

J. POSADAS

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

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



International Scientific Cultural & Political Editions

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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.

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PRESSENTATION

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 the French and North-American imperialist soldiers and assorted 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 continuing neo-colonial liberation of the world.

Today, 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 common economic and diplomatic ties between themselves, and between them and Russia. 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.

Revolutionary military teams in the capitalist armies of Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea, defy jointly the French and North-American colonial reprisals: On 11 April 2024, a Russian military cargo-plane arrived in Niamey (Mali) with Russian military trainers and the promise of aerial defenses. Mostly thanks to the support of Russia and China, these West African countries can now break further away from colonial dependency and 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. The President of Mali, the Military officer Abdourahamane Tchiani, says that from now on, Africa's natural gas¹ must go and supply Africa before being exported. Inside those countries, internal processes of dual power turn them into Revolutionary States (see note 2) under the leadership of military teams.

¹ 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 are, many examples of such progressive military teams in the capitalist armies. The example that J. Posadas originally rested upon was the first administration of General Peron in Argentina in 1946. Although never acknowledged by the world at large, a 'Revolutionary State' came to Peru in 1968 under General Velasco Alvarado. The same happened under General Juan José Torres in 1970 Bolivia². In 1999-2001, the capitalist army of Venezuela as a whole (and not just a part) defended and endorsed the presidency of *Commandante* Hugo Chavez; the country became a Revolutionary State, and still is, under Nicola Maduro. Nicaragua is a Revolutionary State and there are others, like Iran, Iraq, Syria, Yemen.

About the progressive military teams taking power (as now in Africa), the author highlights especially that they originate from *the capitalist armies*, mostly 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, the author foresaw that the Revolutionary State could also happen in imperialist countries: And so it did, two short years later! In 1974 Portugal, the main actors were the anti-imperialist revolutionary soldiers of the imperialist Portuguese army, inspired and won to the communist ideas by the victories of the colonial liberation movements in Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Sao Tome, Principe; all thanks to the support that the USSR and Cuba provided, along with the staunch solidarity of colonial freedom movements 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, and in conditions when Deng's China remained uninvolved or opposed. But this limitation is on now the wane. Years ago, Jian Zemin had already condemned Nato's bombing of Serbia as "absolute gunboat diplomacy"³. On 22 March this year, Vladimir Putin characterized this event as the start of war "in the heart of Europe". Now that Xi Jinping condemns Nato for the bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade 25 years ago, Russia and China are drawing closer to a common anti-imperialist policy.

As they draw closer together diplomatically, economically and increasingly politically, the Workers States of China, Russia and their allies like Cuba, fuse more closely with actual Revolutionary States like Venezuela, and others in development like Iran, Yemen, Syria, Myanmar, Sudan. The struggle for socialism today breaks down its crippling confinement in one country. The existing and upcoming Workers States are free to retake the road of socialist construction, on the only possible road this time, the world road to socialism.

The Editors, 30 May 2024

² Read: <https://en.quatrieme-internationale-posadiste.org/book/the-revolutionary-state/>

³ BBC News, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/340150.stm>

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 Cardenas⁴ was Bonapartist. In Russia, so was that of Kerensky⁵ 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.

⁴ 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.

⁵ 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 government⁶ 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 statised⁷ 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 Panama⁸ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ Statised. This word could be translated as meaning State-ownership under workers and public control, to plan the economy

⁸ 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 Party⁹ 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.

Peru¹⁰ 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 attributed to 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*”. It 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 propelling it, because it will be crushed if it does not. From its very structures, the *Revolutionary State* stimulates the entry of superior social concepts in the economic relations, in the mentality of the petit-bourgeoisie and in 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.

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

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

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 undertake which the Communists do not. The Communists are 'behind' the masses – but far, 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. And what would you call this? A *Revolutionary State*!

The process represented by what 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 when they last only a week. This is the technique of tactics. The problems we face are peculiar because our world contains 14 Workers States, 16 Revolutionary States, and no leadership! The world revolution beams out immense forces, but the local leaderships tend to oppose or curb them. It is our task at every turn to choose the slogans that regroup the forces of progress.

We do not mean just short-term slogans, or those chosen just to win a position of leadership. We mean slogans aimed at impelling the Party, or to create a new leadership, account taken of the forces arising along the road. We are not referring here to short-term tactics. We look for the slogans relevant to aspects in our historic stage that never happened before. Although, all considered now, these aspects have started to become the norm.

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

The Communists of Italy propose "a Government of Democratic Turnabout"¹¹. In France, they propose "a Government of Popular Union"¹² 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. Although economically speaking, it is no longer a capitalist State either, because State ownership breaks the hegemony of capitalism; it profoundly impairs it, even with some capitalist enterprises continuing.

The nationalisation of the major sources of production rapidly demands further nationalisations. A measure like this, if implemented, transforms the capitalist system quite a lot. A point soon arrives when the nationalisations must continue, or let themselves be crushed and all rolled back. How do you call that point when the juridical structure is still capitalist and you take the next step of nationalisations? How do you

¹¹ Government for a Democratic Turnabout in Italy: This intention was declared at the 13th Congress of the Italian Communist Party in 1972.

¹² The Popular Union in France, composed of Communists, Socialists and others, adopted a *Common Programme*, 1972-1978.

call 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 cancel the elements that call for nationalisation. A world war intervening at that point can even accelerate matters in the way 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 preserve the system - but then, the task is to demolish this judicial structure.

The essential condition to pass from capitalist State over to Revolutionary State and Workers State boils down to the steps needed to overrun the juridical structure of capitalism. Once these steps start being taken, people start thinking, judging and forming opinions through new and evolving anti-capitalist concepts. It is only as long as the capitalist structure keeps going that people continue to think as before, in terms of property, because the social and economic relations of the country 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 against it, or launch the war. But this will not change the underlying necessity. The most this will do is hamper the revolutionary change. At every moment therefore, one must seek ways to shore up the revolutionary situation without overlooking the 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 offers a clearer definition of the revolutionary task. We do not choose this phrase to give ourselves a greater say in law or in politics. We use it as a tool in our activities and tactics. It gives us a clearer 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 veils and underestimates the actual level of the revolution.

Instead of a *Government of Democratic Turnabout*, we propose in Italy a *Government of the Left*, 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 in Italy. It influences layers not only in

the army, in functionaries and in the State industries, but in workers' layers, in the peasantry, the employees. It was to attract these people that we chose the *Government of the Left* slogan; to raise their level of historic understanding and resoluteness. This slogan is only for this particular situation however. Had the Communists supported 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 is opposed!

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 structure of the State because it would remain judicially capitalist. More and more nationalisations do not change the bourgeois nature of the State - but how 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 therefore, to go and vilify the government for its limitations. It is not the time to try and bring it down. The task is to let the masses hoist that government up, with a view to overtaking it when the time comes. Not showing the government in the light of an enemy, but still continuing to organise 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; although we do not capitulate to them, their intimidations or their policy aims.

Revolutionary States are occurring in a regular manner in almost all the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. Indeed, we are living through a stage of *Revolutionary States*. It is not a stage that can be skipped because it is rooted in the weakness and colonial retardation of the Communist parties in the countries of the world; they are the reason why there is such a thing as *Revolutionary States*. Had the Communists developed a revolutionary policy, the masses would have become incorporated into it.

Had the Communists developed a revolutionary policy, this would not have entirely suppressed the stage of petit-bourgeois nationalist governments, but it would have made it shorter, extremely so. But the opposite happened. The Communist parties did not grow, and they did not operate as mass parties. Their policies so contrary to the

revolutionary tide left them unable to interpret. They failed to understand that mass movements could develop under petit-bourgeois, and bourgeois nationalist leaderships.

In Latin America and elsewhere, the Communist parties failed to understand even the governments that were unquestionably of the left, like Peron in his first stage¹³, Alvarado in Peru¹⁴, Torres¹⁵ in Bolivia – and Cardenas (Mexico) well before all of these. The Communist parties did not understand that it is possible to solve all the theoretical and practical problems by means of 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 above explains the stage of the *Revolutionary State* that we observe today. It did not have to happen this way. It happened because of the retardation of the Communist parties in front of the mighty revolutionary upswings in Latin America, Africa, Asia. Those upswings had tremendous effects in the world Communist parties, Workers States included. In the communist militants and the communist leaders, the big advances of the masses in parts of the world triggered crisis conditions, stimulating the logical need to understand. Why such a thing as a *Revolutionary State*? What the Communists do not understand is the existence of a world structure that imposes itself on world capitalism; a world structure that makes capitalism incapable of stopping the process, incapable of stopping 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 do, 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, 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

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ 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.

democratic revolution that Castro tried to implement with Urrutia¹⁶ and Grau San Martin¹⁷, 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)

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REVOLUTIONARY STATE, ITS TRANSITORY FUNCTION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIALISM, J POSADAS, 28.9.1969

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

¹⁶ 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.

¹⁷ 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 military function as in the past. The uniform represented military power, the person wearing it represented the power of the State. But this is breaking down today, even for the soldiers. Decisions are no longer drawn from pure military strategies. Still with the army as instrument, decisions now include social, political and revolutionary considerations. We are no longer dealing with wars between one country and another, but with class wars. Military strategy has changed with the growing assertiveness of class war. Where that strategy used to come down from stations or commanding posts, it now comes down from actions of class confrontation, the toppling of professional military sectors included. This makes the soldier uncertain about tomorrow. Military insensitivity and blindness to the social condition makes the soldier feel weak, alien to a process in fact revolutionary. But every war ends in revolution. Every war leads to the uprising of the population. And the military is not spared.



With this downgrade of the purely military function, the military orientation of the soldiers slackens. They used to experience life "in the solitude of the uniform", secluded and isolated from social life. But science and technology keep advancing. Knowledge increases in people, in their human capacity to make relations, to keep up. Any influence coming from one sector of the population reaches everyone quickly. Without waiting for the best technical and scientific means, the most backward populations adopt the usages, the insights and the abilities of the most advanced. This tends to downgrade the military side of the soldiers. They are made to feel the insignificance of the capitalist function. It used to be a distinction and a power to be in the military. It was a representation of the State, but not anymore. 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 that the revolutionary struggle communicates. The latter is the highest form of culture, the means to change history. The soldier observes the progress of human culture beaming in all directions, that of the 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 has no input. In their roles as soldiers, the irrelevance [to life] of the military discourse leaves the soldiers feeling isolated. Because how much 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 further isolates the soldiers. They feel '*the loneliness of the uniform*'. This is how we call this. This situation wins an increasing number of soldiers to the revolution. It is not that they become integrated into the revolution so much as drawn to wanting to resolve the problems. They step forward, and as they do, it is not a military point of view that they bring, but a political one.

The Posadists have been the only ones to deal with these problems. No other current, no Communist or Socialist Party has dealt with them. Indeed, these others never left-off looking at this question from *the rigidity of the uniform* instead. Now that they have heard of it, 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 a conscious attitude.

One needs to focus on the influence that allows soldiers, as in Portugal, to pass *from the solitude of the uniform* over to being in communication with the rest of the world. Although still in uniform, those soldiers no longer feel solitary or lonely in it. Now they see their uniform as an instrument to be used. The progress of humanity removes societal forces from capitalism. We long pined for the sight of soldiers such as those of the MFA¹⁸ in Portugal (this 24 April) who bring their military pluck to the revolution in this stage of history. But such soldiers existed before, as in Bolivia (with General Ovando 1970¹⁹), in Somalia (with Major General Siad Barre 1969²⁰), in Peru (with General Alvarado 1968), in Ethiopia (with Army Officer Mengistu in December 1960), in Argentina (with General Perón 1946). There was Officer Lazaro Cárdenas²¹ in the late 1930s, but it was a more particular case due to the military history of Mexico.

The historic circumstances of today fill layers of the military soldiers²² with the wish to actually live life. The world moves on, and the soldier wonders: "But about war, what

¹⁸ MFA – Movement Armed Forces Portugal, headed by Vítor Alves, Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, Vasco Lourenço, Salguiero Maia.

¹⁹ General Alfredo Ovando, 1918-1982. President 1979-1970. Air Force commander. Nationalised the Bolivian operations of the Gulf Oil Corporation.

²⁰ Mohamed Siad Barre, 1909-1995; President 1969-1991. Nationalised the oil refinery, the small construction and the farming industries. Nationalised the 4 foreign banks. Had Marxism added to teaching alongside the Quran.

²¹ Lazaro Cardenas, 1895-1970. President 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 raises in wages and improvement in working conditions. Created a health service.

²² 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)

do we need it for?". War is key to the soldiers' profession, key to their roles in capitalism. But something tends to grow and develop in the soldiers, and that is doubt. Doubt can spread extensively in layers of the military. This is happening in all in the countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America. It already happens in part, even in countries like Sweden, Italy, France. 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

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 also. They are open to the knowledge 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, military progress included. In very large layers of the soldiers of the world, there is a growing disposition to understand and imagine doing away with the military function.

In capitalism, the soldiers continue to belong to a structure where they have endorsed the military role. And around the notion of no longer playing that role, they come to ask themselves: "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.

Add to this that one's role in the military can be made useful, infinitely more useful than it is now. This applies to the soldiers in the Workers States.

In capitalism, any military engagement signifies the elimination of others, who will be bound to want us eliminated tomorrow. But this not so in the Workers States. One must show that the Workers State has broken away from this. The Workers' State does not set out to eliminate people. It does not excite the personal ambition of possession. What it develops instead is the love for, and the inclination towards human fraternity.

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

At the time of the revolutionary military coup by the MFA²³ in April 1974, the population distributed red carnations to the soldiers.

²³ The MFA (or *The Captains' Movement*) took hold of the government and State of Portugal. It ended 48 years of fascist regime. It granted their independence to the colonies (except Macau), restored freedom of speech and of political organisation in the country. It abolished censorship, the secret police and the paramilitary *Portuguese Legion*. It nationalised banks, insurance companies and major industries. It expropriated large landholding, encouraged the landless farm workers to occupy 2/3 of Portugal's arable lands, and introduced an Agrarian Reform.



The carnation and the rose are more than symbols when they express human resolve, determination and the thirst for programme.

In the 'Carnations Revolution' of 1974 in Portugal, the population crowded around the soldiers to dissuade the military impulse and let the soldiers come forward instead. The crowds were not trying to entice or seduce the soldiers. They had come to make the soldiers aware of the need for progress.

Women were stepping forward not to seduce the soldiers but to win them. There is no longer any need for woman to seduce or surrender herself. Moved by the force of the progress of the revolution, her wish is

to win and elevate the soldier. And now the soldier feels the same! This has not always been so in history. Man and woman feel the force of the revolution. There were children intervening here too, taking part. 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 must have exerted a very great influence on the Portuguese soldiers²⁴. The political superiority of the liberation movements gave them the ability to persuade the imperialist soldiers, inviting them to surpass themselves and advance. The liberation movements were persuading even those with the power to crush and exterminate them.

It takes decades for the imperialists to fail to subdue populations that refuse to learn to read and write under them, but it takes only a few years for the liberation movements to eliminate illiteracy. This cannot fail to impress the soldiers of the imperialist armies. The soldiers of the imperialist armies are not irresponsible. They are not idiots. They are often people who have never done anything else.

Now the soldiers of the imperialist armies are coming face to face with the uselessness of their military role. A role where they have no agency; a role where life can only pay them a visit through the uniform, the sabre or the cannon, and where the ambition is to move to the next grade.

²⁴ Guinea Bissau became an independent State in Sept 1974. Mozambique followed in June 1975, and the Islands of Cap Verde, Sao Tomé and Príncipe after that. Angola became independent in Nov 1975.

On feeling this, the humanitarian sentiment grows in the soldier: the sentiment of pity, of commiseration, of assistance, of solidarity. The soldier's children become Communists, Trotskyists and protestors who clash with the father.

Large numbers of youngsters become protestors very early in life. They intervene actively in politics with coherence and order in their ideas. Many are soldiers' children. They defend ideas that are feasible and necessary, derived not from individual caprice but from their individual and collective endeavours. In being reasonable, their ideas put them in communication with the workers' movement. Such happenings penetrate the soldiers' houses.

This is the age of intelligence and reason

People are no longer consumed by interest 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 marine flora, polluting the waters, the coasts. People see this. They know that with the current levels of technology, production could satisfy multitudes at the touch of a button. The world watched the Soviets coming out of nothing, developing production objectively, along with objective social relations based on the love of the human being.

The ongoing process of social change makes the soldier feel cooped-up. It did not use to be like this in the past. In the past, war used to define everything. The soldier had to serve the definition, always preparing, always drilling for 'the big day'. And in the stage of the fascist dictatorships, the governments used to need the armies to decide.

This is all changed. Now the imperialists are told to go home. French imperialism threw its whole weight against Vietnam, but it had to leave. The Yankee imperialists followed the French in Vietnam on strength that the French did not know how to do things. But they too had to go. It took them 10 years, but they had to go home. Be sure this has not been lost on the soldiers of the world.

Now countries like Syria and Iraq – with hardly any recognised official existence – start freeing themselves and developing. Such things impact the soldiers. They start considering that there is more to life than the uniform, which on top of it, no longer brings with it precedence or kudos. For the uniform is no longer indicative of power, and neither does it raise you above society. The soldier feels taken down a peg. And as people repudiate war, and hate war, the soldier feels the hatred of the people.

In the uniform, the soldier feels exiled, relegated, isolated. This is *the solitude of the uniform*. Now the soldier feels the need to break this. Although this feeling is not a new,

it grew steadily in the process of the development of the social struggles. It eventually prevailed in the Soviet Union, in China, in the countries of Central Europe. It used to be a rather exceptional feeling, but now it has become norm. This is why the communist parties and the working-class movements must set out to win soldiers and officers, and in some numbers. Not in the expectation that the whole army can be won, but to build better relations of forces, more favourable to the workers' movement.

Everything considered, armies are not the most important thing. Of course, there are moments when the military plays a very important or the decisive role. When a mighty force confronts another, it is the military situation on the ground that decides. Still, one must always try to win the soldiers over to the cause, whether in war or in peace. Not all the soldiers can be won because the army is an institution whose structure cannot be transformed; but it is still possible to win a very large part of an army, to break its sense of security and internal cohesion in the service of capitalism.

When entire sections of the military are won to the revolution, as in this case in Portugal, it is because they feel like a political party. They are no longer cooped-up in their uniforms. They want to play a part in the country's problems. They will not wait to be called. They want to take part, and off they go. In this, it is the development of revolution that influences and guides them. They are not pawns that move when they are pushed. They are people who take initiatives.

In Portugal, such initiatives did not come entirely from the political reasoning of the soldiers. That political reasoning rested on the struggle of the masses in the colonies and on that of the masses in Portugal, workers, students, peasants. But there had been all along a constant resistance to the fascist regime²⁵ and many risings in places like Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Angola. There had been the steady weakening of capitalism over all that time, the struggle of the world masses, the great strikes in France, Italy, Japan, Germany, England, and the ascent of the Workers States.

The progressiveness of the world puts pressure on the military. In their own country and at large, it makes the soldiers feel left-out. It makes them feel isolated, puppet-like, without a decisive role. The imperialist commander sends an order as in the past, but the order returns on the echo, having found only a void and no reception at the other end. Whilst to the people in the most backward country over there, what the order has brought is the most advanced comprehension. This has a devastating effect on the imperialist military, on its security, on its sense of caste.

In Portugal, the soldiers react by taking political initiatives, organising as a party. They want the country to advance; but to advance, a country like Portugal, both imperialist and backward, must take the road of socialism. The soldiers – the Captains' Movement'

²⁵ In 1926, a military coup brought fascist Antonio de Oliveira Salazar to power initiating a military dictatorship that continued through various leaders like Marcelo Caetano (1968), and was going to last for 48 years until the 1974 Carnation Revolution.

in this case – take the road of socialism, and it is there that they find the communist and the socialist vanguard.

The soldier no longer wants the role of killing and being killed. Kill and die - but for whom? For some guy visibly amassing money while people are left to die of hunger by the wayside? Kill and die in some war intended to kill the people of another place? The soldiers feel indignant. They feel drowned in the deplorable function of being assassins of history and nothing more. And when they do rebel, they realise that they can be human beings again, like everyone else; and that the uniform is something that can be taken off. In their heads, they have already taken it off. If they still wear it, and we recommend that they do, they want to use it in defence of the socialist road.

Such soldiers are won to intelligence and reason. This is where our epoch of socialism is heading to. It points in the direction of edifying relations. Although a conscious human leadership is still missing, and the necessary sort of economy is still missing too, this process points in the direction of socialism and just human relations.

When the military is won over as in Portugal, and takes the side of socialism, it proves that the problem we face is no longer of an economic order. It is now one of consciousness and determination. Here, you see consciousness determining existence: the military, the captains of Portugal show it. This which we observe in the officers has to be happening a hundred times more deeply in the soldiers of lower ranks - and in the higher ranks too! This is not particular to one country or the other. It is a global phenomenon. We observe it more immediately in the specific circumstances of Portugal because these have happened to come all together just at the right time.

One must not repeat sayings from Marx and do nothing. All that Marx needs now is to be applied. The capitalist system clings on by its fingernails, from above, but it decomposes down below. There is a process of *com-penetration*. Before triumphing, every new social regime penetrates the previous one. It enters the superstructures of the old society and dissolves them. This happens when the old regime – capitalism in this case – sees the *historic right* being taken away from it. The superior social relations that penetrate the old regime start winning people there, the intelligentsias and the leaderships capitalism had formed. The human being is a *thinking being*. Thought is nature's greatest achievement and the highest conquest of organized matter.

The revolutionary soldiers of Portugal had obviously developed sentiments towards life immensely more harmonious than those expected from them in the army. Their actions show that they must have held such sentiments for many years. They had observed the conduct of ordinary people, the ability of people to struggle, the spontaneity and objectivity that makes people fight not just for themselves but for human progress. In the mess, the soldier watches the chief making comfortable, filling up with money, privileges, women, cars - only to end up dead. This surely is insane, crazy. The soldier observes the advance of science and technology to the point of complete expertness in nature and the world. The soldier observes how the relations between humanity, nature

and the cosmos have become simplified. As a human being, the soldier is logical and open to the most noble and elevated ideas.

When military captains and entire divisions manage to trigger the start of a revolution, as in Portugal, this yes, is a permanent revolution. Can there be any doubt that the years left to bureaucracy in the Workers States are few? The captains announce that the future of humanity is already assured. Because behind each of them, there is a book of Lenin. They see the objectivity of Lenin and the historic prowess meant by the construction of the first Workers State, the cementing of its foundations. They see also the amount of objectivity it took from Trotsky to maintain and continue Lenin's principles. For the captains of Portugal are coming across all of those things. Each one of us needs to understand this and make ready to understand it. The encouragement and the recognition of humanity must be extended to the Portuguese Captains, to fortify them, to help them continue progressing in 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 still paramount to win the army. This is necessary and furthermore, totally possible. This may become less necessary much later on, when the world relations of forces will have made it so that the army enters the process directly, like a trade union.

In not very long to come, military sectors will start functioning like trade unions. This will be when the com-penetration of the Workers State becomes evident on the social political and theoretical levels, in a manner infinitely more potent than on the economic plane. These soldiers will have become the direct result of the Workers States.

Our understanding of Perón and Peronism²⁶ 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 hailed from South America; it was not because the armies of those semi-colonial countries have certain traditions of anti-imperialist struggle. More than the tradition, the fact is that the Soviet Union exists, and the other Workers States. Mexico is the one with the most such traditions, with priests taking up arms to lead revolutions and various armies siding with revolutions. But today, what decides 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 surrounds them is just 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 failed to sustain the imperialist mentality of its army. This is now an imperialist army with a revolutionary wing.

²⁶ <https://es.quatrieme-internationale-posadiste.org/libro/el-peronismo/>

In the United States, a part of the army will be similarly won. Beneath America's tranquil surface, the masses are reasoning. A movement of enormous magnitude is bound to appear in the United States' army. Nixon and imperialism cannot assemble 100 supporters of theirs' in the streets. But since they can mobilise 100,000 soldiers, why don't they send 100,000 soldiers to support Nixon in the streets? 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 Union²⁷. When the leftists went to visit a barracks, someone lowered the French flag and raised a red flag instead. The officers pretended not to see. Nobody was sanctioned afterwards and it occurred to nobody to speak of affront to a French flag.

Yankee imperialism prepares teams of assassins for the atomic war

Whilst all this goes on, imperialism tries to organize small groups of selected soldiers for the atomic war. This is what the junta of assassins is testing in Chile²⁸. Imperialism prepares the atomic war. It senses that the atomic war means the end of the capitalist system. It hopes to win, but it feels also that it must continue afterwards. How will it continue? How will it dominate the population? [As things stand], it is already unable to dominate people through the Party, the trade unions. The parties are of no use to it: Incrusted in every way in the economy, in the relations of daily life, in production, in interchange, the parties depend on interests that surpass those of the military dictatorship representative of high finances.

Imperialism wants a reorganization to let it pass through the atomic war, and over it. Set on continuing to exist afterwards, it looks for a new structure where big capital no longer bows to the interests of countries, their political and commercial relations, all their obliging interests of interchange, production, investment. Imperialism feels that this is not attainable politically, but it still necessitates at the same time a power raised over and above all the interests of daily life. And this does not exist.

What imperialism wants is a military government to dominate the world, strictly dependent on the financial centres of Yankee imperialism, with executive arms of imperialism's interests circulating afterwards in every country. This murderous military junta in Chile is testing to see how this can work. It could have made arrangements with the Christian Democrats, or with the large agrarian party of the right, the National Party. But due to its interests standing over and above those of Chile, this junta clashes with these parties instead. The interests of the junta in Chile are global.

²⁷ 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* which they had agreed in 1972. The Communist Party supported the Socialist leader François Mitterrand for presidency.

²⁸ Following Pinochet's coup on 11 Sept 1973, death-squads patrolled in helicopters up and down the country to put to exterminate the supporters of socialist president Allende.

In Chile, Yankee imperialism makes the demonstration that, if it could win the atomic war, it would no longer defend the interests of one place or another. The dependency of the world would be on the United States, which itself would rule over the world. This is being tried in Chile where the junta depends on a global central power, and not on the country. The junta depends on that central power through finance, weapons, political leadership, production itself and the sale of that production. It is like an attempt to break the current structure of the world, the parts of the world where capitalist production is still going on, in order to return to an infinitely more backward era which, from the viewpoint of the social relations, would be worse than the feudal relations.

This leaves the Chilean government with no real existence, and its actions with no perspective. Chile is paralyzed. It only keeps going because imperialism lends it money and guarantees the purchase of copper. Nothing more. The Popular Unity²⁹, even with errors, managed to develop an economic structure that was superior to capitalism. Although it cannot be done, the junta wanted to turn this back. In its attempt at doing so, all it achieved was the disarticulation of all the economic relations of the country, with the world and internally. The resistance of the masses - the small producers, the average producers, the agrarian producers, the petty bourgeoisie - collides with this junta. When imperialism realised that the power structure of the country could not be reconstituted, it looked for new forms of political and social management. It would have suited it to eliminate some forms of private property competition, but these forms are essential to the capitalist regime. On the part of imperialism, this bid to survive is a degeneration of the capitalist regime.

One must integrate the military in the progress of society

The soldiers must be shown that they are part of the progress of society. It is not their subordination that is wanted, but their intervention. The soldier must be invited to intervene. There was never a revolution that did not rely on the soldiers, because the soldiers have the military apparatus at their disposal, which is what decides. At this moment, it is not the economy but the army that has the weapons and the weapon's handlers. The revolution needs to win a part of the army. This is the way to break the homogeneity and the coherence of the army. This debilitates the capitalist structure of the army. It slackens the army's ties with the capitalist economy, and it profits the revolution by winning a part of the soldiers.

In France too, and in the whole of capitalist Europe, one must intervene towards the army. The capitalist armies are not to be trusted as institutions. They concoct coups on behalf of the capitalist system, and one must have no confidence in them. One has to win the soldiers who do not agree with the capitalist coups. One must try to organise

²⁹ 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.

them. 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 have the complete right to appeal to the soldiers? One must have proposals on offer for the army. One must discuss also the need to create workplace and trade union organs, factory councils, to debate the question of power taking, and develop class conclusions there about the structure of the army.

See how in Portugal, such a team of soldiers stepped forward and passed directly to the camp of the revolution. They merit the qualification of revolutionary soldiers. These are the soldiers whose actions - distributing leaflets and crying with emotion in the demonstrations - proved that the conditions are being prepared for very big leaps in the armies, and for further advances. These soldiers feel for the first time the joy of truly laughing, and of truly crying, with an outpouring of the sentiments they could never have had in the seclusion, in the rigidity, and in the loneliness of the uniform. In Portugal, these soldiers are the ambassadors of the need to organize. Progress must not be expected from the restoration of bourgeois democracy. One has to go beyond and higher than that. If this were not the case, the soldiers would not have called on the people, only on the select few.

In the 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 means that preparations are being made, in the armies, to carry out the tasks that have been left undone by the communist parties or the trade unions. This brings to light that the progress of these countries demands measures that go counter to the capitalist system, like the statification and planning of the economy (footnote7), the monopoly and State control over foreign trade, the agrarian reform and revolution.

There must be courses that set out clear syntheses on the subject of *what is a Workers State*, and what is the inexorable course of history.

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THE RED ARMY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ROLE OF TROTSKY

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20 Oct 1973



The Russian Revolution endured thanks to the existence of the Bolshevik Party and the proletarian army organized by Trotsky³⁰. The revolution did not endure just because the proletariat and the Russian peasants adhered to the Russian revolution, but because there became organised a proletarian army for the combat and a class war. In the world, all these problems will soon be discussed again. There was class war at the core and heart of the Red Army, not to defend

“one’s” country but to preserve the central nucleus of the world revolution.

The Red Army worked with the consciousness of defending the progress of humanity. It did not work to defend Russia against foreign invaders, or to extend or prolong the Russia’s frontiers. The whole of the Red Army was steeped in this conception. This happened in other armies, as in Korea and China, but more partially. The Soviet Army was not any old army driven to defend the frontiers of the country. It was an army made to defend the most elevated progress of progress of humanity: the Workers State as instrument to build socialism.

³⁰ “In Lenin’s 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, Trotsky served as the People’s Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, founding the Red Army ..” (Wikipedia)

Trotsky as War Commissar and organiser of the Red Army is historically invaluable. He organised an army not just for military action against the capitalist empire, but to combat the siege, defeat the invasion of world capitalism, and build socialism. This is how the USSR defeated world capitalism and laid the historic foundation of the Workers State. If that army had been made just to defend the borders of the fatherland, of the country, the USSR would have been dissolved. Thanks to having been an army organised to defend the historic base of socialism, it was able to serve this end, and be an element of contention in the degeneration of the Workers State.

If the USSR later was not able to advance more, and degenerated, this came from other causes in history; causes not strictly attributable to the internal process in the USSR, or even to Stalin. There were historic causes, upon which Stalin himself rested, to permit the degeneration. One cannot overestimate what an important factor the Red Army has been, because there will soon reappear a discussion about the function which it played. There is no doubt that the Chinese army and the Korean army were revolutionary and did act in a revolutionary way. But the model came from the USSR. The Chinese leaders of today never recall that fact. In not many years to come, all the works of Trotsky will get published in the USSR. The complete works of Trotsky can already be found in Moscow, not a line missing. For the progress of human thought, Trotsky's writings correspond to the work of the Encyclopedists in their days.

Trotsky anchored the principles of army function in the struggle for socialism

Trotsky integrated a new experience in the organisational capacity of humanity. He derived this from Marxism, which gave him the ability to foresee and organize consciously. Trotsky proved that, on the basis of Marxism, it was possible to organize an army in the service of revolution. In our present times and in some capitalist countries, we believe that it is possible to win the army. It is partly from Trotsky's experience that we derive this notion. We see no direct continuity between what Trotsky did and what happens today, but we base ourselves on the fact that the army can be won. If it cannot be won as a structure or an institution, it can be won at least partially. Every revolution wins over a part of the enemy apparatus. There is no doubt that winning a whole army is difficult, but it has been even more difficult to make advances in the Church, and yet this

is happening, at least in part, today. In the Catholic Church today, sectors are being won to the revolution, and that is in part because they do not want to be left completely behind.

In the triumphing and the bringing down of capitalism, the permanent revolution showed itself in full functioning. Was it possible, yes or no, to pass from feudalism directly to the Workers State? These are principles, and they were already in the program of the Third International, in its First Four Congresses. The historic backwardness of the first 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 preparation of the capacity to think and analyse; not to stay aloof, but take part with the process as it presents, even with a small party, waiting for new stages, organising the political and theoretical confidence, stimulating the formation of new parties, living scientifically all the experiences of the revolutionary process to apply them in the future.

The Third International analysed all the experiences of the world and proved an irreplaceable instrument. It produced a level of cultural knowledge that no university or institution can impart. We talk here of a political instrument. It did not organize academic knowledge politically because it was working for the transformation of society, but in so doing, it raised itself to the level of the most complete form of science. It needed the firmest level of security, of coordination and of centralisation, particularly between its goals and its actions. Political activity is where these abilities are required. The Third International played that role.

The isolation of the Russian Revolution and its effect on the Bolshevik Party

The degeneration of the Soviet Workers State after 1921 must be attributed to the historical conditions at the time. It happened because the revolution did not find the support which it needed in the world. This failure weighed on the Bolsheviks, but they did not fall apart. They did not disintegrate or become disorganized. They sought instead to maintain the revolution whilst waiting for new revolutionary stages.

The conditions in those days were most unfavourable. There was scarcity and crisis. The economy had been devastated. Russia was the most

backward of the capitalist countries. A painting by Daumier³¹ shows Russian nobles playing games of dice and of cards where one of them wins a bundle of slaves, serfs or peasants, all wrapped and tied up. The bundle might have had some 15 or 20 persons in it. Women were being played too. The servants of one nobleman would pass into the hands of another.

That was the Russia where the Bolsheviks took power! There had been some progress however, serfdom had been officially abolished in the second half of the nineteenth century – after some attacks on the tsar – 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 revolution easier.

The retreat of the revolution came with the lack of scientific political parties, the lack of political experience in the masses, the lack of experience in social leadership. There came no timely development in the rest of the Europe, or the world, to make up for it. The result was the isolation of the revolutionary process. Within the USSR, this stimulated the forces afraid of progress because there was no Marxist preparation. The teams around Lenin at that time, especially the proletarian vanguard, remained steadfast in the decision to continue with the Soviet Union. They wanted the USSR to be “the beacon” of socialist construction in the world. The Bolsheviks discussed the need to expect changes in the world balance of forces. Lenin did, and then Trotsky afterwards.

Apart from some teams around Lenin, the historic insecurity that had existed before the taking of power revived in many sectors of the Party. They had accompanied the revolution, but they now hesitated in front of the difficulties of the USSR in the world. This insecurity showed in the way they started defending the Soviet Union in the form of a national retreat. They would protect the USSR by not spreading the revolution. Old sentiments of a national order were revived, that had never quite lost their political, partisan and programmatic bases. There had not been time to acquire understanding, experience, trust in the possibility and the necessity of the world development of socialism.

³¹ Honoré Daumier, 1808-1879, painter, sculptor, printmaker in France. Often portrayed political life.

Before the taking of power, there had been uncertainty in the Party about the actual possibility of building socialism. The continued isolation and the unfavourable conditions that grew after 1924 revived this uncertainty. Many militants and leaders had joined the revolution without Marxist preparation. They had not been able to develop much previous experience, motivation or organizational capacity. This came to weigh decisively in the Party because more than half of the previous Bolsheviks had died. The resolute and the bold ones who had accompanied Lenin's entire stage of construction had often been killed. Many had fallen in the revolution and in the war against imperialism. And then, a large part of those who had survived had to be sent to develop the Workers State, in key positions, mostly in the economy. All this had weakened the Party enormously.

This led to entire layers of new militants and leaders who had neither tradition, experience, nor revolutionary security, to dominate the leading organs of political functioning. The sectors of the Party that had manifested insecurity, inconsistency and weakness in their Marxist understanding came to positions of pre-eminence. They had accompanied, but they had not developed the Marxist capacity.

After the failure of the revolution in other parts of Europe, from 1924 onwards, all such individuals rose to the positions where the power of the USSR was organized. It is from those positions that they seized power and transformed the Bolshevik program. Using the justification that it was necessary to protect the revolution, they developed the notion of "socialism in one country".

Alongside these, further layers became involved. Groups of militants joined who, although seeking to build communism, were not secure in the program, in the politics and the function of the Party. They were a vacillating layer. During the revolution, that layer had been somehow absorbed, won over, or swayed by the steadfastness of the Bolshevik cadres and the Red Army. Now they retreated in the face of the global difficulties, as more boldness was required and the risks had grown.

The boldness that was now wanted needed more than tactical calculation. Audacity had become the essential ingredient of policy. None of these new people were so bold, and they were not interested in taking risks. And there were risks!

The revolution is a risk. It requires immense audacity, great capacity of concentration, decision, judgment. Audacity is not the same as vehemence, intrepidity or going about with weapons. Audacity is the ability to coordinate a small nucleus of people, as the Bolsheviks did; learning to take advantage, organize, mobilize, use the existing forces. This requires a dominion that only Marxism can impart, as well as confidence in the working class and confidence in that the soldiers and the peasants can be won to the revolution.

Even before the revolution, not all the sectors that became incorporated into the Bolshevik Party believed in these principles. As the revolution triumphed, they had to accept, but they started weighing heavily in the conditions that then developed. The isolated Soviet Union became encircled whilst the weight of the revolutionary wing in the Bolshevik Party had weakened. It is then that the newly arrived sectors started emerging, developing and organising themselves as a Stalinist current.

J. POSADAS

20 Oct 1973

This text is an extract from J Posadas, "The Russian Revolution, the degeneration of the Workers State and the process of Partial Regeneration" (same date).

* https://quatrieme-internationale-posadiste.com/book_pdf/EN/1_StalinAtomWar,JP,done.pdf

ARMED FORCES AND MILITIAS FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE REVOLUTION³²

J POSADAS

Sept 1968

In the Soviet Union, the territorial army - organized on the basis of militia, the Territorial Militia as Trotsky called it - kept unchanged the military structure of the army, its power for military action and combat, even with atomic weapons. It maintains the same capacity for mobility, dynamism, concentration and discipline³³.

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 also 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 gun, the weapon, is the means of implementation. As the members of the territorial militia fight to win and promote the

³² Excerpt from "*The Construction of the Workers' State and from the Workers' State to Socialism*", same date.

³³ Read: <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/wright/1941/08/redarmy.htm>

revolution, their weapon is instrument of persuasion or of imposition. There are times when the weapon persuades by imposition: that is when the militia soldiers only need to appear with their weapon to carry the day. Other times, the weapon has to be used. In the end, the ultimate weapon of definition is atomic, because the means to decide, the material means, the instruments, are atomic. In the revolution, military preparation and discipline respond to war plans decided by the Party, the trade union, the neighbourhood, without the need of the army to be involved. In the Territorial Militia, discipline is greater than in the army because in the army, the soldier can evade the discipline 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 - except as boss, or 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 so much 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 need is for popular territorial militias instead of the professional army

Why is the regular army of the Workers State still a professional one, if the social conditions are of identification, of shared interests, of socialist feelings and objectives between Workers State and soldiers? Why? 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 what the Territorial Militias are. It does not lack scientific, cultural or military knowledge. What it lacks is the will to have these made to work. With no Territorial Militias, military organisation in the Workers State is the same as in capitalism: the mechanised soldier is prevented from being a thinking militant. The function of the soldier falls back to obeying orders. This is why the Soviet bureaucrats suppressed Party life and Party cells in the USSR's army. Whilst even at the worst of times during the Russian Revolution, there had been a cellular life in the Red Army where the soldiers could discuss and resolve all the problems.

Today, the bureaucracy hides these antecedents. It knows that soldiers allowed to think will oppose the [arrogance of the] chief, the order, the mechanical life, the differentials. There must be no difference between the general and the soldier. The ranks, the chevrons and the medals displayed by the Soviet generals are absurd, ridiculous. It is ridiculous to see a leader like Brezhnev covered in medals. What do the medals measure? 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 of the Workers State and its plans. The army is no seat of political deliberation. In socialist construction, it does not determine the plans or the programs. The army is an incidental instrument. It may last for years, but it is still incidental. Neither the police, the army, the law, the courts nor the lawyers will continue to exist. The lawyers who are going to continue to exist will be the revolutionaries.

When a conventional army continues to exist in the Workers State, alongside law and lawyers, it is to defend the bureaucrats and what they appropriate. They need the law to defend themselves from the masses. They want to appear not lordly, fair and equitable. Scoundrels! In the Soviet Union, the outfits of lawyers and judges are absurd! If there is no private property, what are they there to 'defend'? They defend the rights to usufruct imposed by the bureaucrats on Workers State property, as part of unequal distribution. A bureaucratic leader in the USSR earns fifteen times more than a worker. It may be officially only 3 or 4 times the worker's salary, but with the bonuses, the use of the State, the houses, hotels, meals, vacations – it is fifteen times the worker's salary.

In the USSR, the laws, the lawyers and the police are there to defend all this. They defend all the illicit businesses of the bureaucrats and of the planners. They not only defend the power of the bureaucracy, but form a shield that stops people criticizing, judging, deliberating against it. It is for all this that the bureaucrats have judges and lawyers.

In the Soviet Union, the army is necessary and atomic weapons as well

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

In the Soviet Union the army is still necessary, and so are its atomic weapons. The case remains however that the army and the atomic weapons of the Workers State can be used, organized and operated without a functioning professional army. It can all be done through the development of Territorial Militias, since they specialise in the learning and the drilling of military capacity. The Militias do this: they meet, discuss, and teach to shoot and bomb. Besides, they can do it at any time. This is why the Bolsheviki used to propose, and now the Trotskyists do, that formal military teaching and training should be handed over to the Trade Unions. The Trade Unions to decide, and no longer the barracks. Although not rejecting attending barracks, we propose that the compulsory military service be eliminated, and military education be promoted by the Trade Unions. Let the Unions make themselves responsible for this.

Trotsky defended this position³⁴. The military HQ has no justification or function other than to mechanize the population, to give structure to a corps of officers, all of which to be used only by a sector of the leadership of society and 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.

³⁴ See Trotsky in interview with visiting the North American Senator King 1923, in "The International situation and the Red Army" <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1922/military/ch22.htm>

In the Workers State, the bureaucracy needs this military paraphernalia to repel uprisings or the struggle of the masses. The imbecility and incapacity of the bureaucracy leads it to have no interest in the formation of workers' militias. It sees these as potential rivals to dispute its power. When workers' militias get made, they will bring with them the ability to indict the usurpation that the existence of bureaucracy had represented all along.

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

The Territorial Militia includes 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, 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. The handling of the weapon aims at creating 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 it, are pressured by the world revolution, they have to resolve problems posed by the competition of other bureaucracies. This 1968³⁵, the bureaucracy of Czechoslovakia introduced economic measures that escape the Workers State and approximate to capitalist forms. Forced to oppose this 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 the people, distributing leaflets,

³⁵ In January 1968, Alexander Dubcek led a movement supportive of a programme to reduce State control in Czechoslovakia, and to introduce the freedom to speak and publish in favour of policies tending towards private property and capital accumulation.

explaining that the USSR has come to defend the socialist structure, and not as a power usurper.

In the Soviet Union, the function of the army is dual. The army works as it does, steered by the permanent life and political function of the bureaucracy, whilst the soldier does not think, does not function and does not reason. The soldier does not intervene as a militant of the Workers State but as a common soldier. Had that soldier been representing the Party over Czechoslovakia, he or she would have asked from the commander: "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 risk of capitalist intervention in that country". The Soviet soldier would have answered: "Let us go then. Let us call on the masses of Czechoslovakia to rise and make Soviets". And that soldier might have added: "Let us call on the workers and masses of capitalist Germany to take power, for they have the North American army over there!".

Look here at the programmatic, revolutionary and social solutions. Military measures are necessary, but they are not the essential base. Even in the case of the utilisation of atomic weapons, as part of military measures, the essential is the organisation of socialist measures. You cannot expect this from standing armies, be they professional or not. They do not have the qualities and the organization to do it. They do not have the political life or the structure for this because they are an army to obey orders, and with only the military function to intervene with.

It is the *Territorial Militia* on the other hand that stretches its military function out into its life in the factory and the Trade Union. Every day, or when necessary, it 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 finds this a much cheaper and safer option: each soldier a leader-decider. Contrast this with the standing army with its enormous costs and deadweight against the politics and the initiatives of the revolutionary ideas. In a Workers State that does not advance beyond this, the standing army remains a function of the interests of the bureaucracy; and not of the revolutionary military necessity of the Workers State. As far as we are concerned, we propose *Popular Militias*.

By its nature, the army is conservative even when it is led to take revolutionary measures going counter to capitalism. This happened 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 Militias been involved instead, they would have called on the masses of Poland to take power, and the masses would have called on Hitler's invading soldiers to turn back, and they would have called on the German population to take power.

J. POSADAS - Sept 1968

Extract from "The construction of the Workers State, and from the Workers State to Socialism", J Posadas, same date.

Who is J. Posadas?



J. Posadas was born in Argentina in 1912 and died in Italy in 1981.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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