

Hero as Pariah: Trotsky's Struggle Against Stalinism

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Leon Trotsky's contribution to the Marxist position in philosophy and his role in the Russian Revolution of October 1917 had been politically maneuvered, tampered with, fabricated and covered by a muck heap of Stalinist slander. By Stalinism, I am referring to the narrative which was born from the bureaucratic degeneration of the Soviet Union, after the failure of working class to consolidate and capture state power in Hungary, Germany, Italy and other western countries which was materially in an advanced position than early 20th Century Russia. It was also the political ideology which was born as a result of civil war, famine, pandemic and the invasion of the newly formed Russian worker's state by more than fifteen foreign countries with colonial objectives. Trotsky's role in creating the Red Army, which was a different to that of a standing army and supporters of Trotsky in the Left Opposition were not only vilified and charged with false accusations but violently purged. In this paper I have highlighted how Stalinism marked a revolution against the revolution of 1917 and how Trotsky continuously struggled against the bureaucratic despotism over the working class in post 1917 Russia.

Keywords: bureaucracy, Stalinism, privileged caste, permanent revolution, Trotsky

Introduction

In his reminiscences of Lenin, Maxim Gorky has related a conversation he had with him. When in the course of it, he mentioned the hostility shown by certain Bolshevists to Trotsky, Lenin banged his fist upon the table and said:

Show me another man who could have practically created a model army in a year and won the respect of the military specialists as well. We have got such a man! We have got everything! (Wollenberg, 1937, Chapter 5, Part 6)

This man was none other than Lev Davidovich Bronstein, popularly known as Leon Trotsky, the hero of the Russian Revolution. Robert Service (2009) defined him as a bright comet in the political sky. Even Stalin who became his bitter rival later had said in 1918 that "all practical work in connection with the organization of the uprising was done under the immediate direction of Trotsky.... It can be stated with certainty that the party is indebted primarily and principally to Trotsky" (Ali, 2013, p. 76). My paper talks about the legacy of Trotsky and examines the reasons for which he was made an outcast or pariah. This paper would examine what Trotsky stood for and I would show how even in the face of extreme vilification and a muckheap of slanderous lies, Trotsky did not for once capitulate and carried on the struggle against capitalism and bureaucratic socialism and represented the banner of Marxism who had theorized about the permanency of the worker's revolution.

Alex Glasgow, in his poem "The Socialist ABC", writes:

S is for Stalinism that gave us a bad name and T is for Trotsky the hero who had to take all the blame.¹

The above line brings to light the history of the degeneration of the Soviet Union into a bureaucratic worker's state which, although being anti-capitalist and having a planned economy, proved to be a systematic system of asphyxiation for the masses of the working class apart from a privileged caste represented by the bureaucracy at whose head stood Joseph Stalin. Khrushchev understood this and condemned Stalin's work in the 20th party congress but even he did not do anything to change the bureaucratic structure. David North (2015), in his book *In Defense of Leon Trotsky*, wrote:

In February 1956, at the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU, Khrushchev delivered his so-called "secret speech". He denounced Stalin as a political criminal, responsible for the imprisonment, torture and murder of countless thousands of Old Bolsheviks and loyal Communists during the purges of the 1930s. Of course, Khrushchev hardly acknowledged the full extent of Stalin's crimes. The indictment was as evasive as it was incomplete. But the impact of Khrushchev's speech was politically devastating. The unstated but inescapable conclusion that flowed from the exposure of Stalin's crimes was that the Moscow Trials of 1936-1938 were a frame-up and that the Old Bolshevik defendants had been murdered. The thought that "Trotsky was right" haunted countless leaders and members of the CPSU and associated Stalinist parties throughout the world. And if Trotsky was right about the trials, what else had he been right about? (p. 27)

Indeed, Trotsky was correct about many events. He was correct about the analysis of Russian Society in 1905 and how the two-stage theory of revolution (i.e., first the bourgeois democratic followed by the socialist) does not hold firm in a backward country, like Russia. In the second chapter of his book *Permanent Revolution*, which is named "The Permanent Revolution is Not a Leap by the Proletariat but the reconstruction of the nation under the leadership of the proletariat", Trotsky (2005) wrote:

The Russian Revolution came unexpectedly to everybody but the Social Democrats. Marxism long ago predicted the inevitability of the Russian Revolution, which was bound to break out as a result of the conflict between capitalist development and the forces of ossified absolutism.... In calling it a bourgeois revolution, Marxism thereby pointed out that the immediate objective tasks of the revolution consisted in the creation of "normal conditions for the development of bourgeois society as a whole". Marxism has proved to be right, and this is now past the need for discussion or proof. The Marxists are now confronted by a task of quite another kind: to discover the "possibilities" of the developing revolution by means of an analysis of its internal mechanism.... The Russian Revolution has a quite peculiar character, which is the result of the peculiar trend of our whole social and historical development, and which in its turn opens before us quite new historical prospects.... The proletariat grows and becomes stronger with the growth of capitalism. In this sense, the development of capitalism is also the development of the proletariat toward dictatorship. But the day and the hour when power will pass into the hands of the working class depends directly not upon the level attained by the productive forces but upon the relations in the class struggle, upon the international situation and finally, upon a number of subjective factors: the traditions, the initiative, readiness to fight of the workers. It is possible for the workers to come to power in an economically backward country sooner than in an advanced country.... To imagine that the dictatorship of the proletariat is in some way dependent upon the technical development and resources of a country is a prejudice of "economic" materialism simplified to absurdity. This point of view has nothing in common with Marxism. In our view, the Russian Revolution will create conditions in which power can pass into the hands of the workers—and in the event of the victory of the revolution it must do so—before the politicians of bourgeois liberalism get the chance to display to the full their ability to govern. (p. 161)

In the same chapter, he launched a scathing attack on the liberals or the liberal bourgeoisie by terming them as a counter-revolutionary force and a population which would strangle and asphyxiate the revolution of the proletarians who are the direct producers of wealth in a society. He writes:

¹ To see full poem, go to http://sa.org.au/marxism_page/int/abc.htm.

Since I have not the possibility of setting out here the whole train of thought of *Results and Prospects*, I should like to adduce one more summary quotation from my article in *Nachalo* (1905): "Our liberal bourgeoisie comes forward as a counter-revolutionary force even before the revolutionary climax. At each critical moment, our intellectual democrats only demonstrate their impotence. The peasantry as a whole represents an elemental force in rebellion. It can be put at the service of the revolution only by a force that takes state power into its hands. The vanguard position of the working class in the revolution, the direct connection established between it and the revolutionary countryside, the attraction by which it brings the army under its influence—all this impels it inevitably to power. The complete victory of the revolution means the victory of the proletariat. This in turn means the further uninterrupted character of the revolution" (*Our Revolution*, p. 172). The prospect of the dictatorship of the proletariat consequently grows here precisely out of the bourgeois-democratic revolution—in contradiction to all that Radek writes. That is just why the revolution is called permanent (uninterrupted). But the dictatorship of the proletariat does not come *after* the completion of the democratic revolution, as Radek would have it. If that were the case it would simply be impossible in Russia, for in a backward country the numerically weak proletariat could not attain power if the tasks of the peasantry had been solved during the preceding stage. No, the dictatorship of the proletariat appeared probable and even inevitable on the basis of the bourgeois revolution precisely because there was no other power and no other way to solve the tasks of the agrarian revolution. But exactly this opens up the prospect of a democratic revolution growing over into the socialist revolution. (Trotsky, 2005, Chapter 2)

Supporters of the Stalinist narrative had pointed a finger at Trotsky by saying that the latter had underestimated the role of the peasantry. This is also a petty vilification and Trotsky (2005), in his *Results and Prospects*, wrote:

In the revolutions of 1789-93 and 1848 power first of all passed from absolutism to the moderate elements of the bourgeoisie, and it was the latter class which emancipated the peasantry (how, is another matter) before revolutionary democracy received or was even preparing to receive power. The emancipated peasantry lost all interest in the political stunts of the "townspeople", that is, in the further progress of the revolution, and placing itself like a heavy foundation-stone at the foot of "order", betrayed the revolution to the Caesarist or ancien-regime-absolutist reaction. The Russian revolution does not, and for a long time will not, permit the establishment of any kind of bourgeois constitutional order that might solve the most elementary problems of democracy. All the "enlightened" efforts of reformer-bureaucrats like Witte and Stolypin are nullified by their own struggle for existence. Consequently, the fate of the most elementary revolutionary interests of the peasantry—even the peasantry as a whole, as an estate, is bound up with the fate of entire revolution, i.e., with the fate of the proletariat. The proletariat in power will stand before the peasants as the class which has emancipated it. The domination of the proletariat will mean not only democratic equality, free self-government, the transference of the whole burden of taxation to the rich classes, the dissolution of the standing army in the armed people and the abolition of compulsory church imposts, but also recognition of all revolutionary changes (expropriations) in land relationships carried out by the peasants.... But while every bourgeois party commanding the votes of the peasantry hastens to use its power in order to swindle and deceive the peasants and then, if the worst comes to the worst, gives place to another capitalist party, the proletariat, relying on the peasantry, will bring all forces into play in order to raise the cultural level of the countryside and develop the political consciousness of the peasantry. From what we have said above, it will be clear how we regard the idea of a "proletarian and peasant dictatorship". It is not really a matter of whether we regard it as admissible in principle, whether "we do or do not desire" such a form of political co-operation. We simply think that it is unrealizable—at least in a direct immediate sense. Indeed, such a coalition presupposes either that one of the existing bourgeois parties' commands influence over the peasantry or that the peasantry will have created a powerful independent party of its own, but we have attempted to show that neither the one nor the other is possible. (Chapter 5)

Trotsky's heroism therefore comes in the shape of a brilliant scientific socialist who had applied the theory of dialectical materialism quite dexterously. In his essay *Revolutionary Silhouettes*, Anatole Lunacharsky, the Bolshevik commissar of culture, described Trotsky as the second great leader of the Russian Revolution. Attempting to compare Lenin and Trotsky, Lunacharsky credited Lenin as a revolutionary politician of infallible instinct, less prone to be swayed by his emotions, if only temporarily. Lunacharsky (n.d.) had written:

It would be wrong to imagine, however, that the second great leader of the Russian Revolution is inferior to his colleague in everything: there are, for instance, aspects in which Trotsky incontestably surpasses him—he is more brilliant, he is clearer, he is more active. Lenin is fitted as no one else to take the chair at the council of People's Commissars and to guide the world revolution with the touch of genius, but he could never have coped with the titanic mission which Trotsky took upon his own shoulders, with those lightning moves from place to place, those astounding speeches, those fanfares of on-the-spot orders, that role of being the unceasing electrifier of a weakening army, now at one spot, now at another. There is not a man on Earth who could have replaced Trotsky in that respect. When David North (the chairperson of the International Editorial Board of the World Socialist Website) had asked the historian Alexander Rabinowitch that why did the attack on Trotskyism carry on for more than seventy years then the latter had replied "Because he is still a threat". Therefore, it becomes imperative for me to describe what Trotskyism is and why is it still a threat to both Capitalism and the Stalinist brand of socialism.

If Trotskyism is considered to be a School of thought, then that school can be said to have five main pillars. The first pillar of the body of Trotskyism includes the theory of the permanent revolution about which I have already said in the above lines. This was first established by Trotsky during the 1905 Russian Revolution which had sparked off after the Czar's repressive apparatus had opened fire against a peaceful demonstration lead by Father Gapon (Wood, 2009). This theory was one which stood against the prevailing orthodoxy of Russian Marxists who had conceptualized about the two-stage theory of Revolution. This orthodoxy was represented by the Mensheviks and by Plekhanov who is often considered to be the father of Russian Marxism. They thought that what was impending in Russia was a bourgeois revolution and that the job of Marxists and of the working classes was to support the bourgeois revolution as the first stage. Lenin had a radical viewpoint on the same orthodoxy. Lenin supported this view but the latter went on to say that it would be the working classes and not the bourgeois class who would lead this revolution. This was different from the Menshevik standpoint in the sense that this group wanted the working class to play a subordinate role and Lenin wanted to see the working class who would play the role of the protagonist in the bourgeois democratic revolution. But both Lenin and the Mensheviks thought that one could not go beyond this two-stage theory. Trotsky contested this. He did not contest the view that Russia was heading for a democratic revolution. He agreed with that. He agreed with the idea that the working class should lead this revolution but he argued that if the working class took the leading role in this revolution, the workers would have to create their own system of power (which they did in the form of soviets) and in this sense it would become a permanent revolution and would move directly from a democratic revolution against Czarism into the establishment of worker's power which would again be only completed Internationally. Trotsky writes:

The expression "permanent revolution" is an expression of Marx which he applied to the revolution of 1848. In Marxian, naturally not in revisionist but in revolutionary Marxian literature, this term has always had citizenship rights. Franz Mehring employed it for the revolution of 1905-1907. The permanent revolution, in an exact translation, is the continuous revolution, the uninterrupted revolution. What is the political idea embraced in this expression? It is, for us communists that the revolution does not come to an end after this or that political conquest, after obtaining this or that social reform, but that it continues to develop further and its only boundary is the socialist society. Thus, once begun, the revolution (insofar as we participate in it and particularly when we lead it) is in no case interrupted by us at any formal stage whatever. On the contrary, we continually and constantly advance it in conformity, of course, with the situation, so long as the revolution has not exhausted all the possibilities and all the resources of the movement. This applies to the conquests of the revolution inside of a country as well as to its extension over the international arena. For Russia, this theory signified: what we need is not the bourgeois republic as a political crowning, nor even the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry, but a workers' government supporting itself upon the peasantry and opening up the era of the international socialist revolution. Thus, the idea of the permanent revolution coincides entirely with the fundamental strategical line of Bolshevism. It is understandable if this was not seen eighteen or fifteen years ago. But it is impossible

not to understand and to recognize it now that the general formula have been verified by full blooded historical context. One cannot discover in my writings of that time the slightest attempt to leap over the peasantry. The theory of the permanent revolution led directly to Leninism and in particular to the April, 1917, Theses. These theses, however, predetermining the policy of our party in and throughout October, provoked panic, as is known, among a very large part of those who now speak only in holy horror of the theory of the "permanent revolution." However, to enter into a discussion on all these questions with comrades who have long ago ceased to read and who live exclusively on the muddled recollections of their youth, is not a very easy thing to do; besides, it is useless. But comrades, and young communists in the first place, who do not weary of studying and who, in any case, do not let themselves be frightened either by cabalistic words or by the word "permanent," will do well to read for themselves, pencil in hand, the works of those days, for and against "the permanent revolution," and to try to get from these works the threads that link them with the October Revolution, which is not so difficult....It suffices to examine our military political literature to see how permeated it was with the thought that the civil war is politically the struggle of the proletariat with the counterrevolution for influence over the peasantry and that the victory cannot be assured save by the establishment of rational relationships between the workers and the peasants, in an individual regiment, in the district of military operations, and in the state as a whole. (Lunacharsky, n.d.)

This theory freed Marxism from the grasp of the second International, of German Social Democracy, of Karl Kautsky which was a movement and a program for a minority mainly for the population of Europe and North America where Capitalism had already existed and gave a perspective of Global Social Revolution. Before this, for majority of the population, Marxism was something which could be looked forward to in the future and not in the immediate present. The programme of socialist revolution was something which was supposed to happen in the future according to the old type of Marxism. In this way, Trotsky built on and supplemented the permanent revolution and gave it a global perspective and made Marxism an ideology not just for the few German Social Democrats but for the oppressed majority of the world. This was a heroic contribution to scientific socialism.

The second pillar of Trotskyism is Lev Davidovich Bronstein's analysis, of the degeneration of the Russian Revolution into a bureaucratic caricature of socialism. Many Marxists are faced with the question that how was it then that the greatest socialist revolution of the proletariat ended in the monstrous regime of Stalinism. Trotsky, in his *Revolution Betrayed*, gave us a Marxist analysis of why the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) cannot be termed as socialist. Therefore, in this sense, Trotsky proved his heroic nature once again. He could have easily taken advantage of his name and prestige and enjoy the benefits that many officers of high rank in the Soviet Union were enjoying at that time. But he did not. He put his whole life at stake. When he saw Stalin's rise to power he had theorized it to happen because of the failure of the German Revolution (because of the betrayal of the 2nd International) and which had isolated the Russian Revolution into an island surrounded by Capitalism. It must also be remembered that after the Russian Revolution, the newly formed worker's state was attacked by 21 so called democratic nations and it was Leon Trotsky again who had created a Red Army based not on the standing type of military but an army which was basically militia centric. One must also not forget the counter revolutionary Czarist forces who were trying to restore Czarism and because of this there had been food shortages and famine and this had led to the exhaustion of majority of the people. In this situation, it was the rise of the ugly head of bureaucracy that wanted to conserve what they had gained and the theory of Socialism in one country was propounded by Stalin. Trotsky had managed to analyze the psychological reason behind the development of such a theory. In *Revolution Betrayed*, he writes:

In Lenin's Declaration of the Rights of the Toiling and Exploited People—presented by the Soviet of People's Commissars for the approval of the Constituent Assembly during its brief hours of life—the "fundamental task" of the new

regime was thus defined: "The establishment of a socialist organization of society and the victory of socialism in all countries." The international character of the revolution was thus written into the basic document of the new regime. No one at that time would have dared present the problem otherwise! In April 1924, three months after the death of Lenin, Stalin wrote, his brochure of compilations called *The Foundations of Leninism*: "For the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the efforts of one country are enough—to this the history of our own revolution testifies. For the final victory of socialism, for the organization of socialist production, the efforts of one country, especially a peasant country like ours, are not enough—for this we must have the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries." These lines need no comment. The large-scale defeats of the European proletariat, and the first very modest economic successes of the Soviet Union, suggested to Stalin, in the autumn of 1924, the idea that the historic mission of the Soviet bureaucracy was to build socialism in a single country. Around this question there developed a discussion which to many superficial minds seemed academic or scholastic, but which in reality reflected the incipient degeneration of the Third International and prepared the way for the Fourth. Petrov, the former communist, now a White émigré whom we have already quoted [in previous chapters of the book], tells from his own memories how fiercely the younger generation of administrators opposed the doctrine of the dependence of the Soviet Union upon the international revolution. "How is it possible that we in our own country cannot contrive to build a happy life?" If Marx has it otherwise, that means that "we are no Marxists, we are Russian Bolsheviks—that's what!" To these recollections of disputes in the middle of the twenties, Petrov adds: "Today I cannot but think that the theory of building socialism in one country was not a mere Stalinist invention." Completely true! It expressed unmistakably the mood of the bureaucracy. When speaking of the victory of socialism, they meant their own victory. In justifying his break with the Marxist tradition of internationalism, Stalin was incautious enough to remark that Marx and Engels were not unacquainted with the law of uneven development of capitalism supposedly discovered by Lenin. (Trotsky, 1937b, p. 271)

Paul Le Blanc (2015) noted that the socialism in one country perspective caused for all practical purposes a downgrade in the seriousness with which the Communist International was taken. Initially established by Lenin and his comrades to build parties in countries all over the world, this theory was now being vulgarized and being transformed into a tool for the foreign policy of the bureaucratic brand of Socialism which was being practiced by the Soviet Union. It is because of this theory that people who are not aware of the history and do not have a proper knowledge of dialectical analysis fail to analyze the Soviet Union. What people usually do is ascribe the name—Communism, to the bureaucratic Socialist Russia. Therefore, the fall of Stalinism, in 1991, is usually known as the fall of Communism and a series of other flawed theories surface, for example, the notorious notion of the "end of history" put forward by Francis Fukuyama. Even today many leftist parties worship Stalin as their idol. Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism was therefore very important. Trotsky does not see the rise of Stalinism as a rise of evil. He analyses Stalinism as the development of a conservative and bureaucratic tendency because of the isolation of the USSR and the failure of the German Communists to lead the proletarian masses into revolution.

To the question that whether Bolshevism is responsible for Stalinism, Trotsky (1937a) wrote:

The flaw in this reasoning begins in the tacit identification of Bolshevism, October Revolution and Soviet Union. The historical process of the struggle of hostile forces is replaced by the evolution of Bolshevism in a vacuum. Bolshevism, however, is only a political tendency closely fused with the working class but not identical with it. And aside from the working class there exist in the Soviet Union a hundred million peasants, diverse nationalities, and a heritage of oppression, misery and ignorance. The state built up by the Bolsheviks reflects not only the thought and will of Bolshevism but also the cultural level of the country, the social composition of the population, the pressure of a barbaric past and no less barbaric world imperialism. To represent the process of degeneration of the Soviet state as the evolution of pure Bolshevism is to ignore social reality in the name of only one of its elements, isolated by pure logic. One has only to call this elementary mistake by its true name to do away with every trace of it.

This leads directly to the third pillar of Trotskyism and that is Internationalism. After the degeneracy of

the Third International and especially after the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, Trotsky had created the Fourth International. On 28th October 1938, an inspiring mass meeting in New York celebrated the founding of the Fourth International. Trotsky (1938) said:

Dear friends, we are not a party as other parties. Our ambition is not only to have more members, more papers, more money in the treasury, more deputies. Our aim is the full material and spiritual liberation of the toilers and exploited through the socialist revolution. Nobody will prepare it and nobody will guide it but ourselves. The old Internationals—the Second, the Third, that of Amsterdam, we will add to them also the London Bureau are rotten through and through. The great events which rush upon mankind will not leave of these outlived organizations one stone upon another. Only the Fourth International looks with confidence at the future. It is the world party of Socialist Revolution! There never was a greater task on the earth. Upon every one of us rests a tremendous historical responsibility. Our party demands each of us, totally and completely. Let the philistines hunt their own individuality in empty space. For a revolutionary to give himself entirely to the party signifies finding himself. Yes, our party takes each one of us wholly. But in return it gives to every one of us the highest happiness: the consciousness that one participates in the building of a better future, that one carries on his shoulders a particle of the fate of mankind, and that one's life will not have been lived in vain. The fidelity to the cause of the toilers requires from us the highest devotion to our international party. The party, of course, can also be mistaken. By common effort we will correct its mistakes. In its ranks can penetrate unworthy elements. By common effort we will eliminate them. New thousands who will enter its ranks tomorrow will probably be deprived of necessary education. By common effort we will elevate their revolutionary level. But we will never forget that our party is now the greatest lever of history. Separated from this lever, every one of us is nothing. With this lever in hand, we are all.... We aren't a party as other parties. It is not in vain that the imperialist reaction persecutes us madly, following furiously at our heels. The assassins at its services are the agents of the Moscow Bonapartist clique. Our young International already knows many victims. In the Soviet Union they number by thousands. With gratitude and love we remember them all in these moments. Their spirits continue to fight in our ranks. The hangmen think in their obtuseness and cynicism that it is possible to frighten us. They err! Under blows we become stronger. The bestial politics of Stalin are only politics of despair. It is possible to kill individual soldiers of our army, but not to frighten them. Friends, we will repeat again in this day of celebration ... IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO FRIGHTEN US. Ten years were necessary for the Kremlin clique in order to strangle the Bolshevik party and to transform the first Workers' State into a sinister caricature. Ten years were necessary for the Third International in order to stamp into the mire their own program and to transform themselves into a stinking cadaver. Ten years! Only ten years! Permit me to finish with a prediction: During the next ten years the program of the Fourth International will become the guide of millions and these revolutionary millions will know how to storm earth and heaven.

Trotsky did this because he understood that the theory of socialism in one country would eventually destroy the Internationalist Communist Movement and would vulgarize it by transforming the movement from serving the world revolution of the oppressed masses to an instrument of Soviet Foreign Policy. Soon we would hear many Communist Parties all over the world imitating that style of Socialism and taking their own national roads to Socialism instead of adopting the International Road. All these so-called National Roads were eventually the same revisionist parliamentary roads where often these communist parties collaborate and enter into coalitions with other parties who represent the interests of the capitalist class.

The fourth pillar of Trotskyism can be said to be his analysis of Fascism and how it should be fought against. It must be mentioned that before Hitler, there was a tremendous tendency in the left to underestimate Fascism. Trotsky had warned about the impending danger of the monster called Fascism and how the latter has the potential of running across the spine of the German working class like a terrible tank. He understood that the victory of Fascism would imply the defeat of the Communist Movement. George Lavan Weissman (1969) wrote:

Liberals and even most of those who consider themselves Marxists are guilty of using the word fascist very loosely today. They fling it around as an epithet or political swearword against right-wing figures whom they particularly despise,

or against reactionaries in general. Since WWII, the fascist label has been applied to such figures and movements as Gerald L. K. Smith, Senator Joseph McCarthy, Senator Eastland, Barry Goldwater, the Minutemen, the John Birch Society, Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, and George Wallace. Now, were all these fascist, or just some? ... These movements not only permitted Nazism to come to power in Germany without a shot being fired against it, but they failed abysmally in understanding the nature and dynamics of fascism and the way to fight it. After fascism's triumphs, they had much to hide and so refrained from making a Marxist analysis which would, at least, have educated subsequent generations. But there is a Marxist analysis of fascism. It was made by Leon Trotsky not as a postmortem, but during the rise of fascism. This was one of Trotsky's great contributions to Marxism. He began the task after Mussolini's victory in Italy in 1922 and brought it to a high point in the years preceding Hitler's triumph in Germany in 1933. In his attempts to awaken the German Communist Party and the Communist International (Comintern) to the mortal danger and to rally a united-front against Nazism, Trotsky made a point-by-point critique of the policies of the social-democratic and Stalinist parties. This constitutes a compendium of almost all the mistaken, ineffective, and suicidal positions that workers' organizations can take regarding fascism, since the positions of the German parties ranged from opportunistic default and betrayal on the right (social democratic) to ultra-left abstentionism and betrayal (Stalinist). The Communist movement was still on its ultra-left binge (the so-called Third Period) when the Nazi movement began to snowball. To the Stalinists, every capitalist party was automatically "fascist". Even more catastrophic than this disorienting of the workers was Stalin's famous dictum that, rather than being opposites, fascism and social democracy were "twins". The socialists were thereupon dubbed "social fascists" and regarded as the main enemy. Of course, there could be no united front with social-fascist organizations, and those who, like Trotsky, urged such united fronts, were also labeled social fascists and treated accordingly.

According to Paul Le Blanc (2015), Trotsky analyzed that Nazism could be explained by several convergent developments. Nazism's growing mass base came largely from what he viewed as petty bourgeois layers, that is the farmers, shop keepers, civil servants, and white-collar employees who definitely did not want to be proletarianised and were becoming increasingly desperate for an alternative to the grim status quo and the deepening economic crisis. It is from this that we can go on to point out the fifth and last pillar of Trotskyism, which culminates in his theory of the United Front as opposed to the popular front put forward by Stalin and Dimitrov. Trotsky called for a United Front of Social-Democrats and Communists, drawing on a conceptualization to which the Communist International of the early 1920s had been won by Lenin, Trotsky himself and others; the notion that a working class divided between reformists and revolutionaries as the most effective fighters, could ultimately win the adherence of a working-class majority. This dynamic played out in Russia in 1917, when the reactionary General Kornilov was defeated by the united working-class action, giving the Bolsheviks predominant influence in the working class. Paul Le Blanc (2015) noted that:

Trotsky felt that the people's front approach blurred and made incoherent any pretence at a Marxist understanding of current realities, insisting that it could not realize its own stated goals of stopping fascism and war. He had always championed the working-class united front, whose primary purpose was to facilitate working class victories around specific struggles, while enabling revolutionary socialists in such an alliance to expand and enhance their own influence, with a perspective of drawing more and more sectors of the working class in a revolutionary socialist direction. (p. 105)

These five pillars serve as Trotsky's legacy as a hero of the Russian Revolution and his legacy as a true Marxist analyst and a dialectical materialist. Apart from this he was an artistic writer as well. David North (2015), in his book *In Defense of Leon Trotsky*, noted:

I attended a lecture on Russian Literature by an aged specialist who had fled his homeland in the aftermath of the October Revolution. This was not a man from whom one could expect the slightest sympathy for Trotsky. At the conclusion of his lecture, a survey of Russian Literature in the twentieth century, I asked him to give his opinion of Trotsky as a writer. I recall vividly both his answer and the thick accent with which it was delivered: "Trotsky", he replied, "was the greatest master of Russian prose after Tolstoy". Many years later, this assessment was echoed in a remark made

by a student I met during my first visit to the Soviet Union in 1989. He confessed that reading Trotsky was for him a very difficult experience. Why was this so? "When I read Trotsky", he explained, "I am forced to agree with him—but I don't want to!" (p. 8)

Trotsky at the time of his exile from the Soviet Union had many followers. At that time, he had created a left opposition which was a bloc against the bureaucracy. It was basically the fight between two camps. One camp was represented in the conservative ideology of socialism in one country which represented the Stalinist bureaucracy and the other which was represented by Leon Trotsky and his ideology of International Revolutionary Marxism. Stalin was aware of this and therefore he had conducted the operation of his banishment in secrecy. Deutscher (1963) noted in his *The Prophet Outcast*:

Stalin was still afraid of commotion. The troops assembled in the harbor were there to prevent any demonstration of protest and any mass farewell such as the Opposition had organized a year earlier, before Trotsky's abduction from Moscow. This time there were to be no witnesses and no eye witness accounts. Trotsky was not to travel with a crowd of passengers before whose gaze he might resort to passive resistance. Even the crew was warned to keep to their quarters and avoid all contact with those on board. A nervous mystery surrounded the voyage. (p. 2)

This "nervous mystery" in Deutscher's statement was well anticipated by Lenin (1922) when he wrote:

Comrade Stalin having become Secretary General has unlimited authority concentrated in his hands and I am not sure whether he will always be capable of using that authority with sufficient caution. Comrade Trotsky on the other hand as his struggle against the C.C on the question of the People's Commissariat for Communications has already proved, is distinguished not only by outstanding ability. He is personally perhaps the most capable man in the present C.C and he has displayed excessive self-assurance and shown excessive preoccupation with the administrative side of the work. These two qualities of the two outstanding leaders of the present C.C can inadvertently lead to a split and if our party does not take steps to advert this, the split may come unexpectedly.

Not only this, Lenin (1922) had also written a letter which suggested that Stalin should be removed from the post of General Secretary:

Stalin is too rude and this defect, although quite tolerable in our midst and in dealings among us Communists, becomes intolerable in a Secretary-General. That is why I suggest that the comrades think about a way of removing Stalin from that post and appointing another man in his stead ... namely, that of being more tolerant, more loyal, more polite and more considerate to the comrades.

Not only was Stalin rude according to Lenin but he proved to be the murderer of the Internationalist Communist Movement. Stalin later on became notorious for the famous Moscow trials, which was a kind of a purge against Trotskyists and other enemies of the state and one has to remember that this was a degenerated worker's state. The Moscow Trials was just one of the process of making Trotsky, the hero, into Trotsky the Pariah. Issac Deutscher (1963) had very beautifully said:

Trotsky's verdict that the Stalin era will go down in the history of artistic creation pre-eminently as an epoch of mediocrities, laureates and toadies has come to be generally accepted. Who does not now agree with him that under Stalinism the literary schools were strangled one after the other and that the process of extermination took place in all ideological spheres and it took place more decisively since it was more than half unconscious. (p. 322)

To make Trotsky into a pariah, the new "Trotskyism" was invented which would create a narrative of lies and slander to bury the truth under this gigantic heap. Trotsky (1927), in his *The Stalin School of Falsification*, talked about the letter from G. Piatakov where the latter writes:

Dear Leon Davidovich,

You ask me to inform you what I am able to recall about the speeches of Lashevich and Zinoviev on the occasion of a discussion with Leningrad comrades on "Trotskyism" which took place at Kamenev's home. I no longer remember all that was said. But since I have always been deeply disturbed by the question of so-called "Trotskyism," and since the attitude of the Opposition of 1925-1926 towards this question was always of enormous political interest to me, I remember quite clearly what Zinoviev and Lashevich said to us. I do not recall the exact words but the sense of what they said I remember well, namely: "Trotskyism" had been invented in order to replace the real differences of opinion with fictitious differences, that is, to utilize past differences which had no bearing upon the present but which were resurrected artificially for the definite purpose mentioned above. This was told to the comrades from Leningrad who were wavering on the question of "Trotskyism" and to whom it had to be explained how and why the legend of "Trotskyism" had been created.

In the same book, Trotsky (1927) wrote:

This admission on the part of Zinoviev aroused considerable astonishment among many second-rank leaders of the Leningrad Opposition who were not initiated into the conspiracy and who honestly believed in the legend of "Trotskyism." Zinoviev told me repeatedly: "In Leningrad we hammered it into the minds of the comrades more deeply than anywhere else and it is, therefore, most difficult to re-educate them." I recall quite accurately the words that Lashevich shouted at two members of the Leningrad Group who came to Moscow to clarify themselves on the question of Trotskyism: "Why do you keep standing the matter on its head! We invented 'Trotskyism' together with you in the struggle against Trotsky. Why won't you understand this? You are only helping Stalin! etc." Zinoviev in his turn said: "You must keep the circumstances in mind. You must understand it was a struggle for power". The trick was to string together old disagreements with new issues. For this purpose, "Trotskyism" was invented.

He even quotes from Karl Radek's letter where Radek had written:

I was not present during the first conversation but heard of it later from L. D. [Trotsky]. But I was present at the conversation with Kamenev when L. B. [Kamenev] said he would openly declare at the Plenum of the Central Committee how they, that is, Kamenev and Zinoviev, together with Stalin, decided to utilize the old disagreements between L. D. [Trotsky] and Lenin so as to keep comrade Trotsky from the leadership of the party after Lenin's death. Moreover, I have heard repeated from the lips of Zinoviev and Kamenev the tale of how they had "invented" Trotskyism as a topical slogan. (Trotsky, 1927)

Therefore, it becomes painstakingly important for us to observe the legacy of a man who was a working-class hero and who was unstoppable. During Czarist regime, he was sent to Siberia twice in exile, but he did not give up, after the isolation of the Russian Revolution and the triumph of the bureaucracy he was exiled, but he posed a threat to the Stalinist caricature so much so that he had to be assassinated in a planned way by an agent of the USSR's State Political Directorate, namely Ramon Mercader, who had disguised himself as Trotsky's student—Franck Jackson. Mehring Books, after publishing Vadim Z. Rogovin's book *Stalin's Terror of 1937-1938: Political Genocide in the USSR* (translated by Frederick S. Choate), writes as a review:

Professor Vadim Rogovin demonstrates that the principal aim of the terror was the physical annihilation of the socialist opposition to Stalin's bureaucratic regime. Moreover, Rogovin places at the very center of this historical tragedy the crucial political figure whom most contemporary historians tend to ignore: Leon Trotsky. Rogovin insists that it is impossible to understand the purges apart from Stalin's determination to stamp out all vestiges of Trotsky's influence which, despite years of repression, had remained a powerful current with revolutionary potential both within the USSR and abroad. (Rogovin, 2009)

Even after his death, the vilification continued as there was always the threat of the ideas of revolutionary Marxism forcing a political revolution in the USSR. He was a hero of the commons and USSR had become a

champion in preserving the bureaucracy. At the time of Trotsky's death, the people composed a ballad which summarizes the notion of Trotsky as a pariah:

Stalin and the assassin
 In frank cooperation
 Carried their crime with precision
 To its final destination.
 Expelled from his country
 He wandered through many nations
 Always fighting bitterly
 to combat oppression. (Le Blanc, 2015, p. 177)

The pathetic transformation of this hero into a pariah can be summed up in a conversation between Trotsky and Kishkin who was an officer in charge:

The officer in charge, ashamed because he had served under Trotsky during the civil war, lamented: "Shoot me, Comrade Trotsky!" To which Trotsky responded: "Don't talk nonsense, Kishkin. No one is going to shoot you. Go ahead with your job". Yet the revolutionary chose not to cooperate with the arrest, forcing the GPU agents to break down the door and physically carry him away. (Le Blanc, 2015, p. 31)

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