to the call of the revolutionary programme or objectives. And when it does answer to something, it is from very far away. Enough to see how emphatically the masses stand for change, and the many actions they dare which the Communists do not. The Communists are 'behind' the masses – but far, very far behind! This happens in other countries. In Italy and also in France, it could happen that the Communist Party goes to government and starts nationalising, still leaving intact the bourgeois institutions. But then, what would you have? *A Revolutionary State!*

The process that we identify as the *Revolutionary State* could happen in France, Italy, or Britain. The onus is on us to create the slogans relevant to such situations, even should they last three weeks only. There is such a thing as the technique of tactics. The problems we face are singular because our world contains 14 Workers States and 16 Revolutionary States - and no leadership! The world revolution beams out immense forces, but the local leaderships tend to oppose them, or want them curbed. It is our task at every turn to choose the slogans that regroup the forces of progress.

When we choose our slogans, we do not go for the short-term ones, or for those that could give leadership positions. We choose the slogans that will impel the Party, or help create a new leadership, account taken of the relative forces along the road. We are not referring here to short-term tactics. We look for slogans relevant to aspects in our situation that we do not think had existed before; although, all considered, these aspects did exist before, and have now started to become a norm.

## **The State, and the programme of the Popular Union in France**

The Communists of Italy propose "a Government of Democratic Turnabout"<sup>9</sup>. In France, they propose "a Government of Popular Union"<sup>10</sup> or "a Left Government". So, the question to ask is: In what conditions can such governments be made? What do the Communist Party and the Socialist Party of France propose? They want to transfer private property to the State. This is an improvement compared with the capitalist State, but it does not achieve the Workers State. Judicially speaking, this is still a capitalist State. This is so, although economically speaking, it is no longer a capitalist State; because State ownership does break the hegemony of capitalism; it impairs it profoundly, even when you still have capitalist enterprises continuing.

The nationalisation of the major sources of production rapidly demands further nationalisations. When implemented, this transforms the capitalist system quite a lot.

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<sup>9</sup> Government for a *Democratic Turnabout* in Italy: This intention was declared at the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Italian Communist Party in 1972.

<sup>10</sup> The Popular Union in France, composed of Communists, Socialists and others, adopted a *Common Programme*, 1972-1978.

A point arrives when the nationalisations must continue, or allow themselves be all crushed and rolled back. How do you call that point when the juridical structure is still capitalist, and you take the next step of nationalisation? How do you define the State at that point? One must envisage such things, and define them, if only to know what sort of stage one is passing through.

Imperialism can declare war upon it all, but this does not do away with the need for nationalisations. A world war intervening at that point can accelerate matters, as when the First World War hastened the process of the Russian Revolution. The triumph of the *Popular Union* in France and the implementation of its programme of nationalisations would strike an enormous blow at the capitalist system. The bourgeois judicial structure of the State, because it is still in place, would rush to save the system - but then, it had been always the task to demolish this judicial structure.

The essential condition to pass from capitalist State to Revolutionary State and Workers State boils down to what is wanted to overcome the capitalist juridical structure. Once certain steps start being taken, people start thinking differently. They develop views and make judgements in light of new and evolving anti-capitalist concepts. It is only as long as the capitalist structure keeps going that people continue to think as before - mostly in terms of property - because the social and economic relations are still being determined by capitalism.

### **The concept of the Revolutionary State helps with the creation of appropriate slogans**

The *Popular Union* may triumph in France. Should it happen, Yankee imperialism will intervene, or launch the third world-war. But this will not change the underlying necessity of the process. The most it will do is hamper the revolutionary change. It is important to find ways of strengthening the revolutionary situation that take account of the possible drawbacks.

If the *Popular Union* wins in France, US imperialism will intervene through NATO. But the Soviet Union will have to intervene too. It cannot just let imperialism install itself in France, there to pressurise Europe, gain military ground. The USSR cannot allow this. The strategic challenge is too great! This is why the Soviet Union insists on what it calls "European security". It is a bureaucratic policy, but it tends to counter the arrogance of US imperialism in Europe.

The *Revolutionary State* characterisation is important in that it gives a clearer view of the revolutionary task. We do not choose this characterisation to gain some credit in law or in politics. We use it as a tool in our activities and tactics. It gives us a finer view of distinctions. Take Italy for instance, where the Communist Party proposes a *Government of Democratic Turnabout*. Here you have an invented concept alright, and a bad one, because it conceals and underestimates the level reached by the revolution.

Instead of a *Government of Democratic Turnabout*, we propose a *Government of the Left* in Italy, with a programme of economic planning, the expropriation of big capital, and other points aimed at attracting the petit bourgeoisie organised presently in the Christian Democracy. The latter is very large. It influences layers not only in the army, the functionaries and the State industries, but in workers' layers, in the peasantry, the employees. It was to attract them that we proposed the *Government of the Left*; and to raise their level of historic understanding as well, make them more resolute. This slogan is only for this particular conjuncture. Had the Communists defended a revolutionary policy, we would have posed the struggle for power. We act as we do because the Communist Party refuses to struggle for power. It opposes this!

Should a *Government of the Left* happen in Italy with a programme like the one we propose, Italy would not become a Workers State. It would still be a capitalist State judicially speaking. But it would no longer be strictly a capitalist State. In the same way, the Socialists and Communists in France could win elections with the *Popular Union*; with the program they already have, they could nationalise the main sources of production. This would not transform the State structure because the State would still be capitalist judicially speaking. More and more nationalisations do not change the bourgeois nature of the State - but what do you call that sort of State at that point? We call it a Revolutionary State. And note - not Bonapartism.

### **On the tactics to adopt towards the Revolutionary State**

Our definition of the *Revolutionary State* is also a slogan. It means to give courage to the leaders who are steadfast about making the State apparatus serve human progress. In such situations, those in government - Communists, Socialists, petit bourgeois cadres - look up to the mobilised masses for support. It is not the time, then, to go and vilify their government and its limitations. The task is not to bring down that government. The task is to help the masses continue to rise and overtake the government. One does not show the government in the light of an enemy but one continues to organise for a new leadership.

We are not speaking here of every sort of capitalist government. We speak of governments like those of *Alvarado* in Peru or of *Allende* in Chile. It is about those particular governments that we say the task is not to overthrow them. We do not call to overthrow them, but we do not fall behind their intentions either, or accept their pressures and policy aims.

*Revolutionary States* occur regularly in almost all the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. So much so that we are literally living through a *Revolutionary States* stage. It is not a stage that can be wished away however. because it is rooted in the weakness and colonial retardation of the Communist parties. This retardation explains our stage of *Revolutionary States*. Had the Communists fought with revolutionary policies, the masses would have simply become incorporated into that policy.

Had the Communists conducted a revolutionary policy in the world, this would not have eliminated the stage of revolutionary petit-bourgeois nationalist governments; but it would have greatly reduced it. It is the reverse that happened. The Communist parties grew opposed or contrary to the mounting nationalist revolutionary tide. Their hostility prevented them from growing. It ended their chance of becoming mass parties, and it left them unable to interpret the process. For they showed themselves completely unable to grasp that mass movements could indeed develop under nationalist petit-bourgeois and bourgeois leaderships.

This is how in Latin America and elsewhere, the Communist parties failed to understand even the governments that were unquestionably to the left: Peron in his first stage<sup>11</sup>, Alvarado in Peru<sup>12</sup>, Torres<sup>13</sup> in Bolivia, Cardenas (Mexico) before all of these. The Communist parties did not accept that all the theoretical and practical problems can be resolved by mobilising the working class and peasant masses; and that it is possible to carry out the bourgeois democratic tasks by means of the proletarian revolution.

### **The world revolution stimulates the Communist movement**

What we set out explains the stage of the *Revolutionary State* that we are living in. But it did not have to happen this way. It happened this way because of the retardation of the Communist parties in front of very mighty revolutionary upswings in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Those upswings had great effects in the world Communist parties however, Workers States included. In the communist militants and their leaders, the big revolutionary nationalist advances of the world had an enormous effect. They provoked questioning and crises in the Communists. They stimulated their logical thirst to understand. They did not accept our Revolutionary State definition because they do not reckon that the revolution at world level has created a structure that gnaws at capitalism. It is this gnawing that restricts what capitalism can do; it makes capitalism unable to stop the formation of *Revolutionary States*.

In the Workers States, in the Soviet Union and Cuba, the leaderships are forced to understand this world revolutionary process better than before. They understand it better than the Communist parties, although still without assimilating it integrally. In its very beginning, the leadership of the Cuban Revolution was no different from the other nationalists. But it changed politically as Cuba entered objectively the process of Permanent Revolution. The latter imposed itself on Cuba through a series of economic,

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<sup>11</sup> General Peron in his first stage: Peron first became President in 1946. He raised the wages and pensions, invested in economic diversification to increase the country's independence. He invested in public transports and encouraged strikes against some employers. In 1946-47, the worker's centre (CGT) had 2 million members.

<sup>12</sup> General Juan Velasco Alvarado: (1910-1977). President of Peru 1968-1975. Nationalised the oil fields, expropriated all large sugar estates and cattle farms, carried out the Agrarian Reform.

<sup>13</sup> Military Officer Juan Jose Torres: (1920-1976). President of Bolivia 1970-1971. He cancelled the US steel concession on an important zinc mine. In Oct 1970, he negotiated with the workers who occupied tin mines. In 1971, he expelled the US Peace Corps from Bolivia. He was assassinated in Argentina in June 1976.

social and political factors, combined with the crisis of capitalism and the political conjunctures in the Soviet Union.

From its semi-colonial State, Cuba went all the way to the Workers State; and this, without any appreciable stage of bourgeois democratic revolution. The bourgeois democratic revolution that Castro tried to carry out with Urrutia<sup>14</sup> and Grau San Martin<sup>15</sup>, failed - or rather, it boiled down to a struggle between them all.

The brief struggle of Castro against these two others amounted to the bourgeois democratic revolution in Cuba. Exactly how long this took is not important here. Fidel Castro did not understand this, otherwise he would have eventually said: "Ah yes, we had the democratic bourgeois revolution; it happened during that short period against Urrutia". But Castro never saw that.

In Russia, the bourgeois democratic revolution lasted 7 months. It took immensely less than that in Cuba where it was hardly started when the struggle for power imposed itself. The process of the bourgeois democratic revolution marks the start of the Workers State so long as the masses keep intervening in massive mobilisations. Without these mobilisations, Fidel Castro would not have succeeded.

There was no *Revolutionary State* stage in Cuba. The process unfolded without stop - from the armed struggle over to the taking of the government, and from there over to the dispute and struggle that created the Workers State. This left no space for a *Revolutionary State*; not even the smallest stage of it. Hardly had Fidel Castro started in power when everything was nationalised and the Workers State was made.

Here you have the vital problems of this stage. One must give them full attention. One must assimilate them theoretically and politically. For such situations are going to recur in other countries, although we reckon that the stages will be much shorter even than in Cuba, much shorter.

J. POSADAS

28-29 Sept 1972 - (Extracts)

## READ ON OUR SITE

**REVOLUTIONARY STATE, ITS TRANSITORY FUNCTION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIALISM, J POSADAS, 28.9.1969** – (contact us if no access)

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<sup>14</sup> Manuel Urrutia: First president of Cuba. In office in Jan 1959. Dismissed by Fidel Castro 6 months later. Urrutia then denounced the "communist tyranny of Cuba" and he eventually went to live in the United States.

<sup>15</sup> Ramon Grau San Martin: (1887-1969), Cuban physician. President of Cuba in 1944. Opposed Batista in 1952. Was running for Presidency again in 1958.

# THE PROGRESSIVE ROLE OF MILITARY TEAMS IN THE WORLD REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

J POSADAS

June 1974



It is no longer possible to view the role of the military as in the past. The uniform used to represent military power. The person wearing it used to represent the power of the State. But this is all breaking down today, even for the soldiers. Military decisions no longer derive from pure military strategies. Still within the army seen as an instrument, the military consideration must now defer to certain social, political and revolutionary considerations. We are no longer dealing with wars just between countries, but with wars between classes. The Military

Strategy has changed with the growing prevalence of class war. Where the military orders used to come down straight from commanding posts, they must now take account of class confrontations, or actions like the toppling of professional military sectors. This makes the soldier uncertain about tomorrow. Military insensitivity to the social condition causes the soldier to feel disconnected, alien to a process increasingly revolutionary. Every war tends to lead to revolution because every war leads to the involvement of the population. This affects the military in consequence. The purely military function of the army becomes altered, downgraded. The purely military orientation of the soldier declines.

The soldiers of the past used to experience life "in the solitude of the uniform", isolated and secluded from social life. But science and technology have advanced. Knowledge has increased in people, in their human ability to progress, to make relations. The influence coming from one side of the population reaches all sides quickly. Without waiting for best technical and scientific means, the most backward populations adopt the usages, the insights, the capacities of the most advanced. This gnaws at the strictly military outlook of the soldier who starts feeling the demerit of the capitalist function. To be in the army used to project power. It carried distinction. It could suggest that one represented the State, but this is no longer so. Now is when the State crumbles.

There is one military coup d'état after another in Africa, Asia and Latin America. This process influences the soldier as part of the cultural elevation carried forward by the revolutionary struggle. For the revolutionary struggle is the highest form of culture. It is the means to change history. The soldier observes this elevation beaming in all directions, in the direction of revolution included. The progress of technology and science enters every soldier's home through the wife, the children, the dog, the cat, the grandchildren, the grandfather, the girlfriend.

In the soldiers' home, what prevails is the logic of daily life, a logic where the military viewpoint does not hold sway. Add to this that, in their roles, the soldiers are witness to the uselessness of the military discourse that leaves them feeling isolated. How much of military talk is relevant to the family? When people gather, they talk about places, politics, science, technology, trips to the moon. They look up to the scientists, not to the army. This marginalises and isolates the soldiers. They experience what we have called '*the loneliness of the uniform*'. This draws an increasing number of them to the revolution. It is less of them becoming integrated into the revolution as becoming drawn to it by wanting to go and resolve the problems. As they step forward to do it, they do not bring along their military viewpoint, they bring their political one.

The Posadists have been the only ones to deal with these questions. No other current, no Communist or Socialist Party has dealt with them. They did not go beyond denouncing *the rigidity of the uniform*. Now that they have heard of what we say, some Communist parties have recently referred to "the military nationalism of soldiers who have no other choice but to be nationalist" - but that is not our judgement. The idea that "they have no other choice" is mechanical and imprecise. It is not a 'lack of choice' that moves those soldiers, but their conscious outlook.

One needs to dwell on what allowed soldiers, as in Portugal, to pass 'from the solitude of the uniform' over to being in communication with the rest of the world. Those soldiers grew out of the feeling of being solitary in their uniforms. Now they see their uniform as an instrument to be used. The progress of humanity peels societal forces away from capitalism. As for us, we have long ached to lay our eyes on such soldiers. See how they use their military clout to impel the revolution in this stage of history. This has happened in other places, in Ethiopia (under ex-Army officer Mengistu, 1977), in Somalia (General Siad Barre, 1969), in Peru (General Alvarado, 1968), Argentina (General Perón, 1946), Bolivia (General Ovando, 1970<sup>16</sup>). The case of Officer Lazaro Cárdenas<sup>17</sup> in the late 1930s was more singular due to the military history of Mexico.

We live in times that fill layers of soldiers<sup>18</sup> with the wish to actually live life. As the world moves on, the soldiers ask themselves: "And war - what do we need it for?". War is key to their professions, key to their roles in capitalism, but doubt catches up with them, and grows. This can go very deep in some armies. It is happening in all in the countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America. Even in countries like Sweden, Italy, France.

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<sup>16</sup> General Alfredo Ovando, 1918-1982. Air Force commander. Nationalised the Bolivian operations of the Gulf Oil Corporation.

<sup>17</sup> Lazaro Cardenas, 1895-1970. President from 1934-1940. Nationalised railways and petrol. Carried out Agrarian Reform. Brought workers and peasants in government with the aim of "workers democracy". Introduced 'socialist education' in schools, supported rises in wages and improvement in working conditions. Created a health service.

<sup>18</sup> A military soldier is a person who serves in an army, engaged in military service, or as an enlisted person. This is distinct from a commissioned officer. In the UK, a commissioned officer is a military officer holding a commission such as Second Lieutenant in the army, acting Sub-Lieutenant in the Royal Navy, Pilot Officer in the Air Force, and officers of all ranks, senior to these. (From Wikipedia, 10.9.23)

The soldiers see that there are fourteen Workers States in the world, sixteen Revolutionary States, and the proletariat everywhere fighting for the power to lead and organise society.

**The soldiers are influenced  
by the Workers States and the world revolution.**



*11.4.2024: The revolutionary soldiers of Niger welcome a Russian military cargo plane landing in Niamey*

The soldiers of the world observe countries like the Soviet Union – which was nothing 56 years ago and less than nothing by the end of WW2 – advancing in leaps and bounds. Revolutionary soldiers can be found in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and in some 'developed' capitalist countries too. They know that the human relations in the Workers States are fraternal ones. They feel and esteem the material and scientific progress happening in the Workers States, their military progress included. In very large layers of the soldiers of the world, the ability grows to understand and imagine doing away with the military role.

In capitalism, the soldiers cannot but belong to a structure that defines their role, which role they have endorsed. Around the notion of no longer playing that role, there comes the apprehension: "And what am I going to do with my life?". One must address this concern by explaining that the soldier who stops playing a strictly military role does not stop being a person and a human being.

On top of this, one's own role in the military can be made useful, infinitely more useful than it is now. Mind that this applies also to the military in the Workers States.

In capitalism, any military engagement means the elimination of others whose side is expected to want us eliminated tomorrow. But it is not like this in the Workers States.

It is important to demonstrate that the Workers State has broken from this. The Workers' State does not set out to eliminate people. It does not excite the personal ambition of possession. It develops instead the inclination towards human fraternity and the wish for it.

### **The significance of the "Carnations' Revolution" in Portugal.**

At the time of the revolutionary military coup by the MFA<sup>19</sup> in April 1974, the population distributed red carnations to the soldiers.



The carnation and the rose are more than symbols. They can express human resolve, determination and the quest for programme.

In the 'Carnations Revolution', people crowded around the soldiers to forestall any rebuff, and have the soldiers welcoming them instead. No one tried to waylay the soldiers or to seduce them. People gathered round to let the soldiers know, to communicate to them their great wish and hope for progress.

Women stepped forward to win the soldiers, not to seduce. Woman no longer needs to surrender herself. Moved by the force of the progress of the revolution, she wants to elevate and win the soldier. And now the

soldier feels the same! This has not always been so in history! Now, man and woman feel the force of the revolution. Children were present too, and took part in all this. This is the significance of 'the carnation' today. Very beautiful, all this!

### **The importance of the influence of the liberation movements in the colonies**

The liberation movements of the colonies have exerted a very great influence on the Portuguese military<sup>20</sup>. The political superiority of the liberation movements allowed them to overcome and enhance their power of persuasion.

They persuaded even those with the power to crush and exterminate them. Where it takes decades for the imperialists to fail to subdue populations that refuse to learn to read and write, it takes only a few years for the liberation movements to eliminate illiteracy.

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<sup>19</sup> **MFA** is the *Movement of the Armed Forces* of Portugal. It was led by Vitor Alves, Otelo Savaira de Carvalho and Vasco Lourenco. Salgueiro Maia joined later. Many other army officers were involved. They took the government and introduced measures of social transformation like the Agrarian Revolution and the nationalisation of the Bank.

<sup>20</sup> **Guinea Bissau** became an independent State in Sept 1974. Mozambique followed in 1975, and the Islands of Cap Verde, Sao Tomé and Principe after that. Angola became independent in Nov 1975.

The Carnations Revolution cannot fail to impress soldiers in the imperialist armies. These are not senseless or unfeeling. They are not idiots. They might never have known anything but the army. The soldier of the imperialist army lives an existence uselessly without agency, where outside life has no entry but through the uniform, the weapon, the cannon; and where ambition has little to feed on, beyond the next grade.

When soldiers come in contact with the population, they develop sentiments of compassion, sympathy, assistance, solidarity. Their children become Communists, Trotskyists, protestors, who clash with the father. It is not rare to find protests with soldier's children, some very young. Their presence confirms protest as possible and necessary. The ideas they raise puts them in contact with the workers' movement. Such happenings penetrate the soldiers' houses.

### **This is the age of intelligence and reason**

People are no longer consumed by self-advancement and career. They look up to intelligence and reason. The development of science and technology causes the productive forces to rebel against private property. Capitalism sends a rocket to the moon, but it has contaminated the waters here on earth. In Italy, large oil manufacturers were recently sentenced to 20 years for the sale of counterfeited and poisoned cooking oil. In France and Italy, waste from the chemical industry gets thrown in the sea, poisoning the fish, killing the flora, polluting the waters, the coasts. People see this. They know that with the current levels of technology, production could satisfy the needs of tens of thousands, and with little effort. The world has watched the Soviets coming out of nothing, developing objectively, and not only production, but the social relations based on the love of the human being.

The process of social change makes the soldiers feel apart and trapped. This has not always been so. In the past, everything used to be defined by war. The soldier had to serve the definition, always preparing, always drilling for 'the big day'. In the stage of the fascist dictatorships, the governments used to decide via the armies.

These days, the imperialists are told to go home. French imperialism threw its whole weight against Vietnam, but it had to leave. The Yankee imperialists replaced the French on strength that the French were incompetent. But the Yankees had to go home. It took them 10 years, but they left. This has not been lost on the soldiers of the world.

Now countries like Syria and Iraq - up to recently considered inexistent - start freeing themselves and developing. Such events impact the soldiers. They start considering that there is more to life than just the uniform - a uniform that no longer brings them kudos or approval. For the uniform no longer carries the power. Where the uniform no longer raises the soldier above society, the soldier can feel belittled. And as people repudiate war, and hate war, the soldier feels the hatred of the people.

## **The solitude of the uniform:**

The soldier nowadays feels isolated in the uniform, exiled, relegated. He or she wants to break out of this solitude, the solitude of the uniform. This feeling is not new, it does not come from now. Only, it has been growing in the soldiers as part of the process of the development of the social struggles. It is in the Soviet Union that it eventually came fully to its own, China also, and Central European countries. Soldiers experiencing this solitude would have been very exceptional in the past. Now it has become norm.

This is why the communist parties and the working-class movements must set out to win army officers, and in some numbers. Not expecting that a whole army can be won, but to develop better relations between the army and the workers' movement.

Everything considered, armies are not the most important thing. Of course, there are moments when the military plays the decisive role. When two mighty forces confront each other, the military situation is what decides. Certainly. But one must still try to win the soldiers - whether in war or in peace. Of course, not all the soldiers can be won.

Although the army is an institution whose structure cannot be transformed, it is still possible to win large layers of soldiers in a process that breaks down their sense of security and internal cohesion in the service of capitalism.

When entire battalions are won to the revolution, as in this case in Portugal, they feel like a political party; and no longer cooped-up in the uniform. Still in their uniforms, they now want to intervene in the country's problems. They no longer wait to be ordered by someone. Forward they go of their own volition. It is the development of the world revolution that influences them here, and guides them. They are no longer pawns that move when pushed. They are people who take initiatives.

The revolutionary initiatives of the soldiers in Portugal did not all come from the soldiers' own political reasoning. That reasoning was induced by the struggle of the masses, particularly those in the colonies<sup>21</sup>. The soldiers' political reasoning had firm roots in the mass struggle in Portugal of workers, students, peasants; for these never stopped resisting the fascist regime<sup>22</sup>. This combined with the risings in Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Angola, to weaken capitalism in Portugal. Just as capitalism was being weakened as a whole, by the struggle of the world masses, the great strikes in France, Italy, Japan, Germany, England. Weakened above all by the constant elevation of the Workers States.

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<sup>21</sup> In 1974, Portugal had to give independence to the following colonies: Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe.

<sup>22</sup> Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, followed by Marcelo Caetano in 1968.



*The soldiers and captains of Portugal do not quit the uniform but "the loneliness of the uniform".  
(Editorial comment, quote from J Posadas).*

The progressiveness of the world exerts pressure on the military. The soldiers feel left-out in their country and the world where they feel isolated, puppet-like, without a decisive role. The top commander sends an order which returns on the echo from void at the other end, or non-acceptance. This imparts to the most 'backward' countries the most advanced comprehension. In the army, this has a destroying effect, on its sense of security, on its sense of caste. The soldiers react by taking political initiatives, by feeling as a party. They want progress for Portugal, but imperialist and backward Portugal can only make progress on the socialist road. The soldiers take the socialist road, and there, what they find is communist and socialist vanguard.

The soldier no longer wants the role of killing and dying. To kill and die - but for whom? For guys visibly making money from letting others die of hunger? To kill and die in wars meant to eliminate the peoples of distant lands? The soldiers feel indignant. They feel overwhelmed by their deplorable role as the assassins of history. What else are they? When rebellion comes to them, they realise that they can be human beings like everyone else; and that the uniform need not cut them off any more. Because in their heads, they have already cast out the uniform. They can still wear it - and we recommend that they do - to join in the fight for progress on the socialist road.

These revolutionary soldiers are won by intelligence and reason. Our epoch of socialist construction edifies people as it heads in this direction. Although a conscious world leadership and a necessary form of world economy are still missing, socialism already points to the way of the just human relation.

When the military is won over and takes the side of socialism, it means that the problem we face is not an economic one any more. It is now a matter of consciousness and resolve. Consciousness must now determine existence: the military shows it, the captains of Portugal show it. What we observe in Portugal from the news has to be happening a hundred times deeper amongst the soldiers lower down - and in the higher ranks too! This is not peculiar to Portugal. This is a global phenomenon that can be observed in Portugal in the specific circumstances of a country where conditions happened to have come all together at the right time.

One must not invoke Marx' ideas as justification for doing nothing. All that Marx needs is to be applied. The capitalist system clings on from above by its finger tips, but it decomposes down below. There is a process of com-penetration. Before triumphing, every new social regime penetrates the previous one. The new society enters the superstructures of the old society, dissolving them. In this case, capitalism sees what it used to consider its *historic right* being taken away from it. The superior social relations of a new regime are penetrating it. They have started to win people in the intelligentsias of capitalism. The human being is a thinking being. Thought is the greatest achievement of nature and the highest conquest of organized matter.

Many other soldiers must be inspired by the new sentiments growing now. What happened in Portugal shows that such sentiments must have been held for many years. The soldiers witness the deftness of people when they rise. They see the spontaneity and objectivity that makes people fight not just for themselves but for human progress. In the army, the soldier sees the chief making comfortable, filling up with money, privileges, women, cars, only to end up - dead. This surely is insane, crazy! Whether in relation to nature, or to the world, the soldier observes the great level achieved in human dominion through the advances made in science and technology. Like everyone else, the soldier perceives the simplification of the relation between the human being, nature and the cosmos. As a human being, the soldier is in principle logical, open to the most noble and elevated ideas.

When Captains and entire battalions start leading a revolution as in Portugal, they prove the Permanent Revolution in practice. Do not think that the Workers States' bureaucracy has many years left to live on. Behind the revolutionary Captains of Portugal, there stands a [figurative] book of Lenin. To the whole world, this announces that the future of humanity is assured. Those captains have shown their respect for Lenin, for the historic feat of the Workers State, and for its foundations. They have heard of the objectivity that Trotsky demonstrated in his endeavour to maintain and perpetuate the principles of Lenin. The captains of Portugal have come across all this. You need to understand this. You have to be able to understand it. The commendation and acclaim of humanity must be extended to the Portuguese Captains, to encourage them, to help them continue with the dialectical comprehension.

## **Humanity is apt for socialism. This is the epoch of intelligence and reason**

For the revolution in Africa, Asia and Latin America, it is paramount to win the armies. This is necessary and totally possible.

This may become less essential in the future, when the world relations of forces will have finally allowed for the direct incorporation of the army into the revolutionary processes. Like some sort of trade union. It will not be long before you see military sectors functioning like trade unions. This will happen when the authority and superiority of the Workers States will prevail in all social, political and theoretical fields, over and above their prevalence in the economy. It will happen when the Workers State prevails in these fields even more powerfully than they do at economic level. These future soldiers will have become direct products of the Workers State.

Our understanding of Perón and Peronism<sup>23</sup> marked the start of our policy towards the military. When we showed the need to win a part of the army, it was not because we were in South America, or due to particular traditions in the armies of particular semi-colonial countries. What gave us our policy is the Soviet Union; the existence of the Soviet Union and the other Workers States. Mexico had had the most traditions, certainly, with priests taking up arms, leading revolutions, building armies, supporting revolutions. But what decides today is the influence of the Workers States.

This is the epoch of intelligence and reason. The economy and society are no longer mysterious. The mystery that lingers now is a disguise. The class struggle question has become simple; and so has everything to do with the existence of classes. Humanity is fit for socialism. Portuguese imperialism has not been able to uphold the imperialist mentality of its army. This is an imperialist army - with a revolutionary wing!

Count on a part of the US army to be won to the revolution some day. Beneath America's calm veneer, the masses are reasoning. A movement of enormous magnitude is bound to appear there. Nixon and imperialism could have 100,000 US soldiers parading in the streets, so why don't they? They don't, because against the 100,000 for Nixon, there will be another 100,000 against him. Same as in the German army, small as it is, where there must be 60% socialists waiting for the moment to go out and bring capitalism down. In the French army, according to the polls, half of the officers voted for the Popular Union<sup>24</sup>; when a contingent of left groups went to a barracks to lower the French flag and raise a red flag instead, the officers pretended not to see. No-one was sanctioned afterwards, and nobody complained of any offence to the French flag.

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<sup>23</sup> <https://es.quatrieme-internationale-posadiste.org/libro/el-peronismo/>

<sup>24</sup> There were presidential elections in France on 5.5.1974. The Socialist Party, the Communist Party and the Left Radicals campaigned together on a *Programme Commun* they had agreed in 1972. Although the Communist Party was the main force in this **Popular Union**, it supported the Socialist leader Francois Mitterrand for the presidency.

## **Yankee imperialism prepares teams of assassins for the atomic war**

Imperialism tries to organize small groups of selected soldiers for the atomic war. What we see in Chile and its Junta of assassins<sup>25</sup> is just the testing of its preparations of atomic war. It has a hunch that the atomic war means the end of its regime, but it hopes to win. It wants to win, but what will it do when it has won? It will have to continue to dominate against people. And how will it do that? Already now, the political parties have stopped being any good to it, because they are embedded, encrusted in the economy, in the relations of daily life, production, interchange. Even such as they are, the political parties respond to interests that are opposed to those of the military dictatorship and high finance behind it.

Imperialism looks to a reorganisation to see it through the atomic war. In its hope to continue existing after the war, it looks for new structures where big capital has broken free from the interests of each country. It wants rid of the political and commercial relations that still respond to interests in each country, at the levels of exchange, production, investment. Imperialism sees no hope of reaching this goal politically. It wants the power to raise itself above the interests of daily life. But such a power does not exist. In every country, it wants a military government dependent on the Yankee and world financial centres, along with the creation of bodies for the execution of the interests of imperialism<sup>26</sup>.

In Chile, the murderous military junta is testing to see if his can work. To prevail in the country, it could have made arrangements with the Christian Democrats, or the right-wing agrarian parties or the National Party. Because this Junta defends interests well beyond Chile, it clashes with these instead. The Junta is about global interests only. If Yankee imperialism could win the atomic war, it would no longer defend one place or another. Chile is the proof. The dependency of the world would be on the United States. The United States would rule the world. This is what they try in Chile. Through finance, the Junta makes Chile dependent on a central power, with all weapons, political leaderships, production and the sale of production for that central power. The idea is to break the current structure of the world, or that part of the world where capitalist production exists, to return to an infinitely backward era, inferior even to the feudal from the point of view of the social relations.

Under the Junta, the Chilean government has no real existence. Its actions have no perspectives and the country is paralyzed. Things keeps going because imperialism lends money and guarantees the purchase of copper. Nothing more. Even with errors, the Popular Unity<sup>27</sup> had built an economic structure superior to that of capitalism.

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<sup>25</sup> The Pinochet coup in Chile took place on 11 Sept 1973.

<sup>26</sup> Editorial Note: At the time of the publication of this document, Oct 2023, this is a fair description of NATO and its functioning.

<sup>27</sup> The Popular Unity was the united front in Chile formed of Socialists, Communists and others, created for the successful candidacy of Salvador Allende in the 1970 Chilean presidential elections.

This Chilean Junta wants to undo all this, but mind that it cannot be done. In trying to do so, the Junta disconnects the economic relations of the country internally and with the world. The resistance of the masses combines with that of the small producers, the average firms, the agrarian sectors, the petty bourgeoisie. This force collides with the Junta. As it realises the power structure cannot be reconstituted, imperialism looks for another form of political and social management.

If the Chilean Junta could do it, it would erase some factors of competition inherent to private property, but these are essential to the capitalist regime. On the part of imperialism, this attempt to survive is a degeneration of the capitalist regime.

### **One must integrate the military into the progress of society**

Soldiers must be encouraged to feel a part of the progress of society. They are no longer wanted for subordination, but for progressive intervention. The soldier must be invited to act intervene. The revolution needs to win a part of the army. This is the way to break the homogeneity and the coherence of the capitalist army. This debilitates its capitalist structure. The revolution loosens the army's ties with the capitalist economy and benefits the revolution by winning soldiers to its side.

No revolution triumphed without support in the soldiers. The soldiers have the military apparatus at their disposal, and the military apparatus decides. The army has the weapons and the weapon's handlers.

In France and throughout capitalist Europe, one must intervene towards the army. Of course, the capitalist armies are not to be trusted as institutions. They organise the military coups on behalf of the capitalist system. This said, the soldiers who we want to progress and who want to organise for it, are those who oppose the military coups on behalf of capitalism. Bourgeois politicians say that "if the communists and the trade unions take the country over, we will still have the army on our side". They say this at every turn. Why then shouldn't the workers' parties not have the right to have the army on their side? The workers parties have every right to appeal to the soldiers. One must have proposals for the army. In the enterprise and the trade union committees still to be made, the question of seizing the power must be discussed, with class conclusions drawn about the structure of the army.

See how in Portugal, a team of soldiers came over directly to the camp of the revolution. They merit the title of Revolutionary Soldiers. Distributing leaflets and crying with emotion in the demonstrations, they showed that the conditions are coming for very big leaps in the world. For the first time, these soldiers were allowed to feel the joy of truly laughing and truly crying, as part of an outpouring of the emotions that were not allowed in the seclusion, the rigidity and the loneliness of the uniform. These soldiers are ambassadors of the need to organize.

No progress should be expected to come from any 'return to democracy' in Portugal. The mass of the population is going to have to go beyond bourgeois democracy. If this were not so, the soldiers would not have come to the people, they would have only addressed a selected few.

In military sectors and military teams of Latin America in particular, but also in Portugal, there is already a debate regarding the need for Marxist courses. The fact that this happens shows the level of preparation taking place in armies, to deal with the tasks that have been left undone by the communist parties and the trade unions.

In some armies, there are debates on the need for Marxism because the progress of the countries demands measures that affect the capitalist system, like nationalisation-statifications, the planning of the economy, the monopoly and control of the State over foreign trade, the Agrarian Reform and the revolution. There must be courses prepared with clear syntheses on subjects like 'what is a Workers State' and 'what is the inexorable course of history'.

**J. POSADAS**

June 1974

# THE RED ARMY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE OF TROTSKY

J POSADAS

20 Oct 1973



The Russian Revolution endured because of the existence of the Bolshevik Party and the proletarian army organized by Trotsky<sup>28</sup>. It was not just that the proletariat and the Russian peasants adhered to the Russian revolution, but that they organized a proletarian army for defence and the class war. In the world, all these questions will soon be discussed again. This aim was not just to defend "our" country against the invader, but to defend the revolution and

its role in the world. At the core of the Red Army, the aim was class warfare.

The Red Army was aware that its role was to defend the progress of humanity. It was not its intention to defend Russia against foreign invaders, or to expand Russia's frontiers. The whole of the Red Army was organized in this conception. This sort of thing happened in other armies, but more partially, as in Korea and China.

The Soviet Army was organised entirely in that way. Its aim was not to defend the frontiers, but to secure the highest possible advance in terms of the progress of humanity. That army was made by a Workers State as a function of being an instrument to build socialism.

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<sup>28</sup> "In Lenin's first government, Trotsky was appointed the People's Commissar for Foreign Affairs and led the negotiations for the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, by which Russia withdrew from World War One. From 1918 to 1925, he served as the People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, founding the Red Army" - (Wikipedia, May 2024)

The role of Trotsky's as War Commissar has been a historical prowess. Through the Red Army, he helped prepare not just for military action against the capitalist empire, but for the battle of the Workers State to defeat the siege of world capitalism as part of the building of socialism. And so, not only did the Red Army defeat the world capitalist siege, it reinforced the historic foundation of the Workers State. If that army had been simply made to defend the borders of the fatherland, the USSR would have been overrun. As an army made to serve the goal of socialism, its victory in 1921 contributed a factor of containment in the degeneration of the new Workers State.

If the USSR later failed to advance and degenerated yet further, this came from other causes in history; causes not strictly attributable to the internal process of the USSR - or even to Stalin. As he degenerated, Stalin was resting on these other historic factors.

We must value the important innovation represented by the Red Army. Rest assured that soon, the discussion will return in the world about the function which it played. Undoubtedly, the Chinese army and the Korean army are revolutionary armies, and they have acted in a revolutionary way. But the model was the USSR. The Chinese leaders of today never recall that fact. It will not be many years before all the works of Trotsky get published in the USSR. The complete works of Trotsky can already be found in Moscow, not a line missing. Trotsky's writings correspond to the work of the Encyclopaedists in their days. They contribute like them to the historic progress of human thought.

With the Red Army, Trotsky as its builder incorporated into Marxism a new level of organisational experience. He drew his ability to foresee and organize consciously from Marxism, and from this Marxist base, he proved that it is possible to organize an army for the purpose of revolution. In our present times, we believe that it is possible to win the army of some capitalist countries. We derive this notion partly from Trotsky's experience. There is certainly no direct continuity between what Trotsky did and what happens now, but we base ourselves on the observation that the army can be won: If not won as a structure or an institution, at least partially won. Every revolution wins over a part of the enemy's apparatus. There is no doubt that winning a whole capitalist army should be difficult! But it has been even more difficult to bring some enlightenment to the Church.

Yet this is what partly happens today. Catholic layers are drawn to the side of the revolution in Latin America for instance, if only not to let the Church fall completely behind.

In the triumph of the Russian Revolution and the overthrow of the capitalist system there, the principle of the permanent revolution became fully verified; for that revolution fully demonstrated that one could pass from feudalism directly over to the Workers State. The aim of doing just this had figured on the agenda of the Third International during the *First Four Congresses of the Bolshevik Party* after 1917. The enormous backwardness of the new Workers State hindered the development of the revolution, but it did not prevent the development of scientific thought.

The Third International devoted itself to the elaboration and preparation of the capacity to think, to analyse and espouse history. There was only one Workers State, but the International did not remain aloof in this isolation. It immersed itself in the process as it was presented, even with a small party, counting on the rise of new opportunities. It organised political and theoretical security in its teams. It stimulated the formation of new communist parties in the world. It endeavoured to live scientifically all the experiences of the revolutionary process, to learn from them and apply the results in the future.

As the Third International analysed all the experiences of the world, it proved itself to be an irreplaceable instrument. No university or institution can impart this level of cultural knowledge. Of course, we are talking here of the International as a political instrument. It did not organize the political knowledge academically. It worked as an instrument for the transformation of society, and in so doing raised itself to the level of the most complete form of all sciences. As such, it required the firmest level of security, coordination and centralisation, particularly between its goals and its actions. Political activity is the one endeavour that demands all these abilities. The Third International played this role.

The post 1921 degeneration of the USSR must be attributed to the historic conditions at the time. The revolution did not find the necessary support. The Russian Revolution did not find the necessary support in the world. This weighed hugely on the Bolsheviks, but they did not fall apart. They

did not disintegrate or become disorganized. They decided to maintain the revolution whilst waiting for new revolutionary stages.

Before 1917, the Russian economy had been devastated by war. Russia was all scarcity and crisis. It had been the most backward of the capitalist countries. A lithograph, *Un Paquet d'Esclaves* by Honoré Daumier 1842, shows two men playing cards where the stakes are bundles of slaves, serfs, peasants. The servants of one nobleman would pass into the hands of another. [Although Daumier exposed mainly the European colonial powers, Ed], such was the Russia where the Bolsheviks took power.

There had been some progress nevertheless. After attacks upon him, Tsar Alexander II had declared serfdom officially abolished in 1861– but this was superficial. The serfdom regime was very powerful in Russia and it meant an immense backwardness. 80 percent of the population were peasants and 80 percent of them were illiterate. This is where the revolution triumphed, and this did not make the revolution easier!

The retreat of the Russian Revolution came with a lack of scientific political parties, a lack of political experience in the masses, a lack of experience in social leadership. From the rest of Europe and the world, the elements to compensate for this did not come. What came instead was the steady isolation of the Revolution. In the USSR, this stimulated the forces afraid of progress due to their lack in Marxist preparation. The teams that had accompanied Lenin and the proletarian vanguard remained steadfast. They still saw in the USSR “the beacon” and the way to socialist construction. The remaining Bolsheviks reasoned that revolutionary events would return, change the world relations, bring new forces to the Russian Revolution. Lenin used to think like this, and so did Trotsky.

Apart from some teams around Lenin, the historic insecurity that had gripped the Party before the taking of power returned to it. Leaders who had accompanied the revolution were now hesitating in front of the difficulties facing the USSR. This insecurity showed in the way they decided to defend the Soviet Union in the form of a national retreat. These new Party layers decided to protect the USSR by not spreading the revolution. The old sentiment of the national interest revived - time having been too short for it to have shed all its political, partisan and programmatic sides. There had not been time enough to build all the necessary understanding.

One had still to assimilate the experience and the absolute confidence in the possibility and the necessity of the world development of the revolution.

Before the taking of power, there had been uncertainty in the Bolshevik Party about the possibility of building socialism. After 1917 and due to the continuing isolation of the USSR, this uncertainty returned and grew in the unfavourable conditions that developed after 1924.

After 1924, many of the Party militants and leaders who had joined the revolution without much Marxist preparation found themselves short of previous experience, real motivation or organizational capacity. This placed a heavy and decisive burden on the Party. Of the Bolshevik militants and leaders who had accompanied Lenin's entire stage of construction, more than half of them had died. They had been the most resolute and bold, but many had perished in the revolution, and in the war against imperialism. Of those who had survived, many of them had had to be sent all over the country to fill key positions, mostly economic, to develop the Workers State. These aspects explain the great weakening of the Party.

This weakening of the Party led to entire layers of new militants and leaders gaining access to the leading organs of Party functioning. They lacked in revolutionary experience, tradition and confidence, but they came to dominate the leading Party's functions and the Party's organs.

Besides this, another layer gained also access to top Party positions. It included people who had manifested serious insecurity, inconsistency and deficiency in the Marxist viewpoint. They might have accompanied the revolution in the past, but they were now leaving the Marxist capacity behind. From 1924 and after the failure of the revolution in other parts of Europe [Germany, Hungary, Poland, Italy], such individuals rose to positions where the power of the USSR was being organized. From the power of their high positions, they seized the power in the Party and transformed the Bolshevik program. They presented this transformation as necessary to protect the revolution and developed the notion of "socialism in one country".

Yet another layer became involved in all this. Before 1924, particular groups of people had joined the Party with a real wish to build Communism, but unsure about the program, the politics and the function of the Party.

They were a vacillating layer. During the revolution, they had been either absorbed, won over or propelled by Bolshevik steadfastness and by the Red Army. After 1924 and in the teeth of growing difficulties, they tended to retreat in front of the need to show now a boldness entailing specific risks.

More even than tactical calculation, a new boldness was now required. Boldness and audacity were now needed. In policy-making, audacity had now become an essential ingredient. None of the waverers we described were so bold. They were not interested in taking risks. And there were risks alright!

The revolution is obviously a risk. It demands an immense audacity. It wants for a great capacity to concentrate, take decisions, use judgement. Audacity does not mean vehemence, intrepidity, going about to face up with arms. Audacity is the ability to coordinate a small nucleus, same as the original Bolsheviks did. Audacity teaches how to take advantage, organize, mobilize, use the existing forces. Audacity requires Marxism as the only means to acquire dominion, confidence in the working class, and confidence in that the soldiers and peasants can be won to the revolution.

Even before 1917, not all the sectors that became incorporated into the Bolshevik Party believed in these principles. As the revolution came and won, they had to accept, but they weighed heavily in the conditions that then developed. The isolated Soviet Union became encircled just when the revolutionary wing of the Bolshevik Party had weakened. It is then that the more recently incorporated sectors we analyse above started emerging, developing and organising themselves as a Stalinist current.

J. POSADAS

20 Oct 1973

<https://quatrieme-internationale-posadiste.com>  
info@quatrieme-internationale-posadiste.com

# ARMED FORCES AND MILITIAS FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE REVOLUTION<sup>29</sup>

J POSADAS

Sept 1968

In the Soviet Union, the territorial army got organized on the basis of militia - the Territorial Militia as Trotsky called it. It kept unchanged the military structure of the army, its power for military action and of combat, even with atomic weapons. It maintains the same capacity for mobility, dynamism, concentration, discipline<sup>30</sup>.

By the nature of its function, the army requires discipline. But this discipline is inferior to that which is required by the Party. The Party needs a discipline superior to the one wanted in the army. The Party operates on the basis of discipline in all the matters of ideas, functioning and objectives. This requires purposefulness in comprehension, in thought and in the concentration of thought. Not mechanical obedience, mechanical application or mechanical imposition. The Party needs the conscious acceptance of its requirements. It is this conscious acceptance that brings a capacity for initiative where discipline can reach over, afterwards into a thousand actions - individual initiatives included. The monolithic kind of centralized discipline in the Party, in the program and in the ideas is capable of the most complete decentralization. This is so because conscious centralisation is the principle that develops the capacity to understand, to create, to advance ideas, positions, documents, programs. Such is the revolution! The capitalist army does not require these qualities. It requires obedience to arms. Bureaucracy too.

The Territorial Militia integrates everyone in a social function and a political function where the arm, the weapon, is the means of implementation. As the member of the territorial militia fights to win and promote the

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<sup>29</sup> Excerpt from "*The Construction of the Workers' State and from the Workers' State to Socialism*".

<sup>30</sup> Read: <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/wright/1941/08/redarmy.htm>

revolution, their weapon is instrument of persuasion or imposition. There are times when the weapon persuades by imposition: that is when the militia soldiers only need to weapon to carry the day. Other times, the weapon has to be used. In the end, the defining weapon is atomic, because the means to decide, the material means, the instruments, are atomic. Military preparation and discipline to respond to war plans are carried out by the Party, the trade union, the neighbourhood, without the any need for the army. In the Territorial Militia, discipline is greater than in the army because the soldier can evade the discipline of the army or be against it.

In the army of the Workers State, the soldier is subject to the discipline of the unconditional defence of the Workers State and its form of property. This is unlike the soldier of the capitalist country who is not bound to private property at all - except as boss, or as son of the boss.

In the Workers State, the soldier truly defends the Workers State because in the army, there is identity between the chief and the soldier. They are bound together by a high discipline that does not need imposition. There is a shared identity between them in the objective of the State, of the property regime.

In capitalism on the other hand, the interests of the soldier and those of the State are opposed. It is due to this that a discipline is imposed on the soldier. This is also why the role of the capitalist army is to mechanise the soldier's will, to make it so that the soldier does not think, does not judge. Soldiers who can think and judge will be bound to shoot the officer. In capitalism, nothing binds the soldier to the officer or to the system of private property.

### **The army must not be an instrument for political power**

Since there are such social conditions of identification, of social interests, of feelings and of socialist objectives between the Workers State and the soldiers, why is the regular army of the Workers State still a professional one? The answer is that the bureaucracy needs an instrument of combat that defends it from *both* capitalism and revolution! This is why the bureaucracy clings to the professional armies.

The bureaucracy knows full well what the Territorial Militias are. It does not lack scientific, cultural or military knowledge. What it lacks is the will

to bring these about. With no Territorial Militias in the Workers State, what prevails is the same military organization as in the army of capitalism. The soldier is mechanised and prevented from being the thinking militant. The function of the soldier reduces to that of obeying orders. This is why the bureaucrats suppressed Party life and Party cell in the army of the USSR. Whereas, in the worst circumstances of the Russian Revolution, there used to be a cellular life in the Red Army where all the problems could be discussed and the soldiers could resolve them.

Today, the bureaucracy hides these antecedents. This is because soldiers allowed to think will oppose the [arrogance of the] chief, the command, the mechanical life, the differentials. There must be no difference between the general and the soldier. The ranks, the chevrons, the numbers of medals displayed by the Soviet generals are absurd and ridiculous. It is ridiculous to see a leader like Brezhnev covered in medals. What do the medals amount to? They use them for distinction. Lenin's distinction was "*The State and Revolution*".

The army must not be an instrument for political power. It only needs to be the instrument that defends the interests and the plans of the Workers State. The army is not seat for political decisions. It does not determine the plans or the programs for the construction of socialism. All considered, the army is an incidental instrument. It may last for years, but it is still incidental. Neither the police, nor the army, nor the laws, nor the courts, nor the lawyers will continue to exist. The lawyers who are going to continue will be the revolutionaries.

The continuation of such a thing as 'a conventional army' in the Workers State, along with laws and lawyers, it is in support of the bureaucracy which attributes State power to itself. The bureaucrats need the law in order to defend themselves against the masses. They say they to do wish to be above the common. They pretend to be seeking fairness and justice. Scoundrels! All this big lot of lawyers and judges in the Soviet Union, is absurd! What do they 'defend' if there is no private property? They defend the right to enjoy the profits of the property that is collectively owned; their right to use and enjoy the property that is vested in the Workers State, as usufructuaries. They impose this on the Workers State through their laws as part of continuing unequal distribution in the Workers State.

A bureaucratic leader in the USSR earns fifteen times more than the worker. Should it be only three or four times the salary, you must add the bonuses, the use of the State, the houses, hotels, meals, vacations - you end up with fifteen times the worker's salary. It is to defend all this that there are laws, lawyers and police in the USSR. They defend all the illicit businesses of the bureaucrats and the planners. They defend the power of the bureaucracy. And they shield it from the people criticizing, judging, deliberating against it. This is what the bureaucrats have judges and lawyers for. Some Russian writer who condemned the bureaucracy was given 5 years for "criticizing the Soviet government." A mockery of the Workers State.

Capitalism was not able to launch the atomic war in time to prevent the revolution. If it did not do it, it because it could not. Its crisis, and the struggle of the masses which is part of its crisis, stopped it from doing so. Now, the revolution has enough strength and self-confidence to outsmart the plans, the sabotage and the repression of the capitalist system. It is the capitalists now who must defend themselves.

### **The army is necessary in the USSR however, and atomic weapons too**

In the Soviet Union the army is still necessary, and so are its atomic weapons. It is still the case, however, that the army and atomic weapons can be used, organized and operated in the Workers State without the need for professional functioning in the army. All this can be done with the development of Territorial Militias, combined with the learning and the development of military capacity. The Militias do this anyway: they meet, they discuss, they teach how to shoot and bomb. What is more, they can do it at any time. This is why the Bolsheviks used to propose, and now the Trotskyists, the suppression of formal military teaching and training. By having the Trade Unions do this, letting the Trade Unions decide. No longer having the barracks, but the Trade Unions deciding. Not refusing to attend the barracks, but going there to make propaganda. But what we propose is the elimination of compulsory military service. Let's have military education coming from the Trade Union. Let it take charge of this.

Trotsky made this proposal in reference to the United States, and later on, in reference to all countries. Barracks have no justification and function

other than to mechanize the population, to give structure to a corps of officers, all of which only to be used by a sector of the leadership of society for its own benefit.

The barracks add absolutely no capacity or knowledge to anything. The life of the barracks is to maintain the rigor of the mechanical discipline of military obedience. Not military experience, but military obedience. The bureaucracy needs this military paraphernalia to defend itself from uprisings or from the struggle of the masses. The imbecility and incapacity of the bureaucracy leads it to have no interest in the formation of workers' militias that it (bureaucracy) views as potential rivals to dispute its power. The existence of workers' militias would bring into the open the usurpation signified by the existence of the bureaucracy.

The standing army has no higher attribute or capacity than the militia. Far from this, it deprives the economy of productive forces. It grants military power to teams that do not add ideas, or intervene with ideas that contribute to the organisation and programme for a revolutionary economy. It does not contribute to the development of the socialist revolution because it usurps it instead. It does not add anything military either, since everything that it knows can be learnt through the Territorial Militia.

The Territorial Militia comprises all those eligible to fight in combat. Its members continue in their daily jobs and activities. It is only periodically that they are called to take part in military exercises, or attend military meetings or military courses. The military courses are not about learning to obey orders or use weapons. They are courses in political-military-social-revolutionary leadership. They do not just learn how to handle the weapon, but how to create the best leadership to impel the taking of power. Together with the atomic weapons, it organizes the action of calling on the population to take power.

Whilst the Soviet bureaucracy, and the army as part of the bureaucracy, are pressured by the world revolution, they have to solve the problems posed by the competition of other bureaucracies. This 1968<sup>31</sup>, the bureaucracy of Czechoslovakia introduces economic policies that leave the

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<sup>31</sup> In January 1968, Alexander Dubcek led a movement of protest against the USSR, in support of a programme to remove State Control and permit the right to speak in favour of certain measures favourable to private property and capital accumulation.

framework of the Workers State in favour of measures approximate to capitalist forms. Forced to oppose this act of competition prejudicial to the camp of the Workers State, the USSR is having to change behaviour. Its old arbitrariness can no longer continue without harmful consequences. This is why, although it moves militarily into Czechoslovakia without calling on the Trade Unions or the masses to make Soviets - it combines this, with its soldiers appealing to the Czechoslovak population, talking to people, distributing leaflets explaining to that the USSR has not come to usurp the power, but to defend the socialist structure of the country.

### **We propose Popular Militias**

Under the Soviet bureaucracy, the function of the army and the way it works are guided by the permanent life and political role of the bureaucracy. The soldiers of the USSR are not called upon to think, to have agency, to use their own reasoning. They do not intervene as militants of the Workers State, but as common soldiers.

Had the Soviet soldiers been representing the Party, they would have argued with the commander. They would have asked: "Why are we going to Czechoslovakia?". No doubt the reply would have been: "We go to stop the danger of counter-revolution because there is the risk of capitalist intervention in Czechoslovakia". Then the Soviet soldiers would have answered: "Let us go then and call on the masses of Czechoslovakia to stand up and make Soviets". Sparing a thought for the people of capitalist Germany, they could have added: "And let us call on the workers and masses of capitalist Germany to take power against North American occupation".

These answers are solutions of a programmatic, revolutionary and social calibre. Military measures are necessary. But they are not everything, even at the military point of atomic weapons' use. More important than all the military measures is the organisation of the socialist measures. You cannot expect this from a standing army. The professional soldiers cannot play this role. Not selected for this, they cannot have the necessary qualities and organization. They will not have had the required political life and framework. They obey the orders of the military function.

What answers to this need, on the other hand, is the Territorial Militia. It brings military capacity to the life of the factory and of the Trade Union.

Whether every day or when necessary, the Militia explains the use and effects of the weapons, the explosives, the atomic weapons, the combination of strategies. With continuous practice, such things do not take long to teach. The State which decides to educate its soldiers in this way finds the keeping of an army much cheaper and satisfying: each soldier a leader-decider. Contrast this with the standing army with its enormous costs and indifference to the revolutionary idea. In a Workers State that does not advance beyond this point, the standing army remains a military function in the interests of a bureaucracy. It contributes nothing to the revolutionary-military necessity of the Workers State. We propose Popular Militias instead.

By its nature, the army remains conservative even when revolutionary measures are needed against capitalism. This happened to be the case when Stalin's army invaded Poland and Finland in September 1939. The Soviet army invaded to defend the Workers State, but to defend conservative interests as well. This is why Stalin invaded without calling on the masses to take power. The Soviet army put a stop to Hitler's advance, but it did not call on the Polish masses to take power. Had Popular Militias been involved instead, they would have called on the masses of Poland to take power, and the masses of Poland would have called on Hitler's soldiers to turn back, and on the German population to take power.

J. POSADAS

Sept 1968



## Who is J. Posadas?

J. Posadas was born in Argentina in 1912 and died in Italy in 1981. He began his activities as a trade union leader in the footwear industry. He soon adopted Trotsky's ideas and joined the Fourth International. He then developed as a writer, theorist, political leader and revolutionary organizer. In 1947 he organized the Fourth International Group (GCI) and started the newspaper *Voz Proletaria* in light of the birth of revolutionary nationalism with Peronism in Argentina. He wrote major works such as "*Plan Quinquenal or Permanent Revolution*" and "*El Peronismo*" 1963, and "*From Nationalism to the Workers State*" 1966.

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

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

Faced with the implacable and historic antagonism between the capitalist system and the Workers States, J. Posadas upheld Trotsky's 'unconditional defence of the Workers State', and analysed the inevitability of the atomic war. He devoted his whole life, and all his work, to giving to humanity confidence in its ability to organize in order to triumph, like Vietnam did, and to defeat world imperialism even in its own imperialist armies.

Some of his last words before he died were: "*Life without the struggle for socialism has no sense, with all the consequences*".

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