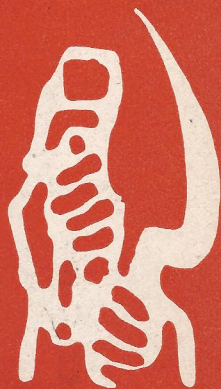


PROLETARIAN POLITICS

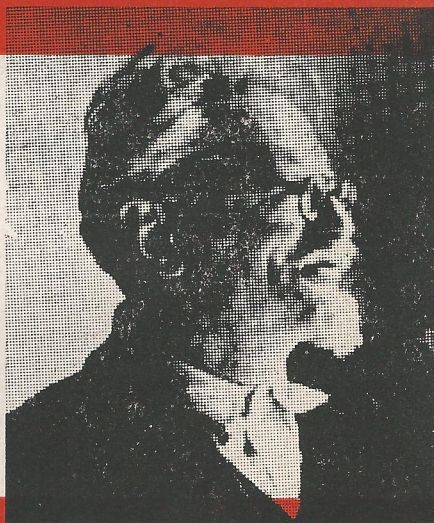
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Leon Trotsky : 1879 - 1979

★ On Afghanistan ★ Political situation in India

- ★ Leon Trotsky : a social scientist
- ★ Leon Trotsks's contribution to Marxism
- ★ Leon Trotsky : a study of his thought

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Editor Magan Desai

All correspondence to : Proletarian Politics.
Govindrao Dev's Wada, 2nd Floor,
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Editorial

On Afghanistan

The USSR military intervention into Afghanistan had come at a time when Hafizullah Amin's regimes position in the country was increasingly becoming precarious. The regime's writ did not run over a large territory of the country. 'Rebel' forces were becoming more and more active. The army as well as PDPA — People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan—were inflicted with acute crisis. Amin regime was on the brink of a total collapse.

The development of Iranian Revolution and imperialism's efforts to re-establish its position in this sensitive area and the possibility of collapse of Amin regime caused concern for Soviet bureaucracy.

The April 1978 coup which installed PDPA into power came as a political response to the repression of Doud regime. It was precisely a coup in the sense that overthrow of Doud regime was not precipitated by extensive mass mobilisations but by PDPA in alliance with military.

Afghanistan is predominantly an agrarian and a rural country. The PDPA, born only in 1965, had a very narrow social base, mainly in urban petty - bourgeois layers, the intelligentsia and army. Its ideology was Stalinist on the question of the character of the coming revolution and the tasks of that revolution.

The PDPA sought to fulfil the bourgeois-

democratic tasks of the revolution such as agrarian and educational reform in a typically bureaucratic manner instead of stimulating mass mobilisations and a developing mass movements and participation, PDPA relied on army-state apparatus and repression. This necessitated an ever-increasing need for reliance on Soviet army. It did not try to widen its social base or democratise its structure and functioning.

The reforms as well as the means and apparatus of their implementation were very much limited in character. Reforms as well as PDPA's methods to implement them induced the reactionary landlords, monarchical and religious opposition forces to unity. United reactionary opposition began to receive assistance from Pakistan and imperialism. Taraki and later Amin's governments increasing reliance on USSR and infighting and murderous cliquism in PDPA further facilitated the military intervention of USSR.

Soviet bureaucracy by its military intervention has inflicted a blow against the conservative and reactionary forces in Afghanistan. To that extent it has helped advance the class struggle not only in Afghanistan but in nearby Iran also.

Nevertheless the cynical and reactionary aspects of Soviet military intervention must not be lost sight of. The modus operandi of Soviet bureaucracy reveals its total criminal neglect or absence of concern for the reaction of the world working class and for effects of its action in disorientating the world proletariat. In the region of Middle East and

Iran, its intervention has objectively also assisted those reactionary forces which seek to dilute the anti-imperialist dynamic in the region unleashed by Iranian Revolution.

Soviet intervention once again reveals the inability of U. S. imperialism to respond directly by military means immediately. But it has helped U. S. imperialism to bolster up defense network in the area through Pakistan and other countries. It has also helped it try to change anti-war attitude of American people.

As for Chinese bureaucracy, its whole response through this crisis, of aligning totally with U. S. imperialism needs to be condemned.

In this context CL while recognising that Soviet military intervention has helped to advance class struggle in Afghanistan by thwarting the imperialist moves to set the clock back in Afghanistan, urges for greater and greater mass mobilizations and revolutionary democratically organised mass participations to defend the gains and deepen and extend them, of the post-1978 Afghan Revolution. This is the only way to advance the process of Permanent Revolution and to defeat imperialist forces.

The CL opposes any call for withdrawal of Soviet forces at the present conjuncture as it would assist only imperialist forces.

At the same time, CL denounces the methods used by the Soviet bureaucracy in Afghanistan. These methods only discredit socialism. The tanks of the Soviet bureaucracy cannot substitute for the

mobilization, action and independent organisation of the masses.

The CL denounces all imperialists operations and manoeuvres that aim to regain its foothold in this area such as creation of defense net work, arming of Pakistan and also boycott of olympic games, embargo on food supplise to USSR, etc.

THE POLITICAC SITUATION IN INDIA AND OUR TASKS

For more than a decade, the bourgeois parliamentary democracy in India was operating under increasing strains. This political instability of the bourgeois democracy flows, in the last analysis, from the steady erosion of material as well as ideological resources at the disposal of the Indian bourgeoisie. The recessionary economic crisis of late sixties, last Indo - Pak war, intensification of class struggles culminating into the railway workers' strike and mass struggles of Gujarat and Bihar, engulfment of Indian economy into world economic recession of 1974, etc. brought staggering bourgeois democracy to its knees resulting into the proclamation of emergency and the brutal suppression of the struggles of the masses.

March 1977 General Elections resulted into the defeat of Emergency regime of Smt. Indira Gandhi. But post - 1977 evolution of bourgeois - democratic polity in India was marked by the incessant struggle for political hegemony between industrial and agrarian capital in the ruling power

bloc that had come into being at the centre with the formation of Janta party. It also revealed the bourgeoisie as failure to evolve a viable political structure of a two - party system. It was marked by a growing erosion of authority of bourgeois governmental structure and political fragmentation of bourgeois political party frame work. This period also registered a growing incidence in the rise of class and mass struggles, declining rate of growth of industrial production and increase in intensity and extent of assertion of power by agrarian capital leading ultimately to a political crisis of bourgeois political leadership in India. Interregnum of 1977-1979 also presented a lack of independent proletarian class alternative on a national and mass scale. Results of January 1980 General Elections signify a change in the complexion of the Central Government. Once again, with Smt. Indira Gandhi at the helm of affairs with a massive mandate, Congress (I) has emerged as a cohesive political party of the Indian bourgeoisie mainly due to lack of a viable independent proletarian class alternative before the voters. Congress (I) has replaced a loosely knit coalition of bourgeois and petty - bourgeois, agrarian and industrial interests of Janta party. Once again, the industrial capital has acquired political hegemony at the centre thereby vindicating Marxist thesis about the dominant mode of production. In so far as agrarian capital had succeeded in articulating its interests politically in the form of a party - Lok Dal - its challenge has been successfully contained by the industrial bourgeoisie. For the moment, its independent political existence at the centre has

been routed by 1980 General Elections. These elections have done away with the power bloc at the centre.

Indian bourgeoisie once again could succeed in establishing its political rule at the centre in the absence of a direct challenge to its rule from the working class due to class collaborationist politics pursued by Left parties. For the moment, bourgeoisie has succeeded in resolving its crisis of political leadership. In a fast deteriorating economic situation virtually bordering on crisis, bourgeoisie has been able to channelise the expectations of the masses once again towards a stable and strong central government. Bourgeoisie's option for a strong and stable government which is a prime requirement for them for expansion of home market in the current conjuncture, in such a vast and diverse country as India with a federal set up, a requirement rendered acute by Janta regime's failure to provide one - coincided with the voters' desperate hopes for improvement in their standard of living as reflected in the growing instability of voting patterns.

1980 General Elections revealed complete bankruptcy of the policy of various Left parties to fight authoritarianism. Their policy especially of CPI (M) since last July when it began to support Lok Dal - of supporting one or the other wing of exploiters to fight authoritarianism, instead of developing independent mass mobilizations democratically structured and under the leadership of the proletariat helped Smt. Indira Gandhi - their main target as authoritarian - to emerge stronger and to capture

centre. As stressed by the Election Manifesto of CL, authoritarianism stems from the backward capitalist social system prevalent in India. As pointed out by CL in its various resolutions and statements during 1977 - 79, Janta regime also was repressive. CL had particularly stressed the inherent socio - economic compulsions which led Janata - Lok Dal regime to adopt repressive postures. CL has consistently pointed out that it is not correct to associate authoritarianism with any particular individuals, groups or parties. CL has also often stressed how authoritarianism can be combated by proletarian means and methods of struggles around the central axis of independent proletarian politics. CL stresses the continuing need for independent proletarian politics in the current political situation in India.

Left parties with their projection of a multi-class bloc called Left and Democratic Front failed to provide an all India alternative to bourgeoisie's political alternative. They therefore could not expand their base and influence outside their traditional regional and electoral strongholds. Neither CP emerged as a national party. Their unity efforts certainly reflect the desire for unity of the working class movement. But their politics continue to be governed by political class collaboration.

Neither social nor political revolution has taken place in India in January 1980 Elections. Smt. Indira Gandhi's government is a bourgeois government meant to run a capitalist state apparatus and to stabilise and consolidate capitalist economy in India when Indian economy is afflicted with many

structural ills in the midst of inflationary and recessionary global capitalist economy.

Smt. Indira Gandhi has come to wield political power when the political and economic compulsions which impelled her to install emergency regime in June 1975 have become more manifest.

Already the Indian economy is being ravaged by continuously rising prices of raw materials and essential commodities. The regime runs with a budgetary deficit of nearly Rs. 3,000 crores. The economy registered a negative rate of industrial growth. The growth of investment in the private sector has tended to slow down. Exports have dwindled in the face of stiff competition as well as inflationary and recessionary trends of global capitalist economy. With a declining purchasing power of the masses in rampant inflation, a creeping apprehension of recession is overcoming thinking of economists and policymakers. The solution of crisis of infra structure as manifested in shortages of power, coal, transportation facilities, etc. is nowhere near sight.

In these circumstances and in the face of feverish quality of hopes of votes as expressed in their readiness to condemn Janata within months of its coming to power, very little room for manoeuvre is left with a government armed with the most draconian measures to strike effectively against the entrenched interests to provide even a modicum of relief to the people. Popular disillusionment is thus bound to set in. To curb its militant manifestation, authoritarianism will be necessary.

Meanwhile, clear indications of what the bourgeoisie expects from Smt. Gandhi are available in speeches and reactions of leading industrialists and their organisations.

Bourgeoisie is seeking a total moratorium on strikes. Bonus as well as any increase in wages is sought to be linked with productivity. It is demanding and pressing for an early reconsideration and reorientation of entire labour policy. Even draft of such policy have been submitted and printed in the newspapers. Most leaders have waxed eloquent over her regaining power. They have expressed their confidence in her and pledged her their support in her efforts to revive the sagging capitalist economy. They think that prospects for a vigorous industrial growth and a marked improvement in investment climate have brightened. They rely on her pragmatism. They are hopeful that she will provide sizeable incentives for savings and investment.

Smt. Indira Gandhi is known for her firmness against militant class actions of the workingclass. In view of the economic situation, to ensure continuity of production, it is very likely that she will resort to strong measures and make serious inroads on trade union rights of the workers. Already demands for outlawing go slows and gheraos and permitting lock-outs and lay-offs are being aired in interested quarters. In carrying on their normal trade union activities and to protect their democratic rights workers are likely to come to a face to face confrontation with the regime. It is necessary to

prepare them for such struggles. It is necessary to oppose all efforts to link bonus or wage increases with productivity. It is essential to oppose all measures to increase valorisation by intensification or rationalisation of labour. It is necessary to develop struggles to oppose the move of ban or moratorium on strikes. It is necessary to close ranks and form an united front of all working class parties, groups and individuals to fight on all these issues. It is necessary to oppose any move for wage freeze in any form.

CL calls upon all the Left parties to forge a fighting united front to fight on all these issues and to resist the imminent attack of bourgeoisie on the working class movement in India.

Various groups and organisations to protect democratic rights and civil liberties are coming into being all over India. CL proposes that an United Front of all these groups and organisation be forged to fight unitedly against any type of violation of these rights and liberties.

At the present moment, the threat of dissolution of duly elected state assemblies and governments non-congress (I) parties has become very imminent. The matter has not stopped there. Youth Congress (I) leaders have even threatened to topple the West Bengal Government, specifically. This talk of toppling West Bengal Government led by CPI (M) signifies a dangerous portent for future especially because CPI (M) has not only secured the majority of the parliamentary seats in 1980 General Elections but has also increased considerably its percentage of votes in these elections. This is

a dangerous portent because in case of West Bengal even Smt. Indira Gandhi's chosen standard of non-Congress (I) parties having forfeited confidence of the people does not apply to the case of West Bengal. Therefore, at the present moment it is very likely that the attack on democratic rights will assume the sinister form of forcible ouster of such State Governments. While CL has never placed any political confidence in or extended its support to such State Governments as they are capitalist governments manning a capitalist State, CL opposes any such move for dissolution or toppling or ouster and urges all left parties and civil liberties groups and mass and class organisations to initiate a mass movement to oppose such sinister moves.

CL opposes and condemns the preventive detention ordinance and any move to enact such draconian measures.

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Leon Trotsky as a Social Scientist.

By : Sharad Jhaveri

Prefatory Remarks :-

In his materialist interpretation of history, Marx discovered the laws of motion of society in general and the laws of motion of capitalist society in particular. Thereby Marx set a distinct tradition in sociological thought. Marx was a classical social scientist par excellent.

But Marx did not study society in a static condition. He did not approach society as it is. He analysed social relations and social structure as they had evolved out of past social relations and as they were heading towards future social relations. In brief, Marx's basic framework of sociological analysis was dynamic, macrosociological and dialectical.

Marx showed that in all the class societies, social relations between human beings were not and could not be transparent. This opaque character of social relations increased in extent and intensity with the development and consolidation of capitalist mode of production. Even though these social relations were created by men themselves in the course of their active interaction with nature through production, men were not conscious of these relations. Hence these social relations appearing as alien forces came to dominate men.

Marx, however, on the basis of his thorough study of the laws of motion of capitalist mode of production arrived at the conclusion that with capitalism, humanity had entered a phase in its evolution wherein it had now become possible, indeed imperative, to render social evolution a conscious process and to harness it for consciously determined social priorities, aims and purposes. Marx conceived socialist revolution and consequent social reorganisation and reconstruction on a conscious basis as the instrumentality to achieve this end.

Hence, in Marx, the aim of a socialist revolution is to usher in a socialist-classless society whose essence—as distinguished from all earlier social formations—is that in it human beings are cognitively conscious of social relations and proceed to replace religion, mysticism, various ideologies, inequalities, commodity production and resultant commodity fetishism and all conceivable symbolical or mythical formulations in which men have hitherto clothed their unconscious grasp or intuitions of their social relations, by a consciously and purposively planned and created network of genuinely human social relations.

In Marx, therefore, a genuine sociological orientation, involves certain basic postulates. Society can be changed. Social relations can be transformed by men themselves. But not at will or whims of the stray individuals, not by so-called heroes of history or by miracles. It can be changed by great mass of people in motion who are impelled by their place in the process of production fundamen-

tally to undertake the venture of changing society. Society can be changed by human beings in accordance with laws of motion which govern the origin, rise, growth and decline of such society. Such laws are knowable and can be defined with reasonable precision. Those who want to change the society must know these laws and must be in a position to make good use of them in their efforts to transform the social structure. Hence any conscious activity aimed at organising social relations consciously on a socialist basis requires a thorough knowledge of laws of motion of society and social change. Hence a socialist revolutionary has to be a social scientist - a revolutionary Marxist social scientist. He needs to have a scientific sociological orientation for making a socialist revolution. This is how a symbiosis on a subjective level or revolutionary theory with revolutionary praxis is achieved in Marx.

While stress on revolutionary activism as one of the main features of Marxism is often to be found in discussions on or about Marxism, little attention has been paid to sociological evaluation of revolutionary Marxist leaders as social scientists.

Marxism, in fact, gave rise to a galaxy of brilliant revolutionary sociologists who were not merely revolutionaries (aspect which is very well known) but also serious students of society which they inhabited and wanted to change. (aspect which is not much dwelt upon). Beginning with Marx himself (consider at least his notes on Ancient society or Asiatic Mode of production, etc;), Engels (his

origin of Family, etc.) Plekhanov (his studies in Russia's social history) Lenin, Trotsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Bukharin, Preobrazensky, Rakovsky, Gramsci and others were classical sociologists of a very high calibre. All of them have contributed to and enriched our understanding of the societies which they studied and which they sought to change, as revolutionary social scientists. They sought to imbibe the basic Marxist principle of the union of Theory and Practice.

But none has done or achieved so much in 20th century as Leon Trotsky in enriching revolutionary dynamic traditions in Marxist thought. And none has suffered so much social ostracism as he or his thought consequently even partial rehabilitation of some strands in his many-sided contributions ranging over four decades - which is what this paper proposes to endeavor - would amount to a rediscovery import long encrusted and encumbered in and by a debris of distortions, misinterpretations and calculated misunderstandings of real sociological method of marxism.

Leon Trotsky is mostly known as a man of action. He was the leader of 1905 - Russian Revolution. He was the co-leader with Lenin of October Revolution in 1917. He was the founder of Red Army. He was the leader of Left opposition he was the recognised founder and leader of Small Fourth International which kept alive in the dark-period of global reaction the revolutionary traditions of Marxism. It is often argued in many quarters that he was the best when in action.

When divorced from social action, he was at his weakest.

Even a cursory perusal of Trotsky's thought would at once show that this argument cannot stand any scrutiny at all. Trotsky produced some of his masterpieces when he was far removed from even any possibility of genuine action. His monumental History of Russian Revolution was written during his third exile. It is rightly regarded as one of the classics of historiography of this century. His studies of a state and political institutions and class interrelations and role of ideology in social conflicts of a decaying bourgeois society concentrated in his studies of and on Fascism were written when gloom of darkest reaction was engulfing Europe. His pioneer efforts to understand and explain the phenomenon of transitional period in a post-capitalist society in a backward isolated country - especially the enigmatic problem of Stalinism and social physiognomy of Soviet bureaucracy - were made in a detached objectivity when Stalinism had silenced the rational insights of Marxism over the globe. But there is no need to extend this list and infinitum.

Leon Trotsky was not merely the master of Russian Literature, Literary Criticism and art, a sympathetic but Marxist connoisseur of Russian and Western culture. He was not merely at home in the art of socio-psychological portraiture of revolutionary personalities he had met. He was also a very keen student of Russia's social history and its social development. He was painstaking and meticulously scrupulous in research as is evident

from his amazing mastery over social histories of such diverse societies as France or Germany or China.

This paper will be devoted to a very brief consideration of his thought in so far as has contributed to our understanding of society in general, change in general and backward underdeveloped societies and nodalities of changes there in particular. This paper will try to pinpoint in brief the peculiarities of heuristic sociological device he developed in the form of his Theory of Permanent Revolution in order to understand the complex phenomenon of backwardness and the dynamic inherent in it for revolutionary development of a backward society. In the process, it is also, proposed to bring into sharp focus some of the salient methodological aspects involved in his paradigm which distinguish his thought from that of Lenin and others. His approach to problems of a transitional post-capitalist society and especially sociology of a bureaucracy in such a society will be briefly alluded to in so far as it serves to illustrate his method of studying backward societies.

Basic texture of Trotsky's Thought

Leon Trotsky was a Marxist. As a Marxist, therefore, all the paraphernalia of Marxist Weltanschauung, were part and parcel of his thought also. But he was not an economic determinist. He was not a mechanical Marxist. As rightly stressed by Denise Avenas in Trotsky's Marxism(I), there is no separation of economics and politics in Trotsky's thought. The economic analysis of Russian social

formation in Trotsky's early studies is directly political presenting the essential factor as being the state. Nevertheless, Trotsky was not a thorough voluntarist. He knew and accepted the Marxist thesis that conscious voluntary social actions of human beings were overall governed by the state of economy and had field day for play only within objective limits set by the development of productive forces. There was a judicious combination or blending of determinism and voluntarism in Trotsky's thought which enabled him to make a somewhat paradoxical prediction that although it was possible, indeed likely, that working class would conquer power in relatively backward countries before it would do so in the most advanced ones it was not possible to build socialism successfully in those relatively backward countries alone. (2) Just as there is no relapse into economic determinism in the later part of this prediction, so also there is no retreat into mere voluntarism in earlier part of this prediction.

"Marxism", wrote Trotsky in "Results and Prospects," is above all a method of analysis - not analysis of texts, but analysis of social relations." (3) Strongly recommending Karl Kautsky's argument that Marxism was a method of investigation, Trotsky charged Russian Marxists with replacing independent analysis of social relations by deductions from texts, selected to serve every occasion in life. (4) Trotsky, therefore, had a strongly marked aversion for references to texts. He sought to approach Russian Society and its evolution in the spirit of Marx's method rather than its conclusions. This

would lead him to evolve a distinct orientation which set him apart from all his contemporaries including Lenin.

We will now proceed to draw specific contours of some of the methodological aspects involved in Trotsky's approach which distinguish him from all of his contemporary Marxists.

Some aspects of Trotsky's method

Trotsky views Russian Society and the state not in isolation from the rest of the world. While all the Marxists adopted the framework laid down by Marx for the capitalist countries of his own time, Trotsky goes further. He considers Russia's socio-economic formation not merely in its internal articulation but also as it has been affected primarily by capitalist development of advanced European countries. In Trotsky's analysis, penetration of imperialist capital in Russian economy generates some peculiarities of capitalist development in Russia. Therefore certain normal stages of development capitalism described by Marx in his studies of European modes will and were either skipped over or compressed in capitalist development of Russia's social history would have a vital bearing on the question of class correlation and mechanism of forces in the imminent social upheaval Russia was facing at the time of the advent of 20th century.

Trotsky refused to view the socio-economic development of Russia as a nationally organic whole. The very backwardness of Russia led him to grasp the social reality of Russia as part of the global economy. Hence right from his earliest writings, an internationalist approach is to be invariably found

in Trotsky. While all the contemporary Marxists including Lenin were engaged in discussions about whether Russia will adopt the same path of capitalist development or not and how far it has already advanced along that path on the basis of internal nationally organic study of backward Russian society, Trotsky breaks with the classical Marxist view by demonstrating that the specific features produced by interaction of advanced West with backward East required a radical re-evaluation both of the concept of economic determinism and the perspectives for revolutionary change deriving from it. Hence instead of basing himself on Marx's exposition of the genesis of the capitalist mode of production and studying Russia's socio-economic development as an organic national development, Trotsky proceeded to consider the restraints imposed by the penetration of imperialist capital and backward economic structure of Russia on its development along capitalist path. Hence Trotsky is more concerned with economic and political pressure of the western countries which impelled feudal Russia to advance by leaps directly adopting the most advanced techniques so as not to succumb to the pressure of the surrounding advanced capitalist countries. Trotsky shows how the organic evolution of Russia was extremely slow and how normality of its social development was being short-circuited by the intercession of advanced imperialist capital. Thus, where Lenin stressed the factors for organic development, Trotsky emphasized the effects of the global development of the capitalist mode of production on Russia. (5).

This does not mean, of course, that one should not undertake an intrinsic study of growth of capitalist relations in any particular backward country strictly keeping in view its internal class relations of forces. No, in order to study how far capitalist mode of production has advanced in a backward country, this procedure is an initial first step. For example, to determine the extent of capitalist penetration of Indian agriculture during last three decades, it is necessary to make an investigation of land reform and other agrarian measures on the basis of current internal class co-relation of forces and current a conjuncture of agrarian question and class struggle. But to consider the question of strategy, say, whether complete and genuine transformation of Indian agriculture on capitalist lines, is possible or not within the capitalist framework, this initial investigation has to be supplemented by a thorough investigation of developing capitalist mode of production in India in its international context.

Behind Trotsky's insistence to study a backward society in the context of world economy, underlay his concept of world economy and the class struggle as a totally subject to the law of uneven and combined development. Behind it lay his dialectical understanding of the reality of imperialism to-day, Imperialism generated backwardness and it could not be overcome through a mere repetition of 19th century West while the stranglehold of imperialism over the economy of a backward country continued imperialist encroachment on backward underdeveloped society produced

a peculiar configuration of class correlation of forces making it possible for the proletariat of that society to assume leadership of the revolutionary process of overcoming that backwardness. Up to this stage of analysis both Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg (6) were in agreement with Trotsky. But Trotsky goes further and argues that assumption of leadership by the proletariat is not for reconstructing social relations on capitalist basis. By its very position in the revolutionary process and in capitalism the midst of reality of imperialism – on decline – the proletariat will be compelled to evolve a post-capitalist transitional framework for overcoming backwardness.

Another element pertaining to method of Trotsky is his refusal to consider Russian Social formation in abstract. He does not treat backward Russian Society abstractly. He does not put it on a par with English or French Society prior to or on the eve of advent of capitalist mode of capitalist evolution of these countries to the case of Russia. In other words, he refuses to confuse the method of Marx which Marx applied to England and France with the conclusions reached by Marx with regard to these countries (7). Since truth is concrete, he takes Russian Society as it is, as he finds it, as concrete reality, evolving in concrete national and more especially international circumstances. Therefore he does not raise questions about capitalism in general, capitalism in abstraction, capitalist mode of production as developed as a theoretical model in Marx's first volume of capital. Instead implicit in him are the assumptions about capitalism as it is

developing in Russia of his time, bourgeois system of production as it is operating in the midst of global domination by capitalism in the form of imperialism, etc.; Trotsky therefore does not consider the question whether bourgeoisie per se as a social class is progressive or not but Russian bourgeoisie at a particular stage of Russia's history and of world capitalist economy is progressive or not. Its capacity to overcome backwardness of Russia is similarly predicated upon concrete case of Russian social formation not capitalist socioeconomic formation in general.

These aspects of Trotsky's method are not only evident in his Theory of Permanent Revolution but also in his analysis of development of social relations in a post-capitalist transitional society of Soviet Russia – especially the phenomenon of Stalinism and Soviet Bureaucracy. While almost all the critics of Trotsky's analysis of Stalinism and Soviet bureaucracy, whether and others or Charles Bettelheim (8) or Paul Sweezy and others make their studies on the basis of internal articulation of Soviet social structure (which in any case Trotsky also does in his *The Revolution Betrayed*), ignoring the global environ of Soviet Russia, Trotsky views post-capitalist society of Soviet Russia and developments therein from the viewpoint of world reality (9). Similarly, while proclaiming that socialism has triumphed in Soviet Russia, Stalinist school also tears as under the immersion of Soviet social reality in world economy.

What, then, are the essential elements of Trotsky's method of social research? Trotsky would

make the most sophisticated analysis of the national specificity of the social structure, and evolve a model of class correlation of forces based on such analysis. Simultaneously, he would relate it to that country's place within the totality of the world capitalist system.

Trotsky enriched Marxism during his successive encounters with the problems and crisis of our epoch. 1905 "Dress Rehearsal" led him to evolve the Theory of Permanent Revolution. It had also the effect of a clearer perception of process of self-organisation of masses when in motion. In 1917 it was to lead to a coherent conception of dialectical relationship between the party as the Vanguard of the class, the Soviet as the form of self-organisation of the class in motion and the class itself. 1917 October Revolution led him to perceive his errors in earlier estimate of Lenin's principles of party organisation, collapse of Second International and founding of the Third led him through various resolutions, thesis and manifestos of the Third International to consider problems of strategy and tactics of the world revolution in a different context process of bureaucratic degeneration of Soviet Russia urged him to grasp theoretically this highly enigmatic and contradictory phenomenon. Second Chinese Revolution of 1925 - 1927 led him to generalise the principles of The Theory of Permanent Revolution as applicable to all backward countries.

At each stage of his successive encounters with reality, Trotsky's thought becomes more and more complex, more refined, more integrated and all-

sided and more organic. It is therefore not correct to treat various aspects of his thought as having conjunctural significance only. The basic ingredients which Trotsky acquired as early as 1905 - such as nature and effects of imperialism, the character of of this epoch as one of Wars and revolutions, the nature of backwardness, the character of world economy and world revolutionary process, etc; - color all his writings.

We shall now proceed to consider some of his contributions to Marxism which have a crucial radical sociological thrust.

Some key sociological elements in Trotsky's thought :

The Theory of Permanent Revolution is, of course, the most original contribution of Trotsky's sociological and revolutionary orientation. (10). Not only in its essentials does it disprove the charge that Trotsky was Eurocentric (11). It also shows how Marx's method can be boldly and dialectically applied to study one of the most pervasive social facts of capitalism - backwardness and underdevelopment.

Marx wrote in preface to capital that "the country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future." Marxists after Marx took this dictum literally and looked at the least advanced countries through the mirror of the most advanced ones. Now they forgot two points. First of all, Marx himself had protested vigorously against the attempt to *"metamorphose my historical sketch of the

genesis of capitalism in Western Europe into an historico-philosophic theory of the general path every people is fated to tread....in order that it may ultimately arrive at the form of economy which ensures, together with the greatest expansion of the productive powers of social labor, the most complete development of man" (12). Second, they forgot the advent of imperialism - the beginning of the capitalist mode of production's decline.

As we know, Trotsky avoided both these mistakes in his Theory of Permanent Revolution. He refused to accept that in the changed environ of imperialism, Marx's model of the genesis of capitalism in Western Europe was valid for all the backward countries. And he drew two conclusions from this initial position. First that the Victory of the Russian Revolution was possible only through the establishment of a dictatorship of the proletariat, supported by the peasantry second, that the construction of a classless society, a complete socialist society, in this backward country was not possible.

Trotsky, therefore, concentrates his attention not on aspects of Russian society which it had in common with the advanced west but on its peculiarities and considers their effects on the formation of peculiar correlation of class forces. The concept of backwardness of Russian society, therefore, constitutes his point of departure.

Trotsky develops a variable sociology of backwardness and checks whether there is any nexus between backwardness and a revolutionary non-capitalist development of Russia or not. It is quite

instructive to see how Trotsky approaches the problem of backwardness as a dialectical social scientist (13). For him, it is not an abstract thing. It is not a static condition. Its origin is historical. Therefore it is concretely manifested. It makes for skipping of stages or their compression or telescoping. This leads to uneven and combined development of society. In his History of Russian Revolution he formulates it as a law and demonstrates how this law is a mode of his understanding reality dialectically (14). This aspect in Trotsky's thought reminds us of Karl Mannheim's famous phrase "contemporaneity of Non-contemporaneons."

But it is only in Trotsky that we find an intelligible sociological explanation of this phenomenon observable in very backward country. In Trotsky, historical backwardness of an underdeveloped society opens for it a revolutionary non-capitalist path of overcoming that backwardness through industrialisation and modernisation but places limitations, objective and subjective, on its isolated efforts to overcome that backwardness completely. It is my contention that whole range of bourgeois academic theory about "third world" countries and their modernization have not been able to grapple with these interrelated aspects of backwardness. Consequently, they are unable to rise, let alone provide answers to such crucial questions as these: What is the historical origin of this backwardness? How far imperialist penetration of backward society is responsible for perpetuation and backwardness of such a society? Can backwardness be completely overcome and society

modernised fully without breaking with the root sources which generate perennially this backwardness? etc; . .

According to Trotsky, historical backwardness does not signify a simple reproduction of the development of advanced countries with merely a delay of one or two centuries. It engenders an entirely new "combined" social formation in which the latest conquests of capitalist technique and structure root themselves into relations of feudal and prefeudal barbarism, transforming and subjecting them and creating a peculiar interrelationship of classes.

But this is not confined to the sphere of material production only. It also happens in the sphere of ideas and culture also. Trotsky says that precisely because of her historical tardiness Russia turned out to be the only European country where Marxism as a doctrine and the Social Democracy as a party attained powerful development even before the bourgeois revolution. For the very same reason, the problem of the correlation between the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism was submitted to the most profound theoretical analysis precisely in Russia.

It is not proposed here to provide an in-depth study of intricacies of Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution. Hence also this is not the place to inquire into the validity of certain conceptions and criticisms of his theory, nor to tear asunder the fabric of lies and distortions concocted by Stalinism around this theory.

But it is pertinent to stress that Trotsky never

underestimated revolutionary potentialities of the peasantry for a bourgeois-democratic revolution, that his estimation and sociological characterization of peasantry as a class stood on all fours with the classical Marxist sociological evaluation of peasantry, that he never argued for skipping of stages but refused to transpose the necessary logical distinction between a bourgeois-democratic and socialist stage of the revolution into a simple chronological succession within the real historical process, that he never said that the bourgeoisie of a backward country would never initiate the process of modernisation, though he did conclude that it would never be able to fully and genuinely complete the tasks of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, that he never made the validity of the theory of Permanent Revolution predicated upon the proletariat capturing power in a backward country but he merely observed that where the proletariat succeeded in conquering political hegemony over the peasantry process, then the revolution could be victorious and proceed in a socialist direction, etc;.

After the formulation of Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution, the most outstanding sociological achievement of Trotsky is his eminently dialectical explanation of one of the most confusing and contradictory phenomena of the 20th century-Stalinism, Soviet bureaucracy and the transitional society.

Trotsky here was a pioneer who still remains unexcelled. He laid sure and solid foundations of a sociology of transition and transitional society

and bureaucracy of such a socio-economic formation. Though he was mistaken in his short-term predictions about such society and bureaucracy, his perspectives in their broad contours reveal amazing insights.

Trotsky continues the tradition established by Marx in his Critique of Gotha programme of the need of postulating a transitional society between capitalism and communism.

But he applies it concretely to the case of post-capitalist society of a backward country. Here was a social formation with a meagre productive base that too exhausted by the war and civil war, a society with a massive dislocation of social classes as an aftermath of a successful revolution, but of reconstruct society on a rational planned and socialist basis. Here was a social formation in motion. Where proletariat confirming his own earlier prediction had assumed leadership of the revolutionary process to overcome backwardness but could not retain it politically because of its own backwardness in literacy, culture, administrative experience, depletion in number, exhaustion etc;. On the international scale, proletariat failed to unleash a similar process of revolutionary metamorphosis. Imperialism was allowed to continue having its adverse effects on Soviet Russia especially economically and militarily.

It is in this comprehensive background only very briefly delineated above that Trotsky develops his theory of rise of Soviet bureaucracy and Stalinism. It is true that some reticence is to be found

in Trotsky in accounting for the subjective factors which facilitated the political ascendance of Soviet bureaucracy. This particularly relates to Bolshevik ban on other left parties and later on factions within the party. But there is evidence of rethinking on this subject in last years of his life.

In any case, unlike his critics and other schools of thought – especially that of Max Weber – Trotsky makes a consciously objective attempt to evolve a most comprehensive sociological analysis of Soviet bureaucracy from a revolutionary Marxist point of view. Since bureaucracy is not merely a rationality, Trotsky, does not view Soviet bureaucracy, as done by school of Max Weber, as merely a continuation or extension of capitalist rationality. He locates discontinuity in the midst of continuity. He shows how Soviet bureaucracy embodies and will continue to absorb more and more irrationality once the productive forces in Soviet social formation begin to resume their onward march. Where sociologists view bureaucracy as a non-person, impersonally, as an apparatus, as a set of rules and regulations and as red tape, Trotsky attempts to fathom the facade and expose the face of bureaucracy, to reveal the men behind bureaucracy. He provides a concrete socio-physiognomy of Soviet bureaucracy, stresses its dual role, defines. With precision the objective area of its operation, points out its shut-in-character as a caste and points the way for its removal.

While bourgeois sociology and many Marxist social scientists also regard bureaucratic phenomenon as a necessary and inevitable evil, only in Trotsky's sociological orientation, one will find elements of a

perspective to curb this evil from the very advent of a transitional society. The benefit of hindsight of course, now enables us to see why rise of bureaucracy and Stalinism were not objectively also inevitable. His followers assembled in Fourth International founded by him in 1938 have done considerable research in this field whose results one having an interest in this branch of sociological endeavor has to come to terms.

It seems paradoxical to observe Trotsky, viewing Soviet bureaucracy not merely impersonally but as a living human group, at the same time not viewing and analysing Stalin personally. In Trotsky, Stalin emerges as the most complete personification of the needs, ambitions, traits, behavior and social character of politically inarticulate and amorphous bureaucracy. All subjective aspects of Stalin as a personality are sought to be evaluated sociologically in this background. So there is no question of cult of personality.

In any case, Trotsky's attempt to grapple with the phenomenon of Soviet bureaucracy and Stalinism as social phenomena has an important sociological message to give. You cannot explain such gigantic events affecting vast multitudes of human beings like purges, terrors, expulsions, forced collectivization, strangulation of revolutions, bureaucratic degeneration of a revolutionary party, usurption of political powers of the proletariat, etc; in terms of individual psychology. True, worst features of Stalin period of bureaucratic rule have disappeared alongwith Stalin and to that extent some traits of Stalin as a personality have relevance in a synthetic

account of this period (and Trotsky prefers to them at many places in his writings especially dealing with faction fights in Soviet CP and in his incomplete biography of Stalin), the bureaucratic usurption of political power and proletariat's consequent deprivation of it remains. Hence, since bureaucracy is a social phenomenon arising out of division of labor into manual and intellectual labor—a division exacerbated by growth of capitalist mode of production—a division whose remnants will influence to a greater or lesser extent the evolution of state and society in the transitional period, it can be explained only in sociological terms. Even socio-psychological terms—approach cannot account for, in adequate terms, the rise and consolidation of bureaucracies in other transitional societies that have come into being after October 1917. Here the immense value of Trotsky's analysis becomes crystal clear. Of course, Trotsky, builds his analysis on the basis of Marx (his writings on Paris commune and Gotha programme) and Lenin (his State and Revolution) but he goes further than both because only he was given to witness the phenomenon of bureaucracy assuming such gigantic and all enveloping monstrous forms. And once again, unlike all sociologists whether of Marxist political persuasion or otherwise, he develops his orientation as a political response to the need of doing away with it. Hence his analysis is activist in character and therefore open-ended. He does not wash off the hands. He is not a fatalist. The fate of bureaucracy is ultimately linked with the dynamics of class struggles both on a national and international-more on

an international-scale—because revolution succeeded in an isolated country. The bureaucracy is seen as an unforeseen variant of an unsettled international Civil War or class struggle between bourgeoisie and the World proletariat—between the world bourgeoisie and Soviet proletariat as the most advanced contingent of World proletariat. Hence it is not correct to charge him with ignoring class struggle, as for example is done by Charles Bettelheim in his book “Class Struggle in the U. S. S. R.” (1977). When explaining the rise of Soviet bureaucracy, Soviet bureaucracy is not studied in isolation from the living national and international class struggle context. It is not studied also as an entity to be compared with some abstract sociological model of bureaucracy conceived in academic antichambers of some university sociology departments. The origin, rise, and growth of bureaucracy in Soviet Russia are studied in terms of reality once again concrete Soviet reality—of class struggles of that period. How spurious is this charge of Trotsky ignoring living class struggles and basing himself only on nationalization of means of production and monopoly of foreign trade only in his analysis of Soviet Russia is evident from the fact that those like Bettelheim or Cliff who level such a charge completely ignore the logic of and *raison de tre* behind Left Opposition and Trotsky’s struggles against bureaucracy and Stalin. Why did Trotsky struggle against bureaucracy and Stalin? Why did Trotsky ever struggle against bureaucracy? Why did he never evolve a complete range of alternative policies and solutions to that of Stalin—if not to turn the tide of class

struggle for revival of proletarian political activity to curb the rising tide of bureaucracy? Critics ignore this aspect and activity of Trotsky’s thought of that period. The programme of the Left opposition was based upon a quicker rate of industrialization, at the expense of kulaks and NEP-men with optimum rate of industrialization so as to benefit the workers and upon voluntary collectivization of that part of agriculture which could be mechanised and run by the poor peasants; critics do not compare social basis of this programme with that of programme of Bukharin and that of Stalin. Like Lenin, Trotsky wanted just a breathing space till the next break through of the world revolution occurred. During the interregnum policy to curb bureaucracy would be that which would significantly increase the objective weight, average class consciousness and level of political activity of the Soviet working class. If, during the interval, this did not happen, the victory of Soviet bureaucracy and the defeat of word revolution were very much likely to occur. Since the Soviet proletariat at the moment was politically passive, the medium of the party was decisive to reverse the trend. Hence he concentrated on inner party faction fight for almost a decade.

Now, one may agree or disagree with Trotsky on these questions. With the benefit of hindsight one may even conclude that Trotsky’s policy on the question of fighting bureaucratization was self-defeating. But one cannot deny that he was basing himself on living class struggles as they were being waged both nationally as well as internationally.

The last point on which this paper proposes to dwell succinctly is rarely if never touched upon in any considerations on Trotsky as a Marxist thinker. It relates to his sociology of art and culture. Trotsky was a sociological savant of art and culture of his time. And his scholarship in these fields was of an objective, appreciative and profoundly aesthetic and human character. In his 1935 Diary in Exile he wrote that "politics and literature constitute in essence the content of my personal life".

"Art and politics in our Epoch" a letter written to Partisan Review in 1938 June 18, and Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art published in Autumn of 1938 in Partisan Review (though signed by Diego Rivera and Andra Breton clearly bear the imprint of Trotsky) provide a quintessence of his views on art and culture. He was against 'leading' or commanding art. He recognised that artistic creation has its own laws. In his view, art is the most complex part of culture. It was very much affected by the decline decay and crisis of bourgeois society and culture. But art by itself could not provide the solution. It would rot along with the society. Thus the character of our epoch constitutes for Trotsky a point of departure to link art with the revolution. He determines the function of art in our epoch by its relation to the revolution. In his view art, culture and politics required a new perspective. Trotsky stresses the hostile character of conditions under which creative activity takes place.

Leon Trotsky was against all types of regimentation of intellectual or cultural activity. State

should not prescribe themes of art. He fervently believed that the supreme task of art in our epoch was to take part actively and consciously in the preparation of the revolution.

Trotsky as a Marxist viewed art and culture as phenomena of super structure. But he was not an economic determinist here also. On the contrary, he gave complete scope for autonomous play of art and culture. He separated the elements of permanence in art and culture from the transient ones and linked them with permanence of productive forces of humanity. Thus he explains the dialectical relationship between human culture and class culture.

It is not possible, nor it is pretended to do full justice to Trotsky's subtle thought in these fields within the short span of this paper. A veritable sociological treatise can be written on it. The aim here was merely to highlight the unique achievement of Trotsky's sociological orientation, because of all Marxist aestheticians of his time, Mehring and Plekhanov, and later, Lukacs, Hauser, Caudwell and others, Trotsky, alone could succeed in achieving integration of purely aesthetic approach with Marxist sociological approach without doing injustice to or disfiguring either.

CONCLUSION :

This paper sought to elicit some of the most enduring sociological insights of Trotsky's orientation as a social scientist. The idea intended to be conveyed is that Trotsky represents a distinct tradition, original in many respects, but pre-eminently

so in his Theory of Permanent Revolution, in Marxist social science. The academic social science, at least in backward countries, has so far chosen to avoid coming to terms with him but at their own peril. Because, thereby, they are only depriving themselves of some of the excellent and historically verified and tested tools of analysis and research evolved by Trotsky in their efforts to understand social reality of backward countries and mechanism of change thereof.

The time for reckoning with Trotsky was never more propitious than now when vast multitude of human beings suffering from backwardness are in ferment for overcoming it.

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- (8) Charles Bettelheim : Class Struggle in the U.S. S.R- 1977

- (9) Ernest Mandel : Revolutionary Marxism To-day NLB 1979
- (10) This author devotes detailed attention in his booklet on Permanent Revolution.
- (11) Baruch : Ibid
- (12) Quoted in Geras. Ibid : P. 84
also K. Marx and F. Engels :
Selected correspondence P. 379
- (13) Apart from the classic first Chapter of his History of Russian Revolution, most succinct formulation is to be found in Writings of Leon Trotsky 1938-39 1st Edition : 1969; P, 110.
- (14) Baruch fails to understand this.

Book Review

**TROTSKY
A STUDY IN THE DYNAMIC OF
HIS THOUGHT**

By : Ernest Mandel New Left Books 1979.

—By : **Sharad Zhaveri**

Leon Trotsky was the architect of The Theory of Permanent Revolution. He was the main theorist of workers' self-organisation. He was the creator of Red Army, the first revolutionary Marxist analyst of post-capitalist transitional society and the state and the founder of the Fourth International. He wrote extensively, documents, thesis, articles and books since 1918 up-to 1940 on almost all the

major international events as well as on the issues confronting international working class movement of the time. Thus, after Lenin, Leon Trotsky, is the most important titan of revolutionary Marxist thought of the 20th Century.

But the fight of soviet bureaucracy against Left Opposition and later on against Trotsky, official disgrace, his pre-1917 anti-Bolshevik past, and Stalinist anathema and slander combined to render his theoretical contributions to and enrichments of Marxism virtually a sealed book for international working class movement. Parry Anderson, in his book-length essay, "considerations on western Marxism", had to issue a special call for mending this situation by a thorough consideration of Trotsky and Trotskyism as one of the most significant but most consciously avoided strands in Western Marxism

Of late, however, at least since May 1968, a slow but sure change has begun to occur. With the renaissance of the forces of Fourth International on a world scale, Trotsky, has, once again, become a focus of lively debate in the international working class movement. Serious literature on Trotsky and his ideas has begun to grow both in volume and content after a lapse of certain time after the publication of Issac Deuetscher's Three volume monumental biography of Leon Trotsky.

This small book by Ernest Mandel constitutes a distinct class by itself in this growing body of literature on Trotsky. Ernest Mandel is an internationally reputed connoisseur of Trotsky and is at present a

central leader of the Fourth International, a World Party of Socialist Revolution founded by Leon Trotsky in 1938.

Sub-titled as "A study in the Dynamic of His Thought", this lucid Introduction to Trotsky is a highly polemical yet perspicuous study of 149 pages divided into eleven chapters with references and a critical bibliographical review of literature on Trotsky.

The topics covered include his Theory of Permanent Revolution as it applies to a developing revolution in a backward country (Ch. 1), and also as it sets out to tackle problems arising out of an isolated socialist revolution in a backward country (Ch. 2). In Ch. 3, Mandel provides a succinct summary of Trotsky's concept of World Revolution as a concrete process wherein he settles accounts with some of the misinterpretations of his concept. This followed by a richly synthetic account of Trotsky's ideas and their evolution on the question of dialectic of relationship between the proletariat as a class, proletariat as a selforganised class, and its revolutionary Marxist party in subsequent three chapters. (Chs. 4, 5, & 7.).

All analysis of and attempts at understanding of Stalinism as a social phenomenon, ultimately, whether consciously or unconsciously have to come to terms with Trotsky's classical analysis of Stalinism. Whether one agrees with Trotsky on this question or not, and most people disagree because of their failure to grasp the dialectical intricacies of Trotsky's thought in understanding

such a highly contradictory and unique phenomenon, one must admit that unlike state capitalist theory group, or unlike Bettlaheim and Maoist, Trotsky approaches Stalinism also from an international point of view, that is, does not restrict it to a mere resultant of internal class correlation of forces of Soviet Society. At the same time, by a correct application of the Law of uneven and combined development, he avoids fatalist economic determinism while challenging the doctrine of Socialism in a single country. Whole of chapter Seven of this book is devoted to a consideration of Trotsky's views on Stalinism as one of major contributions to Marxism.

In late twenties and early thirties, Trotsky's was the lone voice forewarning the international labor movement and especially the German proletariat of the mortal danger Fascism represented for the working class organisations immediately and for civilization at large. His analysis of bourgeois democracy, bourgeois state in a decaying bourgeois society, the class forces behind fascist movement and his strategy to fight fascism, though conjunctural in the sense of written in immediate political response to a current situation, is a model of Marxist political analysis comparable in breadth and vision with Marx's classic analysis of mid-19th century French developments. Albeit still hesitatingly, but surely, only now serious scholars like Anderson, late Nico Pounlatzas and Ernest Luclow have begun to assess the immense value of his contributions to Marxism on the question of Fascism. Ch. 8 of this book spells out his theory of fascism.

Though, like Lenin, Trotsky, never elaborated in an explicit manner his theory of imperialism, certain specific views on imperialism, certainly underly his opposition to Stalinist doctrine of Socialism in a single country. These views are also discernible in his arguments for the building of Fourth International in the midst of all engulfing reaction at that time. Trotsky had a clear inkling of the effects of imperialist penetration of backward countries on class correlation of forces for bourgeois democratic revolutions in backward countries when he developed his Theory of Permanent Revolution as early as 1905-1906, first in connection with Russia, later in 1925-27 in connection with Second Chinese Revolution and in 1929 with regard to all backward, underdeveloped and semi-colonial or colonial countries. Trotsky postulated the overall objective limits which imperialism places on industrialization and modernization of backward countries along capitalist path of development.

Ch. 10 by far constitutes the most original yet vigorously sustained defense of Trotsky's attempt to found and build the Fourth International. Even scholars like Deustcher with generally Trotskyist type of political persuasion have called into question the validity of Trotsky's project to build the Fourth International. Mandel takes up the critics and reviews the whole debate on a higher theoretical foundation by stressing how Trotsky grapples with the problem of resolving contradiction between determinism and voluntarism. Mandel poses the problem in its concrete context of defeats of international proletariat in order to highlight the perspective of

Trotsky. Were the defeats final irreversible and conclusive or would the proletariat rise again? Trotsky concentrates the alternative in a key question: will the proletariat be able to reconstruct society or the relapse into barbarism will continue? If the proletariat rises again, then the question of its revolutionary leadership would be posed in all its sharpness. Hence everything depended on what view one took of defeats of world revolution between two world wars.

Last chapter is devoted to a consideration of his views on socialism.

According to Mandel (P. 9), this book is a summary and systematic exposition of Trotsky's essential contributions to Marxism. It shows how Trotsky develops them in and through his successive encounters with the many complex problems of our epoch and in the process how various stages in Trotsky's intellectual and political development are delineated. But one important area of his thought is "deliberately" (P. 122) left out from treatment. This is his ideas on art, literature, culture, policy of a revolutionary party in the field of artistic and scientific creation and art criticism. Inclusion of his ideas in these fields would have greatly enhanced the value of the image of Trotsky as it emerges from this excellent book.

And this attempt to portray Trotsky as a thinker and a revolutionary - "an attempt to explain the 20th century" (P. 10), - is furthest from idolising Trotsky. In fact, Mandel, is critical of Trotsky's views on ban placed on other parties in earlier period Soviet

regime, on his pre-1917 views on Leninist theory of organisation, etc. In the process, Mandel succeeds in developing some new insights into the problems involved. For instance, he castigates attempts to resurrect Trotsky's views on Lenin's Democratic Centralism etc.; by putting a poser if Trotsky's correct understanding of Lenin on party building resulting into his becoming a Bolshevik as early as 1902-1903 would not have facilitated his later task of fighting bureaucracy after Lenin's death.

A noteworthy feature of this lucid introduction to the dynamic of Trotsky's thought is the seven page polemical and critical but very succinct review of about twenty works on Trotsky and Trotskyism which Mandel provide. (P. 149 to P. 156). The authors considered here by Mandel from a spectrum of internationally reputed authorities of widely divergent political persuasions such as Issac Deutscher, Lenzek Kelakowski, Richard Day, Baruch Kneipuz. Jean Elleinstein and Roy Medvedev and others.

The ideas considered in nut-shell but with polemical sharpness characteristic of Mandel range from Trotsky's opposition to Stalin's doctrine of "Socialism in a single Country" to his ideas on modernisation and industrialisation, or his concept "the character of our epoch as that of war and revolutions", etc;. In dealing with misunderstandings and/or misinterpretations of Trotsky diverse authors, Mandel points out how Trotsky dialectically could reject any illusion that the Russian working class could by itself modernise Russia thoroughly even while holding that

it could capture political power earlier (against Knei-Paz). Arguing against Richard Day, Mandel explains how Trotsky's Theory of imperialism led him to insist that the integration of backward countries into the world market implied their control by international finance capital and their subordinate and lopsided development. In these circumstances, organic and harmonious industrialization of backward countries was possible only if these nations, after making a successful revolution, through monopoly of foreign trade, drew on the technological resources of the advanced nations, without becoming subordinate to the law of value operating on the market. Of course, Trotsky had no illusions whatsoever, that Russia could ever completely emancipate itself from the influence of the law of value in the absence of a world revolution.

Mandel takes up cudgels against Geoff Hodgson's reading of Trotsky's contributions to Marxism as "active fatalism." Mandel stresses the point that Trotsky explicitly incorporated the outcome of class struggle into his economic perspective.

According to Mandel, many authors like late C. Wright Mills, or Irving Howe, because of their lack of adequate grounding in Marxist theory, fail to identify Trotsky's specific contributions to Marxism. Denis Avenas, Norman Geras and others represent an emerging trend of Trotskyist writers who discuss his contributions critically.

In sum, as the NLB comment on cover aptly describes, here is a lucid but succinct overall view of Trotsky as a Marxist, that "makes a fitting and long overdue counterpart to "Lukacs's historic study of Lenin fifty years ago." □ 13. 1. 1980.

Leon Trotsky's Contributions to Marxism

— By George Novack —

(George Novack is a Marxist philosopher, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party.)

Novack met Trotsky while helping organize the Commission of Inquiry into the Charges Against Leon Trotsky, headed by the philosopher and educator John Dewey. The commission proved that the charges laid against Trotsky in the Moscow Trials were a frame-up.

Novack has written many books explaining, defending, and applying the Marxist outlook of dialectical and historical materialism. These include 'Understanding History,' 'Polemics in Marxist Philosophy,' and 'Democracy and Revolution.'

This is the year of Leon Trotsky's hundredth anniversary. He was born on November 7, 1879. This date coincided with that of the October insurrection which brought the Bolsheviks to power and which he led as president of the Petrograd Soviet. Trotsky first noticed this odd coincidence only three years after 1917.

Trotsky was one of the most many-sided personalities of the twentieth century. He was no less a man of innovative thought than of revolutionary action. While he was organizing and commanding the Red Army, which fought for three years on twenty-one fronts, he wrote a series of incisive polemics against the critics and foes of the

young Soviet Republic. He drafted an account of the events of the Russian revolution while negotiating with the Germans at Brest Litovsk as the first Commissar of Foreign Affairs.

After writing the finest literary criticism any Marxist has produced, he went on to become head of all Soviet scientific institutions.

From the time he joined a circle of young opponents of czarism in South Russia in 1898 to his murder by an agent of Stalin in Mexico in 1940, Trotsky's life was marked by stirring and dramatic incidents, with sudden ascents to the heights of power followed by precipitous drops into exile, persecution, and, finally, assassination.

Trotsky was arrested at an early age for his activities against the czar. He was deported to Siberia, and later escaped to Western Europe to work with Lenin and Plekhanov. He returned to Russia in 1905, the year of the first, though abortive, Russian revolution. He became the moving spirit of the St. Petersburg Council of Workers Delegates, the first soviet in history. Again arrested, convicted, and exiled by the czar's government, he escaped to Western Europe.

He came back to Russia from the United States eleven years later, after the czar's overthrow. In July 1917 he was arrested by the Kerensky government and elected president of the Petrograd Soviet after his release. He prepared and led the October insurrection and served as Commissar of War from 1918 to 1925. He was the author of all the manifestoes of the first five congresses of the Com-

munist International and many of the documents of the first four.

He took up the struggle in opposition to the Stalin faction within the CP leadership that was begun by Lenin before his death. This caused Trotsky's deportation first to Alma Atain Kazakhaston and then to Turkey in 1929. During his third exile he moved to France, Norway, and finally Mexico. He was accused of infamous crimes in the Moscow Trial frame-ups and sentenced to death in absentia. Stalin's murderous edict was carried out while Trotsky was working on his last book, an accusatory biography of Stalin.

Trotsky was the man of action, leader of a revolution, master of insurrection, war leader, cofounder with Lenin of the Third International, and later founder of the Fourth International. Trotsky was not only the doer but also the thinker, the analyst of history and society, the Marxist politician and theoretician. Trotsky was the most prolific writer of the Marxist movement. His pen was continuously active for over four decades. Thirteen volumes of his collected works were published in the Soviet Union up to his ouster from the leadership in 1926. A complete collection of his writings would total four or five times that number of volumes. He commented on almost every significant political event and question during his adult years.

So I must be very selective. I will focus on his thought which seem to me most valuable; pertinent, and enduring. These are his celebrated theory of the permanent revolution; the law of

uneven and combined development; his conception of the nature of Stalinism; and, the evolution of his position on the revolutionary party. Even so, I am leaving out such irreplaceable contributions as his analysis of fascism.

The phrase "the permanent revolution" is better known than its content is understood. Although both the term and its meaning can be found in some of Marx's writings, and was anticipated before him by the Babeuvists of 1795 during the decline of the French revolution, it is rightly and inseparably linked with Trotsky. He gave the theory its first systematic exposition in 1905-06 as a result of his analysis of Russia's peculiar social structure and his insight into the dynamics of the 1905 revolution.

Permanent Revolution And Colonial Countries

This theory flowed from a recognition of two historical facts, The transition from precapitalist to capitalist conditions had proceeded with extreme unevenness in different countries and continents and this disparity of economic and social development entailed epoch-making political consequences. It would direct the twentieth century revolutions along a fundamentally different path than the revolutions of the preceding epoch.

From the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries the first-born countries of Capitalism in Western Europe and North America, such as the Netherlands, England, France, and the United States had, as a result of their advanced economic and social development, gone through colossal

revolutionary upheavals that refashioned their social systems along capitalist lines and more or less organized their political structures in accord with bourgeois democratic specifications.

The nations of East Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East were hardly drawn into this renovation. They had yet to win the national independence and unity, the modernization of their institution, the large-scale reform of agrarian relations, and the democratic parliamentary regimes won in the West.

There was an organic connection between this underdevelopment of the nations historically retarded in economic and social respects and the more favourable conditions among the major capitalist powers. That fatal link was the rise of the colonial system which formed a cornerstone of commercial and industrial capitalism and was buttressed by imperialism. Foreign capital reaped advantages from the primitiveness of czarist Russia, while the colonies were not so much underdeveloped as superexploited. The very global expansion of capitalist enterprises that spurred the bourgeois democratic movements that came to power in the West inhibited and prevented the growth and success of democratic movements in the colonial world.

Dynamics of Underdevelopment

Consequently, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the bulk of humanity living in the backward and semicolonial countries were beset by two crucial questions. "How did we fall under the

subjugation of imperialism and how can we get out of it?" Trotsky's major theoretical discoveries dealt with these questions. The law of uneven and combined development explains the reasons for the first condition and the theory of permanent revolution is the key to the mode of its elimination.

The bourgeois - democratic struggles against outdated forms of feudal, clerical, slave-holding, and monarchical sovereignty and their precapitalist property relations had already been carried to conclusion in the plutocratic countries. But it had been postponed to the point of almost intolerable urgency in the greater part of the planet. This posed the problem: how were these peoples to catch up with more privileged and wealthy Western metropolises whose ruling classes exploited and dominated them?

Many mistakenly believed that the countries which had yet to be modernized would follow in the footsteps of their Western forerunners and go forward to liberal democracy under capitalist rule. This still prevails as the propaganda line in official, reformist, and academic circles.

However the backward and semicolonial nations could not duplicate the process of *revolution* experienced by their predecessors precisely because they had been forced into a different pattern of *evolution*. Neither in their economic nor their political development could they reproduce with some delay and minor variations the models provided by the imperialist exploiters.

The theory of permanent revolution clarified the reasons for this anomaly. The roles of the

social classes were to be vastly different in the declining senior stage of capitalism than they had been in its progressive junior ones.

The main tasks of the democratic revolution in the bourgeois era were as follows: the achievement of national autonomy and unity, agrarian reform, secularization (separation of church from state), the elimination of precapitalist relations of production, the creation of a democratic state capped by industrialization. These tasks had been undertaken and solved with varying degrees of success under the leadership of radical and liberal elements of the bourgeoisie of the West during their heyday when commercial and industrial capitalism flourished.

However the forms of bourgeois life and labor had been stifled and stunted in the backward and colonized areas while remaining yoked together with precapitalist survivals and even revivals, like chattel slavery. Because of their mangled and meager development and fear of the upsurge of the workers and poor peasants on their own behalf, the local bourgeoisies within these countries had no capacity for shouldering the gigantic tasks of revolution and leading the popular masses in all-out struggle against imperialism for a thorough renovation of the old regimes along democratic lines.

Decisive Role of Workers

Trotsky arrived at his highly original conclusions through a concrete analysis of semifeudal, semicapitalist Russia and the dynamics of the class forces disclosed during the defeated 1905 revolution.

On the basis of these events he set forth the following propositions.

The liberal bourgeoisie had become impotent and politically bankrupt; when the chips were down it would go over to counterrevolution. The peasantry and anti-czarist intelligentsia could play significant but only auxiliary roles in the revolutionary process. The sole available candidate for revolutionary leadership that could carry the struggle for democratic demands through to the end was the proletariat, a new class that was the special product of the industrial revolution.

Thus the unique alignment of social forces produced by the whole preceding evolution of world capitalism had prepared the conditions, for an interpenetration of successive historical stages in twentieth century Russia. This correlation had two major aspects.

First, because the anticapitalist working class was the paramount political force guiding the upheaval, the democratic tasks appropriate to a belated antifeudal revolution inevitably became intertwined with the tasks of the socialist revolution.

These included the conquest of power by the proletariat at the head of the insurgent peasant and popular masses; the abolition of capitalist private property; guaranteeing of self-determination to oppressed nationalities; the collectivization of agricultural production; the creation of a planned economy and the state monopoly of foreign trade crowned by the institutions of socialist democracy.

These accomplishments would promote the most rapid growth of the economy and lead to lifting the standards of consumption and culture, the overcoming of inequalities, the liberation of women, enlargement of democracy on all levels, the gradual elimination of the differences between mental and manual labor and between the city and countryside, the uprooting of alienation in social life, and the removal of the gap between the rich and the poor nations, about which much is said but so little done nowadays.

These desired objective would be attained in only one way; by extending the world revolution through the establishment of workers power in the most advanced countries where the most highly developed productive forces and the seats of imperialist power were located.

Combined Revolution

Second, the fight for bourgeois-democratic rights and the struggle for workers power had to be carried out by an alliance of the workers and peasants in mortal combat against the power and property of the "unholy alliance of the native bourgeoisie, the precapitalist exploiters, and the foreign imperialists.

The two components could not be separated in time or space; the one grew over into the other as the revolution deepened. The historical opposites were integrated in dialectical dependence. This conception of the revolutionary process and its socialist strategy for czarist Russia—projected by Trotsky in 1906 was put to the test in 1917. It

was adopted in principle by Lenin upon his return from exile in April and guided the Bolsheviks' policy leading to their victory in October.

The experience in China in the mid-1920s, where Stalin's policy of supporting the leadership of the national bourgeoisie as the natural leader of the democratic revolution ended in disaster, convinced Trotsky that it was not limited to Russia but was valid for all the economically backward countries.

The validity of its essential ideas has been positively vindicated since World War II by the course and outcome of the Yugoslav, Chinese, Cuban, and Vietnamese revolutions. It is being tested anew in Iran and Nicaragua today.

This conception has found confirmation in the negative by the inability of those colonial peoples that have not combined their struggle for national sovereignty with a victorious onslaught against capitalist property and power to achieve either a stable and durable democratic regime or an escape from the yoke of imperialism. Witness the Iranian revolutionary upsurges of 1906 and 1945-53. And witness the continent of Latin America from Mexico to Argentina and Chile.

In addition to illuminating the road to power and liberation from imperialism, the theory of permanent revolution involves two further theses. One asserts that while the revolutionary forces can be victorious in a single backward country without waiting for any others, as happened in Russia in

1917-18 and Cuba in 1959-60, the revolutionary process cannot be confined within the borders of a single country. It cannot realize its basic aims nor can its full program be consummated in a socialist order unless workers power has taken hold in the most highly industrialized sections of the globe. This revolutionary internationalist position and perspective is squarely counterposed to the Stalinist national bureaucratic utopian dogma of building socialism in a single country.

The theory further stresses that the suppression of capitalism does not all at once and equally eradicate all the relations and customs of the past but only overthrows those economic, political, and legal institutions at the root of capitalist domination. After the conquest of power, the worker-peasant revolution is obliged to tackle and remove inherited obsolescences as fast as conditions permit. There's the rub. Experience has shown that this is easier indicated than accomplished, above all in the poor and backward workers states encircled by imperialism where the anticapitalist revolutions up to now have taken place.

* * *

I have already touched upon the second of Trotsky's contributions to Marxist thought: the law of uneven and combined development. This juxtaposition is not accidental, because the theory of permanent revolution is a particular expression of this more general law. The one is limited to the conditions and problems of the period of transition from the capitalist system to socialism, whereas the

other has a far broader application to the entire span of humanity's evolution.

Indeed, Trotsky consciously formulated the wider law of uneven and combined development after elaborating the more restricted conception and as a generalization of it.

Uneven Development

The starting point of the law is the empirical observation that the course of history and social life through the ages has not been harmonious, balanced, and symmetrical but characterized by extreme irregularities of all kinds at every step along the way. One of the most dramatic instances of this disparity took place when the aboriginal inhabitants of North America were brought face to face with the white invaders from Europe.

At this juncture, two completely separated routes of social evolution, the products of some thirty thousand years of independent growth in the New World and the Old, encountered and came to grips with each other. People living in the preclass tribal conditions of the Stone Age collided with newcomers equipped with all the acquisitions of class society from private property to firearms. We know the bloody genocidal result.

Gross differences in development are also to be found, not only between people living on different levels of progress, but also within specific social and national structures and their class components.

Throughout its evolution capitalism by its very nature has given rise to all sorts of economic

- inequalities : unevenness of development between industry and agriculture; between the first industrialized countries and the colonial and semicolonial dependencies; between different branches of industry; and between different and even adjacent regions of the same country.

The accumulation of the irregularities produced by the unequal development of capitalist civilization up to the twentieth century set the stage for the new turn in world history whereby the bourgeois forces became antirevolutionary while their antithesis, the working class, has had to take over the progressive functions they previously performed.

The underlying cause of the different rates of growth in history and among the various elements of social life is the faster or slower growth of the productive forces. The resultant differences in economic power impart varying rates and extents of growth to different branches of society, different classes, different social institutions and fields of culture.

But unevenness is only the primordial aspect of the total process. The disproportionate development among the "diverse sections of society and the various factors of social life has a very important consequence. The contact and coexistence of features belonging to earlier stages of development with those at a later level of development provide the possibility for the merger of elements belonging to both in a combined formation. These hybrids deviate from the normal type and exhibit pronounced peculiarities because of their highly contradictory character.

The periods of transition from one socioeconomic order to a higher one have been especially marked by this intermeshing of the old and the new. This held true for the passage from precapitalist societies to the capitalist world system and even more for the present period of changeover from predominant capitalist to postcapitalist relations. Capitalism did not develop in a void but arose, expanded and came to global mastery in incessant and inseparable interaction with precapitalist modes of production ranging all the way from tribalism to feudalism. Despite the disparities in their economic and cultural levels, capitalism welded together in a single system progressive institutions and ideas with primitive and cruder ones. This amalgamation of features appropriate to very different kinds of historical development has generated very peculiar phenomena and produced some surprising turns and twists in history.

In the Carolinas at the time of colonial settlement, a capitalist shareholding enterprise acting under a royal grant tried to establish unalloyed feudal relations, at a time when feudalism had been largely surpassed in England; the scheme didn't work. Later in that same area there was a bourgeoisified chattel slavery in which communistic Creek Indians who held slaves sold their products on a capitalist market, thereby combining three stages of evolution. We've seen a twentieth century president who calls upon a medieval god to bless Washington's war in Indochina and the napalming of women and children, thereby combining medieval superstition with imperialist brutality.

This law provides the key to deciphering the complexities and anomalies of the contemporary revolutions which under unfavourable conditions have had to take the democratic tasks left over from the deficient bourgeois era with the socialist tasks necessitated by modern technique and culture. Thus, in order to win national independence from Yankee imperialism, Cuba had to break with capitalism and start on the road toward socialism. This overloading of historical tasks saddled upon the postcapitalist countries should be kept in mind in assessing the characteristics of their progress—and regress.

Roots of Stalinism

The third outstanding contribution of Trotsky to living Marxism was his explanation of the political degeneration of the Soviet Union, the rise of the bureaucratic caste to supremacy, and the causes, characteristics, and cure for Stalinism. There are many theories in circulation about the horrible phenomenon that fastened itself after Lenin's death upon the Soviet Union, the first workers state in history.

The most common misconception states that Stalinism is the natural offspring and inevitable continuation of Leninism, Marxism, and socialism. Others define the Soviet Union as state capitalism or bureaucratic collectivism, dominated by a new class of exploiters. On the other hand, the uncritical followers of the Kremlin believed Stalin when he claimed that the Soviet regime was already socialist and Khrushchev and Brezhnev when they

said it was going beyond that toward communism.

Trotsky presented an altogether different analysis and appraisal of the Stalinized Soviet Union. He defined it as a degenerated workers state. He explained that the proletariat had come to power first in backward Russia rather than in the more advanced countries of Western Europe, as Marx anticipated, because of the conjunction of a peasant uprising against czarism and landlordism with a proletarian revolution against capitalism. This combined mass upsurge was responsible for the extraordinary scope of its achievements, for the great leap forward that changed the direction of modern history.

However, at the next stage of the unfolding of the Russian revolution after Lenin's death in 1924, the inherited economic and cultural backwardness that had previously supplied the charge that propelled the Russian people far ahead of the rest of the world took its revenge. It became the basis and starting point of a bureaucratic reaction culminating in a political counterrevolution. The workers democracy of the first years of the Soviet republic was crushed and replaced by a totalitarian dictatorship crowned by Stalin's one-man rule.

This relapse was the outgrowth of two major factors, one internal, the other international: First, the failure of the revolution to be extended into the more industrialized countries such as Germany and the prolonged isolation of the first anticapitalist state and its tight encirclement by an imperia-

list environment. Second, the meager productivity of Soviet industry and agriculture—along with the shattering blows of World War I and the Civil War—engendered terrible poverty, misery, and sharp social inequalities that facilitated the rise and consolidation of a new privileged caste. The socially ruling class of workers was degraded into an oppressed class—although still the ruling class since the surviving postcapitalist property forms were in the workers' historic interest.

Abolitions of Workers Democracy

Under capitalist conditions a flourishing democracy had largely been established only in the more wealthy nations and, even where the poorer and less fortunate countries had set up democratic institutions, as in the colonial and semicolonial world, these have not been very sturdy or stable.

A similar rule applies to the Soviet Union and other countries based on postcapitalist economic relations. The poorer and more backward they are, the stronger are the tendencies toward bureaucratism and inequalities and the more likely are the materially, politically, and culturally privileged elements and antidemocratic forces in the workers state to become masters of the situation at the expense of the rights and powers of the toiling masses. In China high party officials are called "those who eat meat" by those who never see it.

Here an analogy may be helpful. A child stricken by rickets because of defective nutrition may grow up stunted, with curvature of the spine, bowlegs, and a bulky head, if he or she lacks the vital

dietary ingredients that produce normal stature, well-proportioned organs, and agreeable features. Analogous rules of growth apply to social organizations and their political regimes.

Trotsky explained that the young Soviet republic became a victim of ugly malformations because the society and state were deprived of the conditions and elements for normal development during needed the most formative years. The Stalinist regime that resulted was the most self-contradictory combined formation in modern history. At its base were the most advanced forms of property and social conquests of a postcapitalist character, its nationalized production, planned economy, and monopoly of foreign trade. These were the precious products of the 1917 socialist overturn.

Resting on top of this economic foundation was a political superstructure that was thoroughly totalitarian and resurrected many of the most repulsive features of class rule. People are so puzzled by this enigma and do not know what it is or how to estimate it because the Soviet Union today abounds in such contradictions on all levels.

In this workers state the workers themselves have no direct political voice in the major decisions. Freedom of expression and movement are severely restricted. The best works of its greatest living novelist, Solzhenitsyn, cannot be published. In transportation, huge jets speed over the trackless wilderness where peasant carts creak along in well-worn ruts, as they have for centuries, while Soviet astronauts circle around the planet.

Tremendous scientific, technical, industrial, and cultural advances go along with political retrogression and reaction.

Defense of Workers State

The regime's official claim that it represented socialism was spurious, Trotsky said. For all its successes, the Soviet Union was still far from socialism. It was a society in transition from capitalism to socialism with an unbalanced, inharmonious structure which was torn by tense contradictions and, above all, by the irreconcilable antagonism between the bureaucratic caste that had usurped power and the working masses.

Nonetheless, this workers state—for all its deformities—must be defended as a conquest of the working class against the efforts of the imperialists to destroy it. The property forms that have been established represent the only way forward for the Soviet working people, and it is these and not the dictatorial regime that accounts for the antagonism of the capitalist powers.

What perspective flowed from this diagnosis? To clear the way for the further march toward socialism, the Soviet workers would have to combat and clear out the bureaucratic oligarchy. This could only be done by way of a higher type of political revolution. Trotsky predicted. The objective of the antibureaucratic revolution would be to transfer control of the economy and state to the direct producers so they could go forward and create the socialist democracy outlined in *State and Revolution* by Lenin and promised in

the Marxist program.

Many developments since Stalin died have testified to the irrepressible growth of opposition to the monolithic grip of the Kremlin within its own domain, its satellites, and the Communist parties elsewhere. It suffices to mention the attempt to establish "socialism with a human face" in Czechoslovakia, which was crushed in 1968 by the Soviet invasion; the more successful offensive of the Polish workers that toppled Gomulka and persists up to today; the continuing resistance of oppositional intellectuals and oppressed national minorities; and the heresies timidly uttered by the Eurocommunists.

Such events tend to substantiate Trotsky's contention that the parasitic bureaucracy is not an organic part and inevitable product of a postcapitalist society but rather a gross malignant tumor bred by the international isolation and persistent poverty and inequalities of the first workers state. It was a transitory phenomenon that big new revolutionary advances would serve to undermine, oppose, and eventually overcome, especially if the workers came to power in one or more of the advanced industrial countries.

Black Struggle

As an internationalist, Trotsky analyzed events and developments in many countries. His views on Black nationalism and self-determination for Afro-Americans was a prophetic contribution to clarifying one of the key questions of American politics.

He pointed out that Afro-Americans constituted a distinctive oppressed national minority. As such they have the right to self-determination. They will become more and more discontented with the unremedied abuses they suffer under monopoly capitalism. Black workers could become radicalized before the majority of white workers, move to the forefront of the anticapitalist forces, and fight harder for a new society than the more privileged sections of the working class. "The Russians," he said, "were the Negroes of Europe."

The Black liberation struggle called for uncompromising support from all socialists. They were equally obliged to combat the deep-seated racist prejudices capitalism untiringly inculcates in the white population.

In conclusion, a fifth expression of Trotsky's thought that others have discounted but that he himself considered the most important during his last exile. This was the evolution of his views on the character and role of the revolutionary vanguard party of the working class. His ideas on this matter underwent a significant change.

Lenin and Trotsky Join Forces

After escaping from Siberia in 1901, Trotsky went to London at Lenin's invitation and became part of the team of Marxist propagandists around the periodical *Iskra*, the Spark. When the split in the Russian Social Democracy between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks took place somewhat later, he aligned himself with the Mensheviks but was soon alienated from them. From 1904 until 1917 he occupied an intermediate and independent

position between the two contending factions, unsuccessfully undertaking at times to reconcile and unify them.

He opposed Lenin's revolutionary and original conception of a centralized proletarian combat party, as so many New Lefts and anti-Leninists do today.

He decisively and definitively changed his mind on this score after the February overthrow of czarism. In July he led his Petrograd organization into fusion with the Bolsheviki at a time when the latter were under heavy persecution and Lenin and Zinoviev were in hiding.

The triumph of the October insurrection can be traced to two circumstances. In the April theses that rearmed and reoriented his party, Lenin adopted the strategic conclusions of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution—that the proletariat was obliged to take power then and there in order to realise both the democratic and socialist aims of the mass movement. Around the same time Trotsky was won over to Lenin's plan of party organization. Lenin became Trotskyist, as Kamenniev charged at the time, while Trotsky became Leninist.

After the October insurrection, Lenin stated about Trotsky, after he had rejected any idea of organizational compromise with the Mensheviks, "From that time on there has been no better Bolshevik."

The Revolutionary Party

Also, from then on Trotsky never wavered in his adherence to Lenin's principles of organization

and in fact became their foremost exponent after the latter's death in 1924.

There is widespread misunderstanding about the real meaning and content of democratic centralism which sums up the Leninist theory of party life.

The principal source of confusion is the counterfeit of Leninist ideas and distortion of their practices that Stalinism has introduced into the workers movement. The Stalinist pattern of the monolithic party fused with the state, autocratically manipulated from above by an uncontrolled and irremovable officialdom, is the very antithesis of the genuine Leninist system of organization. As against bureaucratic centralism, under democratic centralism the leadership and apparatus are both responsible to and controlled by the party ranks and subject to their informed and democratic decisions, as they are in the Socialist Workers Party.

In opposition to the supercentralism of the Stalinist model on the one hand and the spontaneists and anarchists who reject any centralism in principle, Trotsky stressed the need for a workers party that was democratic in its inner functioning and centralized in action.

In the foundation document of the Fourth International entitled "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International"—popularly called the Transitional Program—Trotsky stated that the world political situation is characterized by a historical crisis of the leadership of the proletariat because of the degeneration of the Second and Third Internationals and the defaults

of lesser radical formations. This crisis of humanity can be resolved only through the creation of a new revolutionary vanguard.

The task of the Fourth International, he wrote tersely is "the abolition of capitalism's domination. Its aim—Socialism. Its method—the proletarian revolution. Without inner democracy—no revolutionary education. Without discipline—no revolutionary action. The inner structure of the Fourth International is based on the principle of democratic centralism: full freedom in discussion, complete unity in action."

New Revolutionary International: Fourth International

Trotsky devoted the last years of his life to forming and educating the cadres of such a party on an international scale. He considered this "the most important work of my life—more important than 1917, more important than the period of the Civil War or any other." That was not an aberrant judgment on his part. Like other eminent Marxists, he understood that theory is sterile without its immersion in practice, its testing in the day-to-day class struggles, its connection with the building of national parties and a world organization of socialist revolutionaries. He was a man of deeds, not an armchair theorist. He wrote and thought at all times with the aim of changing society, not simply commenting on the passing show, lamenting or applauding what others are doing.

Trotskyism and Stalinism, like their personal exemplars and namesakes, represent two irrecon-

cilable forces, programs, and methods of operation. The Kremlin dictator and his successors express the interests and narrow national outlook of the bureaucratic stratum that came to monopolize power and accumulate privileges in the first experiment in post-capitalist organization. The followers of his arch-opponent represent the interests of the world working class in its efforts to overthrow capitalism and institute a socialist democracy.

During his quarter-century tenure of total power Stalin's word was law in official world communism; his speeches were printed in tens of millions of copies and regarded as holy writ. Trotsky, the hounded exile, had difficulty in making his voice heard and in circulating his views beyond a limited circle. His writings were tabooed to members of the Stalinist movement who were fed distorted and poisoned versions of his ideas.

Trotsky Outlives Stalin

History has its ironic turnabouts. Today in the Soviet Union, Stalin has been exposed and disgraced as a criminal tyrant by his closest associates. His works are no longer printed in huge quantities—in fact they are rather hard to come by—and his omnipresent portrait has come down off the walls of every government office. **It is dubious whether his centenary will be given notice by Moscow.**

Trotsky's books, on the other hand, are being reprinted in many languages, not least in the United States. Dozens of works about him appear in print year by year. His ideas are securing a wider hearing and broader following on all continents.

A while ago the Husak government in Czechoslovakia put nineteen young people on trial for their alleged Trotskyist ideas, actually for their opposition to official oppression. The Trotskyist Petr Uhl has just been given a five-year sentence there.

The newly formed section of the Fourth International in Iran has emerged as a banner-bearer of the socialist program against the Khomeini-Bazargan bourgeois-clerical regime, which is attempting to roll back the rights conquered by the Iranian masses in the battle to topple the Shah.

Although Stalin's henchman struck down Trotsky in Mexico four decades ago, he did not and could not kill his ideas—and Stalin's imitators will be even less effective.

It is not possible, I believe, to be a politically literate person or understand the essentials of world politics today without an acquaintance with the ideas of this genius of scientific socialism who left us such a rich heritage. □

Trotsky's Centenary Celebration in India

—Magan Desai

The year 1979, being the year of Leon Trotsky's hundredth anniversary, was celebrated as Trotsky Birth Centenary. He was born on 7th November of 1879, the red letter date in the history of man-

kind. On that date in 1917, the great October Socialist Revolution inaugurated a new epoch for the history of the exploited, oppressed and humiliated humankind. This successful assault on the marginal minority of the privileged propertied exploiting classes was led by Lenin and Leon Trotsky, the leading lights of the Bolshevik Party of that period. 7th November, the birth date of Trotsky, accidentally coincided with that of the October insurrection that enabled working class organised in the Soviets as the ruling class first time in the world. Trotsky was the president of the Petrograd Soviet of the workers and soldiers deputies that spear headed the armed struggle to topple the Tsar, the symbol of the triple exploitation of feudalism, capitalism and imperialism.

Followers, friends and critical admirers of Trotsky in India who eagerly seek to accelerate the process of "de-stalinisation" on the track of democratisation of the whole Russian State and Society and strive to "restore democracy in all the socialist-countries" and those who favour and fight for "civil liberties" everywhere united to celebrate the birth centenary of Leon Trotsky in several parts of India.

The object to celebrate Trotsky Birth Centenary was not to idolize him nor build a "cult of Trotsky". The central theme in this endeavour was (i) to stimulate the objective study of Trotsky's life and work, to evaluate his contribution and assess his role in the world working class movement for world Socialist Revolution; (ii) to understand

and examine the relevance of his controversial and keenly contested but profound theoretical, Strategic and tactical insights provided by his theory of "Permanant Revolution", the transitional programme, proletarian internationalism and his critique of stalinism and fascism; (iii) to probe his basic critique of Stalin's "Two Stage" theory of revolution in colonial, semicolonial, called backward third world countries and his strategic and tactical perspective with regard to combined revolution—bourgeois cum national or peoples democratic with socialist called "Permenant Revolution" in these countries; (iv) to comprehend the relevance of Trotsky's theory in the concrete context of Indian situation; (v) to evaluate the movement organised under the banner of Trotsky's ideology and organisational frame work; and (vi) to build up organised opinion for rehabilitating Trotsky in his rightful place in the U.S.S.R. and in the history of world communist movement, as a part of the demand for rehabilitation of the victims of Stalinist purges and witch-hunt.

MAHARASTRA : In Bombay "Trotsky Birth Centenary Committee" was formed. It was led by Dr. A. R. Desai, a well known revolutionary Marxist-sociologist and writer. It was sponsored by the persons active and known in trade-union, journalism, student movement, educational sphere, the struggle for civil liberties and working class parties. On 7th November, a public rally was organised. It was presided by Dr. A. R. Desai. It was attended by a representative of cross sections from the different walks of life of Bombay. A booklet in Hindi language

on Trotsky was released on this occasion. The meeting was addressed by Dr. Vinayak Purohit, noted research scholar in sociology of Indian art; Jayaras Banaji, an emerging learned scholar from independent orthodox Marxist orientation; S. B. Kolpe, the noted leftist journalist leader and the editor of popular radical daily and weekly "Clarity"; Vijay Chandra, Achin Vanayak, Janardan Nair, Chandra-shen Momaya, activists in Trade-union movement, Pushpa Mehta and Jayaram Shetty, representing Revolutionary Socialist Party and Vibhuti Patel from the Communist League, the Indian section of the Fourth International. The main theme of these speakers was not to idolize and glorify Trotsky but to objectively appraise his contributions in the sphere of Marxist ideology, world working class politics, art and literature, in the context of a Stalinist's systematic campaign of effacing, denigrating and distorting the achievement of his life and work and its relevance to the present prevailing situation of the world working class movement. Various speakers highlighted the unprecedented heroism and sacrifices of Trotsky's life over and above his profound contribution in various spheres to organise the world working class movement to overthrow capitalism in underdeveloped and developed countries and sociological clerification and combating the bureaucratic nationalist degeneration that plagued the some component of the leadership of Bolshevik Party under Stalin. Some of the speakers while disagreeing with the certain part of the Trotsky's legacy, however pointed out the stimulating critical trend that has acquired enormous significance for the present

situation prevailing in the world politics. Most of the speakers emphasised that his ideas have great relevance in India for thrashing out strategy and tactics for overthrowing the capitalist regime so as to travel on "non-capitalist" track of socialist society. Also all of them condemned systematic effacing of Trotsky's name and contribution from the pages of the history of Soviet India and agreed to pursue the efforts for rehabilitating Trotsky and other who were incarcerated under Stalin's tyrannical regime.

KERALA : At Trivendrum, the capital of Kerala State, a symposium was organised in Law Academy. It was presided by Dr. V. K. Sukumaran Nair, the vice-chancellor of Kerala University. He in his speech described Trotsky as the greatest political personality of 20th Century. In spite of Stalin and Stalinist tremendous propaganda to erase Trotsky's name for the annals of the history, the fact remains that Trotsky prepared and led the October Revolution with Lenin. It was Trotsky who organised red army and saved nascent Soviet Union from the invasion of imperialist powers. The alert and innovative mind of Trotsky conceived to harness Russia with Napear hydroclutic project. Revolutionary Trotsky in his forced exile deprived of powers, prestige and glory by Stalin remained dangerous enemy to all the imperialist countries as they had refused visa to Trotsky. Former student leader and principal of Medical College of Trivendrum Dr. K. Madhavan Kutty narrated torments of Trotsky and his wife when their younger son Sergei was murdered by Stalin. In his further speech

Dr. Kutty impressed upon the audience Trotsky's inprint on revolutionary working class politics, literature, art, education and military science.

Mr. Vishnunarain Nambudiri, one of the topmost young poet of Kerala State, emphasised in his speech that through the book "Literature and Revolution" Trotsky had made invaluable contribution to art and aesthetic.

Comrade M. K. Kumaran, an ex-member of Parliament and supporter of Communist Party confessed in his speech that Communist Party discouraged him from reading the writings of Trotsky. But he violated party directive by reading Trotsky's biography and other available books. This encouraged him to recommend the reading of Trotsky to veteran C. P. leaders K. Damodaran and Achyuta Menon, the ex-chief minister of Kerala State. Com. Kumaran further disclosed to gathering that K. Damodaran one of the topmost Marxist-thinkers and writers of many books and leader of CP., once a bitter critique of Trotsky became in his last years the admirer and adherent of Trotsky's principles and politics. In his concluding speech Comrade Kumaran remarked that he still disagees with Trotsky, nevertheless Trotsky remains as a great political thinker. He condemned falsification of history in Soviet Union and passionately demanded the rehabilitation of Trotsky in his country.

Such seminar was held at Peripanam, a stronghold of Stalinists in the month of November. This was presided by lawyer Comrade Harindra Nair while Comrades M. N. Subra-

maniam, P. Natrajan and M. Rashid read the papers on Trotsky as a cultural leader, a revolutionary and on theory of Permanent Revolution respectively. Many youngsters from CPI, CPM and youth congress participated by raising questions and heated debates by opposing Trotsky. M. N. Subramaniam, the Secretary of Trotsky Centenary Celebration Committee of Kerala announced the decision to publish Trotsky's biography in Malayalam language.

WEST BENGAL : Trotsky Centenary Committee was formed. Joint initiative was taken by the representative of Revolutionary Communist Party, Communist League and Revolutionary Socialist Party. Veteran leftist journalist, progressive minded educationalists, student, worker and peasant activists, from various parts joined this committee. At Calcutta and Santipur, discussion, exhibition of Trotsky's books and two days seminar was organised on 7th November, the birth date of Trotsky. It was well attended and had created interest among leftist establishments.

GUJARAT : "Trotsky Centenary Celebration Committee of Gujarat" was formed in last July. Individuals from the important cities like Ahmedabad, Baroda, Surat and Jamnagar had joined this committee. Leftist oriented prominent doctors, lawyers, university professors, well known artists, journalist, Trade union and student activists and representative from the working class parties were the members of the sponsors committee.

Dr. S. C. Mishra, head of the department of

advanced history from M. S. University of Baroda, was the President, whereas N. M. Pandya, the economist, Ranchhodlal Vayada, the well known veteran journalist of Gujarat and Dr. R. N. Mehta, the head of the archeology department of M. S. University were the vice-presidents of the committee. Due to some objective limitations of the committee, celebration could not be organised on 7th November. It became possible in February '80. Two days programme of lecture and seminar at Baroda was arranged. Dr. Bipanchandra, well known historian and the dean of the faculty of social sciences of the Jawaharlal Nehru University of New Delhi was the main guest speaker on 16th February. The B. M. Hall where this programme was organised was packed to its capacity. Nearly hundred and seventy five persons from different walks of life - well known doctors, teachers from schools and university, prominent social workers, M. L. A., trade unionists, workers and students - attended the function. This was chaired by Prof. N. M. Pandya, the vice-president of the celebration committee and the meeting was conducted by Comrade Sharad Jhaveri of Communist League.

The theme of Dr. Bipanchandra's speech was "present situation in India and relevance of Trotsky's thought," In starting Dr. Bipanchandra paid profound tribute to Trotsky as the greatest Marxist thinkers, greatest revolutionary and greatest human being of 20th century, who in his life time was loved, honoured and followed by millions as well as maligned, slandered, persecuted and haunted by rulers of Soviet Union in whose creation and construction Trotsky

had played prominent role. Trotsky's contribution to the advancement of humanity is invaluable and enormous. His murder organised by Stalin failed to halt the spread of his ideas as ever increasing attention and recognition is being given to principle and politics of this great figure martyr. Before coming to his subject Dr. Bipanchandra narrated his emotional experience when he visited the house in Mexico city where Trotsky passed his last days of his life. It was the modest residence equipped with simple necessities of life like ordinary wooden furniture and few utensils. The roof of his bed room was pierced with holes caused due to the machine guns shots aimed to kill Trotsky. This was inspired by his political opponent Stalin. In this considerably fortified and well guarded but sparten surrounding Trotsky used to write incessantly on numerous subjects from the view point of working class politics whose significance for the present world situation is considerable. Because Trotsky was genuine Marxist in grand tradition of Marx, observed Dr. Bipanchandra. It requires many days to understand different aspects of his enormous contribution to working people of the world. His main quality was courage, courage and courage in tradition of Marx. Hence his extreme boldness in understanding reality, to interpret different aspects of dialectical reality was superb and unique. Very few people possess it. As per Dr. Bipanchandra's considered opinion Indian left movement is in dire need of such quality. So it has to initiate to inherit Trotsky's tradition to face in order to probe extant Indian reality. Leftist in India must assimilate from Trotsky's ability, humility, honesty,

integrity in their analysis of Indian situation. In spite of long history of left movement it has failed to comprehend this tradition. Trotsky's contribution of several decades was visualised in Europe and America. Almost everywhere politically conscious people were aware of what Trotsky had to say. Unfortunately it is not recognised in his own homeland - Soviet Russia, where his name is still anathema. We must appeal to Soviet government in whose revolution and its defence Trotsky's contribution was irreplaceable to vindicate and rehabilitate his role and honour by returning to the road of democracy in USSR. Trotsky waged long fierce battle after 1924 against bureaucratisation under Stalin, and championed the cause of socialist democracy by becoming the spokesman of those honest communists who resisted Stalin's authoritarianism. For Trotsky socialism was not conceivable without democracy for the working people. Trotsky adamantly opposed capitalism because it deprives workers of their freedom to acquire culture, where as socialism absorbs all the past achievements of human culture. While developing his theme Dr. Bipanchandra shed light on Trotsky's grasp of contemporary reality of his time i. e. the phenomena of the rising Fascism in Germany. This was in footsteps of Marx and Lenin. The comprehensive analysis of, and strategy and tactics to combat fascism developed by Trotsky remains the greatest work of the time. Unfortunately his voice was not taken seriously by the sectarian communist party that resulted into the hollow cost of the second world war. According

to Trotsky facism was the byproduct of the decay of bourgeois democracy, he distinguished between strong state oriented to Bonapartist authoritarianism and facism, he demarketed facism and bourgeois democracy. To Trotsky, centralised strong state was not necessarily the facism in whose development he highlighted the crucial role of disinherited depressed petty-bourgeois stratas. As per Dr. Bipanchandra considered opinion fertile ground for facism in India is not yet favourable because the Indian petty-bourgeois is as much left as much right due to politicization. There is greater need to protect it from facism. This can be achieved by developing struggle against communalism and national chauvinism the potential breeding ground of mobilizing petty-bourgeoisie for facism. Capitalist strong state oriented to Bonapartist authoritarianism being unable to face mass movement manipulates petty-bourgeois discontent for destroying working class organisations. Facism takes advantage from the ebb or passivity of the working class movement. Trotsky was the first to point out those phenomena and untiringly advocated the united front of the all trade unions and working class parties to defeat facism in Germany and France. At present no major fascist movement exists in India but leftist have failed to provide an alternative since 1967 onwards. So Indian left movement has to learn lot from this to avoid the tragedy for the toiling masses.

Further in the course of his speech Dr. Bipanchandra made interesting observation regarding Trotsky's attitude on culture. Trotsky was a man

of great in art, culture and literature. And he did not glorify cultural backwardness of working class who nas to assimilate critically bourgeois culture after coming to power. But it should not be imposed upon anybody. He did not believe in the absurdity of "proletarian culture" so he ardently advocated for socialist movement to wage struggle for acquisition of culture.

At the end his speech Dr. Bipanchandra concluded that Trotsky was not a god but a human being. So he has his weak movements and failures also. His major limitation was to grasp colonialism and peculiar problems of colonial countries and its national liberation movement. Stalin and bourgeois democracy also ignored this problem. India hardly figured in his writings nor Jawaharlal Nehru who was great admirer of Trotsky. This is because he was historically specific and generalised too much from experience of Russian Revolution of 1917. Trotsky never made a deep study of colonialism. Though he fought against the concept of monolithic party but he did not question Lenin's Bolshevik model for the revolutionary party. This is surprising. My critique of Trotsky may be contested as I don't claim expertise on Trotskyism. It is too much to expect from a revolutionary like Trotsky who struggled single handedly against the numerous odds which derailed world working class movement.

The real way to honour Trotsky the greatest martyr of 20th century is to creatively follow his methodology to understand the Indian reality.

On the 17th February the symposium was

held. It was chaired by Dr. S. C. Mishra, the chairman of the celebration committee and attended by 60 to 70 persons. The subject was "Trotsky's contribution to Marxist ideology and struggle for world socialist movement." Prof. Sharad Jhaveri read the paper on "Trotsky as a social scientist", Dr. Vinayak Purohit's subject was "Trotsky's contribution to art and literature" and Dr. Ghanashyam Shah the director of 'Centre for Social Studies', gave his estimate of "permanent revolution and problems of third world". Bhagirath Shah and Bhupesh Shah the secretaries of the celebration committee, spoke on "Transitional programme in extant Indian situation" and "Trotsky on Trade Union".

The representatives of Gujarati and English language news papers like the 'Loksatta', 'Times of India' and 'Indian Express' had attended this function and flashed the news and reports. This occasion had created curiosity and interest for Trotsky and the movement based on his ideas among the political conscious circles of Gujarat where the leftist movement is considerably weak. □

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Leon Trotsky on INDIA

The struggle for national independence, for an independent Indian republic is indissolubly linked up with the agrarian revolution, with the nationalization of banks and trusts (under workers' control), ...other economic measures aiming to raise the living standard of the country and to make the toiling masses the masters of their own destiny. Only the proletariat in alliance with the peasantry is capable of meeting these tasks.

* * *

The Stalinists in India directly support the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois national parties and do all they can to subjugate the workers and peasants through these parties. What we must do is to create an absolutely independent proletarian party with clear class programme.

* * *

Surrounded by decaying exploitation and enmeshed in the imperialist contradictions, the independence of a backward nation inevitably will be semi-fictional and its political regime under the influence of internal class contradictions and external pressure, will unavoidably fall into dictatorship against the people....Gandhi's (Congress) regime will be similar to morrow in India....So long as the liberation movement is controlled by the exploiting class it is incapable of getting out of blind alley. The only thing that can weld India together is the agrarian revolution under the banner of national independence.

A revolution led by the proletariat will be directed not only against British rule but also against the Indian princes, foreign concessions, the top layers of the national bourgeoisie, and the leaders of the National Congress and Muslim League. (1939) □