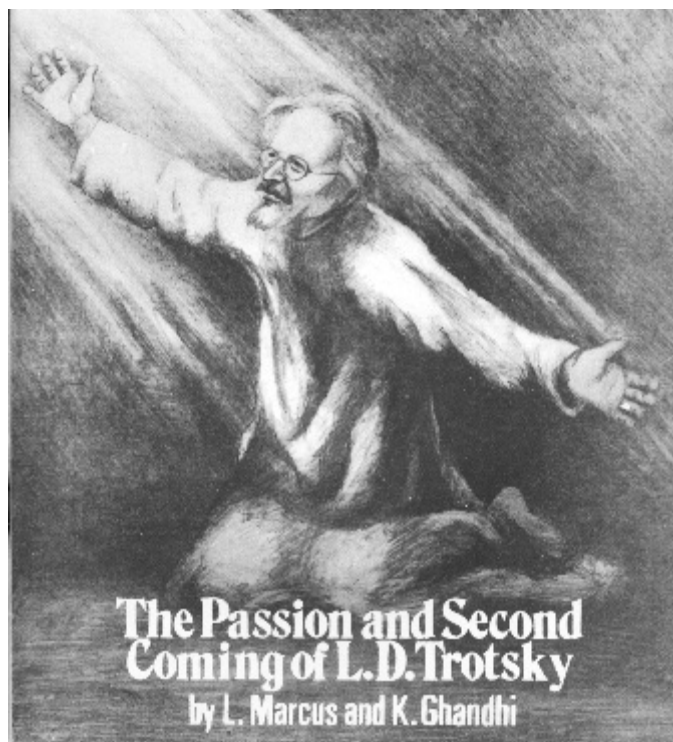


## THE PASSION AND SECOND COMING OF L.D. TROTSKY

by Lyn Marcus and K. Ghandhi

[The original text is found in the Summer, 1974, issue of *The Campaigner*. During scanning, only those occasional spelling "errors," which were obviously unintentional, were corrected. A so-called "spelling error" which was potentially intentional was left alone, and no other corrections have been made. For reference purposes, page numbers, breaking at the first paragraph appearing on even numbered pages from the original text, are in brackets.]

Drawings by J. Sholdebrand



In "The Case of Ludwig Feuerbach" it was shown that the internal categories of modern Christian religious life are in no sense arbitrary. Those doctrines are the *determinate* outcome of the churches' efforts, "organic" efforts over several centuries, to adapt doctrine and ritual to the deepest psychological wants of the victims of capitalist ideology. As religion thus abstracts the common, universal features from the widest assortment of individual and other special neuroses, its doctrines serve as the efficient body of clinical evidence through which to distinguish even the atheistic individual's participation in the universal neurosis (bourgeois ideology) from the special pathetic qualities of his' personal development.

The central images of religion are much more than appropriate constructs. They are not merely fictions which satisfy a neurotic need. They are projections of the characteristic unconscious images from the believers into the realm of doctrine. Nor are they peculiar to religious

believers. They are characteristic of the unconscious life of nearly all victims of capitalist ideology, including such professedly atheistic communities as logical-positivism and "organized Trotskyism."

Nor is the relationship between religion and believer only a contingent feature of secular practice generally. Religious belief reflects the "deepest" aspects of mental life, and consequently it discloses the real pattern of motivations by which nearly every judgement and action of the individual is controlled. The critical, psychoanalytical study of religion is the efficient way to go directly past the surface rationalizations by which people misrepresent their motivations, to thus expose the actual reasons people behave the way they do.

There might be some collateral value to collecting interviews of presently and formerly professed "Trotskyists," concerning their initial affiliation, etc. At best, most of those reports would be unconscious lying. One understands nothing respecting the "Old Trotskyism" (characteristic of groupings during the 1940-58 period) until one studies it as *a cult of the Passion and Second Coming of Christ-Trotsky*, as we do here.

The point to be made through this study is of general applicability for the socialist movement of the 1970's. We shall expose what we identify as a "Trotsky Syndrome," characteristic of the 1940-58 "Trotskyists," but also of the widespread, tragic neurotic flaw of many otherwise promising young cadres throughout the movement today. The syndrome is associated with its victim's self-image as a *self-righteous but impotent individual, doomed to fail*. The image of Trotsky as a brilliant person who failed despite his relatively correct strategic outlook, the image of Trotsky as a "prophet," a tragic hero — almost a living archetype — prompted his self-styled followers to make their own neurotic flaw into a special sort of doctrinal virtue of their faction. Hence, those groupings, especially those of the 1940-58 period, express the phenomenon in a remarkably concentrated form, so much so that it is that neurosis, not Trotsky's ideas, which represented the fundamental doctrine *of practice* for the professed tendency in general.

The parallels between Christianity and the "Old Trotskyism" are not only luridly pronounced, but such a connection bears directly on the "Trotsky Syndrome" itself.

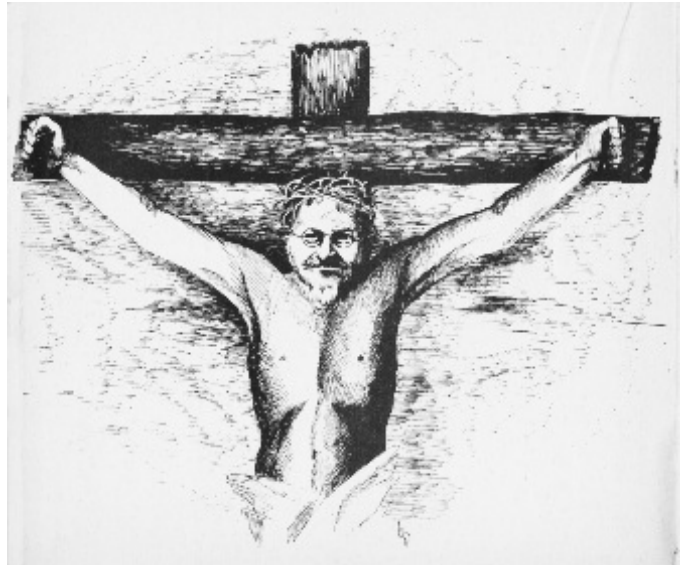
### Trotskyist Theology

To the "Trotskyist," in particular, like Feuerbach's God of the pure understanding, Karl Marx and V.I. Lenin are too purely rational, too perfected, too potent to be directly comprehended by ordinary men and women. "Ordinary folk" can find referents within their mental processes only for gods who are *flawed* as they are. For the identical reason

religion requires a *Messiah*, a God *with man's flaws of passion*, the "Trotskyist" movement cannot directly comprehend Marx or Lenin; it requires a *flawed* God-become-mere-man to *mediate* its relationship to the incomprehensible deities. On this account we have the trinity of Karl Marx (the Logos or "Holy Spirit"), V.I. Lenin (God the judge, the law-giver), and the Christ-Trotsky who failed on earth as ordinary Trotskyists were unconsciously determined to do.

To the "Old Trotskyist," the query, "what will socialism be like?" brought forth in reply an ingenuous Garden-of-Eden sort of chiliastic description: what it might "be like" if, miraculously, Trotsky were to descend to earth again backed by the will of his Heavenly Father. The official "Trotskyist" explications of such a world are infantile, sentimental rhapsody respecting the all-curing remedies of a "workers' society." The 1940-58 "Trotskyist," in particular, never considered what the characteristic problems of workers' society would be, nor how the society would function to actually resolve the necessary crises of expanded socialist reproduction (e.g., the "ecological crisis", the reactionary carry-over of such bourgeois ideology as "nationalism," etc.). Their socialist society was a chiliast's fantasy, whose mere contemplation was presumed to have some wonderfully propitiatory connection to daily party practice.

The "Trotskyists," including — to a certain lesser, degree — Trotsky himself, reflected their professed impotence in hagiolatry. This tradition (the so-called "cult of the personality") spilled over into the world movement from the wretched Lenin-idolatry of even the left opposition itself. In this schema, Trotsky places Lenin above himself, and the "Trotskyist" abjures any notion of equaling or surpassing Trotsky on matters of theory and method. The "Trotskyist" organizations had a sense that somehow the future movement would "throw up new Lenins and Trotskys," it was dogmatically asserted that, naturally, such Second Coming Trotskys would manifest themselves within the leadership of the SWP, etc., but it was more forcefully assumed in *practice* that no actual person in the movement was going to be permitted to develop such eerie qualities. If any member consciously set himself to mastering theory and method, to master these as peers of Lenin and Trotsky, i.e., independently of the "inspired exegeses," he would be treated just as the Church would treat a parishioner who set out to become a second Christ. *The theology of the "Old Trotskyist" movement was the "imitation of Christ-Trotsky," "a sentimental contemplation of the Passion, Crucifixion and Second Coming of Trotsky.* The doctrine of the movement was an exegetical, scholastic, rabbinical "interpretation" of "inspired writings," the high point of "theoretical" achievements a clever quibble respecting the discrepancy between current practice and the ostensible meaning of sacred literary authority on that topic.



These parallels between the "Old Trotskyism" and Christianity are in no way strained, not mere plausible metaphors. We shall demonstrate that here in due course.

The reader who grants, entirely or conditionally, that such parody is existent in the sense we have stated, may suggest a plausible cause for this connection in the pervasive influence of religious teachings and symbolism in the society from which socialists are recruited. This connection exists. As the mind conditions religious forms, those forms reflexively condition the mental processes from which they themselves arise. This is an extremely significant but tertiary aspect of the matter. (It is not astonishing that so much of the festive life of the U.S. socialist movement, for example, mimicked the revival meetings of Protestantism, or that so many socialist and labor-union songs are based on popular hymns.)

More immediately, the centrist socialist demands that the forms of life of his political organization meet those same bourgeois-ideological needs alternately served by religious practices. This must be as much the case for the centrist who has a relatively minimal exposure to religion per se as for his ex-Catholic, ex-Protestant comrades. The requirement is paradoxical: the rituals offered must, on the one hand, conceal their religious quality, and yet credibly fulfill what the believers' unconscious processes accept as a model of that very quality which must be concealed.

Fundamentally, the resemblances arise because both Christianity and "Trotskyism" have a common psychological basis in the bourgeois ideology *almost equally* dominating their respective parishioners. If there were no Christianity to emulate, "Trotskyism" would have still assumed what we are able to actually recognize as the forms of Christian doctrine.

## Stalinist Anti-Trotskyism

The religious quality of centrist socialism is not peculiar to the “Trotskyist” factions. Stalinism, still the essential theology of the Communist Parties, is similarly superstitious. This is a subject demanding extensive analytical treatment in its own name. We treat it here only as that bears directly on Stalinist anti-Trotskyism, a phenomenon through which certain prominent theological features of “Trotskyism” itself are better illuminated.

The official Trotskyist explanations of Stalinism are only far less an edifying hoax than traditional Stalinist counter-statements. For decades, the Trotskyist movement mischaracterized the influence of Stalinism in the same way that Enlightenment counter-theologians atheistically represented religious belief as a simple hoax. It was argued that the awesome authority of the Soviet Union itself, as the certified existent form of anti-capitalism, duped credulous CP members into believing anti-Trotskyist lies from the Kremlin. Until the very early 1960’s, the *raison d’être* of Trotskyist organizations was located in this thesis. It was argued that the successful exposure of those lies would result in Trotskyist relative hegemony within the, socialist movement. It would so finally be conceded that “Trotsky was the true son of Lenin.”

They obsessively ignored the overwhelming evidence of daily life in the socialist movement, that the CP rank-and-filer’s belief in Stalin’s false statements was principally a wishful credulousness. It was not lies that created acceptance of Stalinism, but reactionary outlooks within the CP ranks which created Stalinist lies. Stalin exploited the most fantastic lying, but he was able to secure world-wide currency for those pathetic falsehoods only because the ordinary CP member demanded that its leadership create the most pathetic slanders against the Left Opposition.

The CPers’ hostility to Trotsky is not a result of credulous acceptance of Stalin’s lies, but is a superstitious impulse rooted in a deeply religious obsession concerning his relationship to the CP itself. It is not the lies that cause affiliation to the CP, but affiliation to the CP that cause rank-and-filers to demand the propagation of hysterical edifications from their leaders.

A preliminary insight into the real connections is located by considering the impact of Trotsky’s earlier “Germany” articles and pamphlets on Communist Party members of the 1933-35 period. There is a parallel in the immediate reaction of European and North American CPers during late September and October to the Labor Committee’s predictive analysis — a year before the event — of the way in which Allende’s Chile regime would fall. The obvious vindications of Trotsky’s warnings was cause for the extremes of lying against Trotsky just as the fall of Allende put hysteria into right-wing CPers’ rage against the

Labor Committees. The rank-and-file CPers’ conscience was enraged by the irrefutable evidence (in both examples) that “popular front” realpolitiking is always counterrevolutionary in effect.

The opportunist socialist is, thus confronted by a conflict between his reason (self-consciousness) and his infantile passions for fearful “popular front” gregariousness (his Ego).

This conflict was examined under the caption, “The Agony of Self-Consciousness” in “The Sexual Impotence of the PSP.” One with psychoanalytical experience can identify the obsessive qualities of the conflict as being in proportion to the political phenomena we are attributing to that neurotic impulsion.

We have the following conspicuous features of the CPers’ circumstances to consider. Firstly, as a self-esteeming pariah in capitalist society, a potentially or actually persecuted political minority, he is subjected not only to the rational concerns he requires as a matter of “political combat sense,” but also experiences an acute upsurge of his neurotic “fears of rats.” The neurotic aspect of the matter impels him toward violently propitiatory behavior toward large strata of possible allies — e.g., the social democracy, the liberals. In accordance with lawful psychodynamics, this same neurotic fear plunges him, more intensely than usual, into an obsessive Ego-state, characterized by a more acute ploy of the infantile passions (fear, rage, object elation) and obsessively gregarious impulsions.

*His obsession, his rage, is immediately focused against his own self-consciousness.* He must, so to speak, angrily blind himself to any internal voices which, by exposing the degraded quality of his Ego-impulsions, might weaken or otherwise interfere with what his Ego is grimly determined to do.

Witness the case of CP Chile policy. Since the election of Allende, the CP press throughout the world had held Chile up as a model to be emulated, as the modern road to socialism in the Age of Peaceful Coexistence. To maintain that course in Chile, the CPC endorsed and even incited butcheries and other repressions of Chilean leftists, workers, and farmers. Then, inevitably, in due course, Allende was dumped, fulfilling precisely the course of development of which the CP’s leading socialist critics had warned. How, then, did the CPUSA react to this bloody proof of the suicidal character of its “popular front” policies? It waved Allende’s bloody shirt, made a martyr of the bungling opportunist, plunged hysterically into more extreme manifestations of the same suicidal policy.

Contrary to “Old Trotskyist” theology, discrediting of CP policy does not necessarily result in mass movements toward the organization of the vindicated critics. Usually, as in the Chile case, exactly the contrary occurs.

Demoralization, per se, usually impels the CPer to, lunge more hysterically toward partial reconciliation with some large faction of even the enemy political machines! Contrary to the strategy for Trotskyism associated with the James P. Cannon traditions, the militant working-class rank-and-file is not rational; it is neurotic, and its governing neurosis (bourgeois ideology) *usually* impels it, under stress, toward deeper submission to capitalism.

The demoralized CPer of 1973, like his predecessors of 1934-35, was impelled toward a “popular front” betrayal of rational class self-interest. He plunged into a more profound, more obsessive Ego-state, and became therefore violent in his attitudes toward those, who created internal threats to his hysterical behavior.

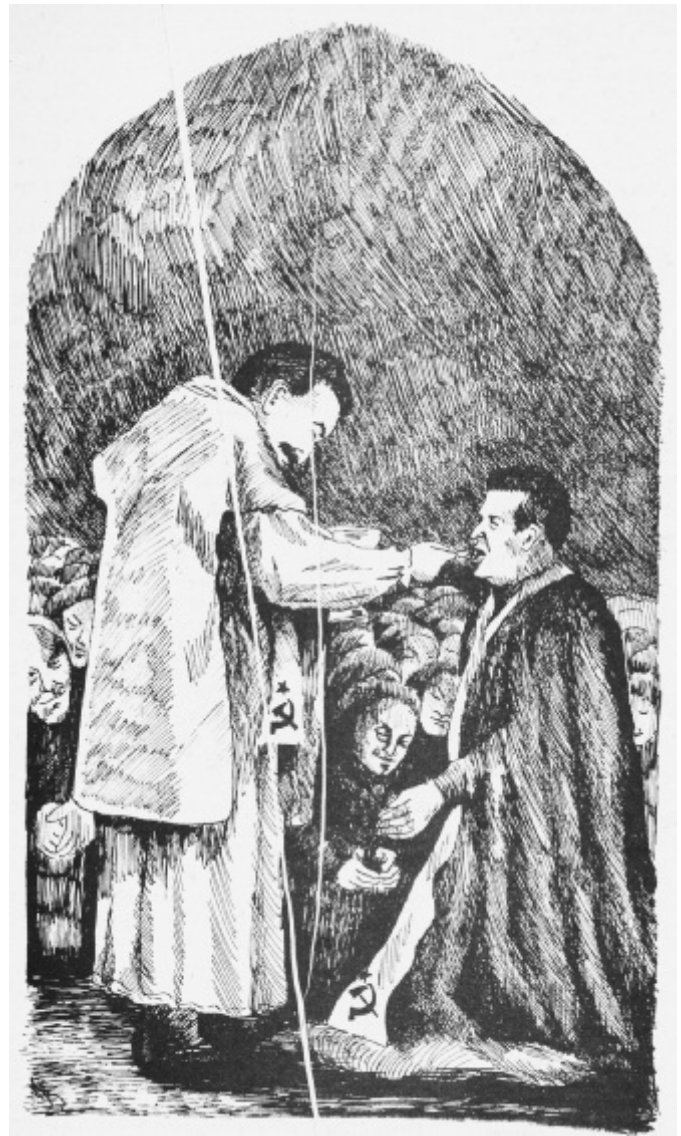
Trotsky’s “Germany” 1929-33 articles, thus paralleling 1972-73 Labor Committee analysis of Chile, speak to the reason, the self-consciousness of (in particular) the CPer. They strengthen self-consciousness, even awaken it. Self-consciousness, informed in its judgement, condemns the suicidal infantilism of the Ego. The Ego lashes back, shrieking in rage, “Don’t try to control me. I know what’s best far me.” The attack on his own restive self-consciousness is accompanied by a vicious attack on external allies of self-consciousness.

Self-consciousness dictates *changing* the mental state of not only the CPer thus affected, but his commitment to that changing of state, from Ego state to self-consciousness, of other CPers, militant. workers, etc., and hence to create new, left-hegemonic revolutionary institutions. It means abandoning the CP perspective of opportunist “peaceful coexistence” tactical maneuvers within the existing capitalist framework, and resolving to change the system fundamentally. This, in turn, means rising above “nationalist” and parochial idiocies generally to establish an international party per se. It demands, in place of reallocating existing produced wealth, a programmatic conception of coordinated world-wide qualitative development of the productive forces.

In every respect, self-consciousness of the *implications* of the Chilean events demands rejecting the view of a fixed order of reality, a view of merely reordering the existing elements of reality. It demands *hubristic* (i.e., Promethean) overview on the wilful qualitative changing of world-wide reality by *each individual*.

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In terms of Christian doctrine, this is to violate the first of Rabbi Ezra’s ten commandments. It is to place Lucifer (Prometheus), the potent god who changes the laws of the universe, above the Apollonian Father-God, the apotheosis of unchangeable laws of the “outer world” (Zeus). That image exactly identifies the root of anti-Trotskyism within



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the mind of the CP rank-and-filer.

The ordinary CP rank-and-filer, like the ordinary, benumbed Catholic, is — in his opportunist phases — a superstitious adherent of the Whore of Babylon (The Virgin Mary). Such a CPer’s professed “materialist” outlook means only that he openly professes a clearer connection to the spiritual Madonna-side of his Mariolatry. The Communist Party is, from a psychological standpoint, unconsciously regarded by most CP members as Mother — i.e., a sort of “Mother Church.”

The typical, hysterically Trotsky-baiting CP rank-and-filer had, contrary to the Trotskyist’s mythology, almost no perception of a system of Stalinist lies about Trotsky. Rather, the CPer “felt” a deep entirely superstitious, irrational fear of Trotskyism, just as the Christian similarly

feels superstitious fear of Lucifer.

*Lucifer, not Satan! Thorough and far-reaching capitalist Christian doctrine properly identifies Satan as the patron essence of witches. It is Stalin, the unifying symbol of the Big Whore-Mothers of the World, who exactly fulfills the theological and psychoanalytical qualifications of Satan: ignorant, boorish, superstitious, sensually sadistic Stalin is a perfect Satan. It is "the God of Light," Lucifer, which is hated by all whores.*

Why should such a religious hatred of Trotsky be thus so peculiar to Stalinists? Why do so few Trotskyists, anti-Trotskyists, and others outside the CP fail to experience that particular feeling or know of its decisive role within CP ranks? Not only do Labor Committee recruits from CPs universally report this phenomenon, but once one has discovered the fact, CP literature readily affirms the hegemonic pervasiveness of that syndrome.

The special impotence of the CPs is the key to this, the effect of that special quality of impotence on the new recruit.

Is this not the same, essentially, as Trotskyist impotence? Why attribute any special qualities to it therefore? It is not the same. Mass-based Communist Parties have been repeatedly in a position to undertake the seizure of power in the advanced capitalist sector (Germany, 1923; France, Italy, etc., 1944-46) and have turned away from such manifest opportunities each time. The same trait is reflected in a far greater number and variety of the lesser openings representing major opportunities for building toward the critical juncture of state power. Unlike the Trotskyist groups, which except in Ceylon — never enjoyed so much as a distant perspective of left hegemony in any country, the Communist Parties have a trait of constantly sabotaging major historic opportunities repeatedly presented to them: almost an obsession with political abortion of this sort.

The new CP recruit, especially the cadres drawn from the working-class organizers of mass upsurges, enter the party with a commonly fierce devotion to quickly changing the world. There they soon encounter pervasive qualities which destroy their revolutionary commitment. The new recruit expects fiery intellectual passion in CP leaders; he meets philistine cynicism and boorishness the Babbitt-smell of bureaucratic functionaries. He expects revolutionary theory, sweeping strategic conceptions, a scientific ruthlessness of precision respecting tactics. He finds the same "realpolitiking" squatness of intellect and moral outlook otherwise typical of a union official. The banal stink of "practicality" (realpolitiking) is like the moral climate of an ill-kept outhouse. On one level he quickly realizes that "this bunch of clowns can't lead a revolution." Yet he believes that that miserable organization is the only socialist force relevant enough to build a socialist influence

in his country. He compromises, remaining in the CP, he makes a disastrous moral compromise within himself. Hence, the typical pattern: the longer a formerly revolutionary recruit remains in the CP, the more successfully he advances within it, the more morally benumbed he becomes.

It is the discrepancy between a once-aroused self-consciousness and a "disciplined" enforcement of Ego-state political outlooks and practice, which causes the distinct, acute syndromes peculiar to the CP. The CPer is usually more susceptible to self-consciousness, hence more vulnerable to, more threatened by addresses to his reason. He must repress this fact, "to live with himself as a CPer," and force himself, with "fanatical discipline," into Ego-state politics, become a devout adherent of political whorishness. Hence his fear of Lucifer.

It is widely characteristic of CPers that their deepest superstitious hatred of Trotskyists is cathexized to the words "outsiders" and "intellectuals." "Outsider" has a double meaning. It identifies the "outsider" within the CPer himself, the self-consciousness which is the hated outsider to his own witch-dominated Ego. It also reflects the notion of "outsider" originating in infantile mother dependency, showing thus the bourgeois-ideological content of CPUSA daily practice (parochialism, modern Jeffersonism, etc.). "Intellectual" is the word which often brings up the CPers' fiercest hatred, not accidentally: it reflects the hostility of the obsessed Ego to the CPers' non-self-consciousness, rage against those who would attempt to awaken his own reason to domination of his own mind.

The latter phenomenon is more generally endemic outside the CPUSA in a common hostility toward those who demand self-conscious thinking. Usually, the real motives of the philistine leftist are crudely disguised by a fallacy of composition. The pseudo-intellectuality of ordinary classroom life, itself a reflection of Ego-state domination, is cited as if the moral indifferentism of "kosher" scholars were the taint of actual intellectual life. Two things are to be recognized in regarding a related syndrome as "special" to Stalinists. Firstly, as we have noted, the CPer who was recruited from labor organizers of a revolutionary disposition joined the party as an individual of relatively unusual heightening of self-consciousness, thus distinct from the ordinary working-class philistine whose adolescent and adult life is one of unrelieved banality. Secondly, respecting the widespread philistinism of the left generally, the Stalinist *Proletkult* tendency is qualitatively more vicious, in the terms we have already identified this point.

More broadly, the CPers' essentially superstitious hatred of Trotskyists is reflected in such expressions as, "They are ... slimy ... somehow alien ... not right ...." Contrary to the cited commonplace Trotskyist myth, the CPer has no explicit motive whatsoever for his "Trotbaiting." It is

entirely an irrational feeling; that it is no more than a linear sort of emotion (hence an infantile emotion) the CPer reflects by giving an “infinite” referent for his attitude: “They are capable of anything” — generalized “evil.” Therefore, he demands that his press and leaders fabricate a plenum of lies concerning Trotskyists.

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His mental state, a generalized, “linear infinite” form of infantile, superstitious fear/hatred, corresponds to the anxiety of an endlessly recurring nightmare. His mind is a *schwaermerei* of fragments of irrational feelings and fleeting images, literally a “bad infinity” state. He demands a “cadence” to bring this kaleidoscopic swarm to a resolution of sorts. His infantile state demands something “definite” to replace the ambiguity. He will therefore seize upon any vicious slanders — the wilder the better to his ends — with the most intense outpouring of infantile elation of object-possession, i.e., with obsessive wishful credibility. He will believe the most fantastic assertions. This credulity corresponds to his Satanic (i.e., whorish) “infinite” feeling: “Trotskyists are the essence of a universal evilness, hence capable of anything.” Yet even that criterion of credulity is relatively secondary to the psychodynamics of his superstitious obsession. He hysterically clings to any concrete fabrications because his anxiety demands the elation of possessing *any* such “objective” possessions.

The Trotskyist who suggests that the lies are the causal factor are themselves hysterically refusing, to acknowledge the preponderance of the very evidence which has most preoccupied their attention. The “Moscow Trial” fabrications are exemplary. (For economy, we limit our immediate attention to the acceptance of the show-trial fantasy outside the Soviet Union.)

There was *never* the slightest basis for believing the charges against the principal defendants of the *Yezhovschina*. The overwhelming majority of Lenin’s Central Committee, headed by Trotsky, were alleged to have conspired in covenant with Adolf Hitler for a capitalist restoration in the U.S.S.R. Mussolini’s immediate and continuing enthusiastic support of Stalin exemplifies the obvious point. Even a *rational* empiricist watching from a telescope on Pluto would not have ignored the obvious falseness of the whole affair. The Dewey Commission’s report is also exemplary.

The widespread “comsymp” acceptance of the Moscow Trial fabrications is significant. From the Seventh Congress (1935) through the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact, Stalinist policy was the “popular front” of “peaceful coexistence,” in which Communists subordinated their organization and its supporters to alliances with social-democrats and “liberal” capitalist factions. The thrust of the Moscow Trial terror in the capitalist sectors was directed against opponents of this support of capitalist factions. The

Consymp and liberals generally consciously acknowledged his own bitter hatred of the socialist factions against which Stalinist terror was directed — just as liberals, headed by the *New York Times*, again, in 1973, openly conspired to assist the Communist Party U.S.A. against the Labor Committees. The pro-F.D.R. fellow-traveler and liberal recognized that the “Trot-baiting” of the CP was directed against the liberals’ opponents and represented the CP’s virtual dissolution of socialism into the left-wing of the Democratic Party.

The Moscow Trial falsehoods could not have been the *cause* for *anyone’s* acceptance of anti-Trotskyism. Hence, as subsequent history confirms (the Khrushchev “revelations”), the mere repudiation of those falsehoods would not diminish anti-Trotskyism in the least. However, the Trotskyists had to believe the specious explanation of their own reasons. If the Trotskyist y acknowledged the preponderance of the clinical evidence, he would be obliged on this account to reject his own obsessive conceits concerning the “objectivity” of political processes. He could have been compelled to locate Stalinism in the psychopathic processes we have identified, and by implication *examine his own mental processes by the same method*.

It was the Trotskyists themselves, including Leon Trotsky only to a lesser degree, who were obsessively compelled *to deny that Stalinist anti-Trotskyism was entirely a religious matter*.

## The Evolution of Trotskyist Doctrine

It should be neither surprising nor regarded as strained metaphor that a theology such as **Trotskyism** is characterized by successive *apostolic*, *episcopal*, and *agnostic* phases. As we have already emphasized, it is the *episcopal* or “Old Trotskyism” phase, typified by the 1940-58 period, which characterizes the cult in its exemplary form. However, to understand this middle, characteristic phase, it is essential to see its roots in the *apostolic* period; by considering the lawful outcome of “Old Trotskyism” in its agnostic successor, we are able to readily demonstrate features of the “Trotsky syndrome” which might otherwise appear unduly subtle to many.

The apostolic period dates from the last period of Lenin’s illness, 1923, to the assassination of Trotsky’s son Leon Sedov, 1938. The significance of the latter date is that it corresponds to the transfer of the organizing, center from Paris to New York City, or the placing of de facto control of the world tendency in the hands of the actually *Zinovievite* centrist faction of James P. Cannon et al. There is a *limited analogy* to Marx’s transfer of the headquarters of the First International to the U.S.A. The *Yezhovschina* had successfully obliterated the last *organized* remnant of the

actual Left Opposition. The death of Sedov and the pathetic state of the squabbling factions in Britain and France ended the immediate prospect for an organized faction actually representative of Trotsky's *direct* political influence.

1938 also corresponds to the ritual of establishing the self-styled "Fourth International." Isaac Deutscher's opposition to that organization has a double significance. Deutscher's argument is ironical in fact. He correctly regarded the pretense of the founding as farcical *in any ordinary terms of reference*, but thus rejected the urgent, rather desperate reasons which made that step *therefore* indispensable. The very fact that the Left Opposition had been wholly crushed in its efforts to become a significant force prescribed *the absolute historic urgency of establishing some encysted germ-form in which the basis for a new movement even decades hence — might be reasonably provided*. At the same time, the refusal of Deutscher's faction to participate in the new organization to the latter, historic purpose contributed to making the "Fourth" the farce it became in fact. Indeed, Deutscher's misguided position exemplifies the wretched circumstances which forced Trotsky to capitulate to the proprietary claims of Cannon et al. (We shall return to this point below.)

The second phase, the episcopal, begins with the consolidation of Cannon's position as "first bishop" by the circumstances accompanying Trotsky's death. Trotskyism as a subject had ceased to be located in the initiating activity of Trotsky and had been relocated in the "rabbinical" authority of the established organization, to interpret and amend the "literary heritage." The subject-form of Trotskyism was reified absolutely, from the theoretical-strategic terms of Trotsky's reference to the practical family interests of the organized faction *in itself*.

"Trotskyism" in the sense of Trotsky's historically located authority, his strategical outlook and methods, was degraded from subject to mere principal predicate. The former predicate, the organized actualization of strategy as daily practice, became the subject-form. The alienated object-form of the determinate, mediating activity was asserted to be the primitive, fundamental reality; the former essence, the strategic conception of goal became the determinate expression of the self-reproduction of the organization as an entity-in-itself.

Trotsky's personal history and writings became the mere attribute, the mere possession (heritage) of the (principally) SWP. "Once the truth about Trotsky's genius is generally recognized, the SWP will enjoy the resulting ..." capital *gain in its assets*.

The apostolic or "Old" Trotskyism characteristic of the 1940-58 period was formerly oriented to the inevitability of such developments as the Khrushchev "revelations" and the Hungarian revolt. It was the fundamental self-estimation

peculiar to the episcopal phase that the final exposure of Stalinist anti-Trotsky lies would lead directly to the rapid left-hegemony of organized Trotskyism at the first succeeding radical upsurge. Therefore the "Old Trotskyism" collapsed in demoralization as soon as the initial experience of a new radical upsurge (1958-60) had made a mockery of this fundamental doctrine.

The episcopal phase collapsed beginning approximately the end of 1960. For most of the groups, excepting the leading British faction and its allies, the "Old Trotskyism" had failed them. Not only had the Khrushchev "revelations" and Hungary failed to give them left hegemony, but the new radical upsurge had apparently bypassed even the labor movement itself, in favor of a new kind of social revolution identified by "Third World" struggles generally and epitomized by the case of Cuba. The entire "Trotskyist" movement fragmented into sundry variations on two themes. The majority of the forces, at the beginning of the 1960s, coalesced around the "Cuban model" of the "brand new" phenomenon of "Third World" struggles. The minority a few years later (1965-66) retreated entirely into sectarian encystment.[19]

The *agnostic* phase formally begins during the 1961-63 period of unification of the "bishoprics" of Cannon-Dobbs (SWP) and Ernest Mandel-Pierre Frank. The initial impetus for this was provided by direct informal negotiations between Mandel and one of Cannon's principal heirs of the 1940-60 period, Murry Weiss. The temporary thesis of those discussions was the perspective of wooing Fidel Castro and his worldwide following to a reconstituted "Fourth International" of which Castro would presumably become principal spokesman. This particular illusion was dispelled soon enough, but it is nonetheless of decisive clinical importance for an understanding of the essence of "New Trotskyism." This harebrained hope was an impulsive objectification of an emerging but generally formless world outlook; like the Stalinist anti-Trotskyist lies treated above, the obsessive objectification of Castro as prospective leader of the "Fourth International" was an attempt to reduce the anxiety of kaleidoscope fragments of feeling and images to a consoling cadence of fixed-object goals.

Two theses of more enduring and profound importance for the worldwide evolution of the "New Trotskyism" were developed by other SWP spokesmen. The key argument used to rationalize the transition from "Old" to "New" was developed by the eclectic Joseph Hansen. The rationalization for generalizing Hansen's thesis into its present counterinsurgency expression was developed by an SWP admirer and collaborator of Detroit's Reverend Albert Cleage, George Breitman. As Weiss and his short-lived thesis faded from the SWP in 1963, these two doctrines rapidly emerged as the exemplary models for sweeping overthrow of the "Old Trotskyism."

Hansen's thesis had the importance, at the time of its introduction, of stilling the consciences of an SWP majority which was still cathected to the catch-phrases of the old doctrine. He insisted that since the Cuban two-phase revolution reflected the "theory of permanent revolution," that the Cuban leadership was an "organic" (possibly "unconsciously" so) expression of Trotskyism. The conspicuous general feature of his thesis was his amalgamation of two distinct problems. Demagogically exploiting the obvious fact that the second Cuban Revolution had been realized as a conscious establishment of a *deformed workers' state*, [20] he argued that the non-socialist Fidelista movement of the first bourgeois-nationalist revolutionary struggle represented a *repeatable* model, an *alternative policy-model, for willful accomplishment of socialist revolution*. This is the germ-form of the "New Trotskyism."

### "Permanent Revolution"

The application of "permanent revolution" to Cuba is most instructive in several ways — none of which Hansen did or would concede.

The "theory of permanent revolution" was developed, as an alternative to the Adler-Menshevik "theory of national stages," by Rosa Luxemburg during the early and middle part of the 1890s, initially set forth in her doctoral dissertation. [21] For Luxemburg this thesis had two interconnected features.

Using the industrial development of Russia in Poland as her chief point of illustration, she attacked the cretinism of the theory of relatively autarkic national phases of political-economic development. The capitalist world was characterized by a worldwide interdependence of the productive forces, so that the quality (phase) of development of the productive forces within a national subsector was determined by the quality of capitalist development, as a whole, a quality epitomized in the dominant sectors. Thus, if the economic maturity of the dominant sector specified a ripeness for socialist transformation, then all sectors were overripe for directly socialist revolutions.

Her second, connected thesis was the point that this circumstance of the economic basis restricted the quality of working-class self-consciousness to the class-for-itself form of internationalism, in respect to which "national" working-class consciousness was a chimera, an antisocialist bourgeois-ideological relic. By catering to "nationalist" revolutionary ideology, the socialists were conciliating counterrevolutionary tendencies.

Through Luxemburg's strong influence on Parvus during the immediately following period, a bowdlerized

version of her conceptions appeared in the Parvus-Trotsky version of the "theory of permanent revolution" following the 1905 Russian revolution. This is not to imply that Trotsky merely plagiarized Luxemburg on this account. The experience of 1905 showed that the Russian capitalists, tied to world capitalism, could not satisfy Russian popular bourgeois-democratic interests for agrarian reform, etc. The same experience also demonstrated not only the need for direct movement to a Russian workers' government, but the need to *subsume* the bourgeois-democratic material aspirations of the peasantry within a socialist program and struggle for soviet power. Trotsky's 1905-06 experience demonstrated to him the insoluble contradictions of a "stages" tactic within the context of *national* workers' revolutionary struggles.

In an important sense, Trotsky was an internationalist *relative to* the Mensheviks, the social-democracy, and Stalin. The workers' movement of each country must support a socialist struggle policy for all other countries. However, he differed absolutely from Luxemburg in the respect that he, like Lenin, never overcame his vestigial bourgeois-ideological premise of self evident national divisions of the workers' immediate struggle, nor did he ever comprehend the actual notion of socialist expanded reproduction even to the qualitative extent that Luxemburg did.

Despite their otherwise important differences, relative to Cuba, Luxemburg's and Trotsky's notions of permanent revolution broadly concur in immediate analytical practice. The Cuban Revolution could not fulfill the promised measures in the self-interests of the urban and agrarian proletariat within capitalist order. Castro had to either sell out the proletariat, as Allende's government did, or nationalize the principal Cuban productive forces under some approximation of a self-government of the working class. To survive imperialist blockade and other countermeasures, he was compelled to align Cuba with the Soviet sub-sector of the world economy.

In this respect, Castro's comprehension of "permanent revolution" was metaphorically comparable to the understanding of Kepler's law by a falling iron ball.

### The "New Trotskyism"

On this point there are several grotesque fallacies in Hansen's fraudulent theses.

To the extent that the "spontaneous" socialism-in-fact of the Cuban Revolution is indeed positive, the same spontaneous reality dictates Cuba's assimilation within the Soviet bloc (not the "Fourth International"), a bloc under the political control of the Soviet bureaucracy. All fortunate Cuba-like revolutionary developments could only, *taken individually*, lead to the same result.



More grotesque is the assumption that the Cuban Model is *repeatable*. Castro succeeded in his first revolution because the USA gave the preponderance of its support to the overthrow of Batista by the alliance of which Castro was then a part. The U.S. government did not imagine that a force developing in the manner of the popularly-based July 26th Movement could be capable of even contemplating effective steps toward a workers' economy. Imperialism was caught off guard, and unable (for political reasons) to reorient itself toward the kind of policy which would have prevented Castro's success until mid-1960, after the new Cuban state had consolidated itself. After 1960, no Cuban-Model revolution could occur anywhere. (When this particular criticism was made against Hansen's thesis, he went into what is for him a public rage.[22] His whole thesis was being exposed on what was, for him, its most vulnerable, most indefensible point: his fraud of implying *repeatability*.)

More generally, Hansen's thesis was entirely an effort to exclude the decisive role of self-conscious revolutionary vanguard organization from socialist revolution. In his original representation such an explicit profession was sedulously evaded. What his private views were on this he carefully avoided revealing. He merely insisted that spontaneity was *also* — in *fact!* — a revolutionary method; he tended to say, but avoided debating whether he saw this only as supplementary or, as he strongly implied, a new wave, even the characteristic method for the succeeding period. In any case, the extreme, spontaneist method became the later SWP and Hansen — policy of "New Trotskyism."

Essentially Hansen's thesis broke with actual Marxism and the "Old Trotskyism" alike in these points: (1) The Trotskyist movement 'had no perspective of organizing socialist transformations — at least, for the indefinite future; (2) revolutions required no programmatic-strategic impetus and method; "program" was degraded to a recipe-collection consulted for the purpose of submitting polite suggestions to spontaneist movements; (3) no foreseeable perspective for socialist transformation in the advanced sector; (4) the abandonment of even the pretense of Marxian conjunctural analytical methods in preference for blatantly empiricist methods of extrapolation from "current trends." His attempt to reconcile the tailist approach to spontaneity with "permanent revolution," and his status as former chief guard at Coyoacan were stressed to insert the fundamental break within the appearances of theoretical continuity — a package designed to soothe the tattered consciences of the demoralized, tired, and credulous "old cadres."

The *overtly* vicious break occurred during late 1962 and 1963 in Breitman's "theory of Block Nationalism." Hansen's Cuban-Model formula was applied to spontaneist petit-bourgeois black nationalist ferment, to order a tailist approach to the SWP's daily practice. Tentatively at first,

this thesis was extended to its consistent corollary, that the SWP had essentially written off the working class as a revolutionary class force. If we take into account the organic changes in SWP membership which ensued in an organization adapted to the Hansen-Breitman "New Trotskyism," the replacement of "old cadres" by anarcho-syndicalist "New Left" strata of increasingly virulent anti-labor moods, we can correctly say that *there is a direct connection between the 1960-63 Hansen-Breitman initiatives and the SWP's present policies as an active supporter of CIA-type and actual CIA counterinsurgency activities in the USA.*

The reactionary CIA-controlled SWP of today is the extreme expression, the proto-fascist result, toward which the "New Trotskyism" everywhere tends to converge. "Proto-fascist" is no factional exaggeration in the case of the SWP majority and leadership. Perfervid petit-bourgeois anarcho-syndicalism (radical "local control" militancy) is exactly that Dionysiac form of enraged heteronomy ("pluralism") which is the essence of all mass-based fascist movements.

## Cannon and Dobbs

Especially because of the initial period of absolute hegemony of the Cannon "papacy" (1940-1952), the SWP is an even more precise model of the "Old Trotskyism" than its 1961-73 version is the extreme prototype of the "New."

The Cannon faction was a product of the old trade-union opportunist Cannon-Foster clique from the CPUSA of the 1920s, which, had been most strongly oriented toward Gregory Zinoviev during most of that period. At the point of Cannon's expulsion, this political character was embodied in the draft program of that CPUSA faction. Not only was this policy the official policy of the newly-established Communist League of America; but it was the cornerstone of SWP domestic policy throughout the 1934-1949 period, and the policy toward which the party hoped to return throughout the subsequent period of reaction (1950-57).

It is most relevant to contrast the Cannon-Foster program with such Trotsky writings of the "Germany" period as "What Next?" or his "Whither France?" Despite Cannon's strong personal attachment to and awe of Trotsky himself from 1928 onwards, Cannon was always a Zinovievite politically. In 1928, at the moment of his "Damascus Road," he was a standard anti-Trotskyist CPUSA bureaucrat personally aligned toward Zinoviev. He happened to join Trotsky at a moment when the joint opposition (including Zinoviev) was being thrown out of the CPSU, but before Zinoviev had recanted. These curious features of the Cannon Pauline conversion to Trotskyism are significant exactly because Cannon remained a Zinovievite in practice for as long as he was active in the SWP

leadership.

[44]

There was always a large gap, to say the least, between the Cannonite conduct of U.S. Trotskyist domestic matters and Trotsky's policies and methods. *Cannon was, so to speak, a Trotskyist in foreign policy.*" This was the case even during Trotsky's lifetime.

The conflict shows up luridly in the stenogram of June, 1940 debates between Trotsky and SWP leaders concerning policy toward the CPUSA's proposed presidential candidacy of Earl Browder. Trotsky there goes further toward a factional attack on Cannonism than the record shows otherwise. There is nothing accidental in that appearance, since other indications exist of his growing estrangement from Cannon's labor lieutenants, Cochran and Dobbs, during the same period. He (properly) accuses Cannon et al. of an opportunistic adaptation to the pro-capitalist ideological currents among trade-union *rank-and-file militants*. He makes this charge repeatedly, his cold anger on the issue indelibly showing even from the version of the transcripts published by the SWP leadership. He is accusing Cannon et al., accurately enough, of being outright centrists (viz., outright Zinovievites).

There are portents of this in earlier proceedings. Throughout his relationships to the SWP, Trotsky crossed swords with the leadership on account of various expressions of the latter's characteristic philistinism respecting principled theoretical matters. The scandalous case of the Burnham-Schachtman "Intellectuals In Retreat" is exemplary, as is his precise language of "critical support" to the Cannon tendency (the "viable" tendency) during the 1939-40 split struggle. Cannon occasionally reciprocated, especially on the "organizational question," with cautious "independence" from Trotsky's authority.

To Cannon, the organization was always the subject, and its "Trotskyist" professions the organization's principal predicate. From the 1934 Minneapolis general strike onwards, the revolutionary strategic perspective became increasingly a chiliastic self-distinction of an organization which, back in the "trade-union business," was principally situated in the pursuit of Cannon-Foster traditional practices.

The extreme version of this is expressed by Cannon's now-retired heir, Farrell Dobbs.

When Dobbs, in 1964, publicly asserted, "The party is everything," one of his impressionable young critics triumphed, "Bernstein!" The critic, an individual typically slovenly and shallow in political matters, missed the point. Bernstein said: the *movement* is everything *not the party*. The "party is everything" is the expression appropriate to

Bernstein's centrist opponents, Bebel et al. The young impressionist was committing slovenliness in overlooking the distinction. The secret of *the connection between* the "Old" and "New" Trotskyisms has its most revealing expression in the case of the same Dobbs who kicked Cannon upstairs (in 1961-63) in order to preside over the anti-episcopal transition.

There is some parallel between the Cannon-Foster split of 1928 and the Dobbs-Cochran split of 1952. Cannon had been the *political* side of the Cannon-Foster CPUSA clique. Although Foster remained within the CP, this ironically reflected his proverbial muddle-headedness over political questions (from the earliest available record of his activities in the IWW to the end of his career). Similarly, the Dobbs-Cochran tendency of 1940-52 split along the lines of Dobbs' commitment to *politics* as he understood it. In the 1952 break, it was Cochran who expressed the tradition of Bernstein-Legin "the *movement* is everything," and Dobbs the tradition of Cannon and Bebel, "the *party*, is everything." That is the key difference between the *opportunist* (Cochran) and *centrist* (Bebel-Cannon) tendencies in the socialist movement.

Immediately, this would seem to represent a fundamental political difference between Dobbs and Hansen-Breitman, even during the 1961-72 period. It does represent an extremely significant *secondary* difference which would have expressed itself in openly bitter factional forms if Dobbs had enjoyed what he saw as significant opportunities for SWP union base-building during that time. The difference between the Dobbs and Hansen-Breitman tendencies is lodged in their contrasting social orientation. The fact of Dobbs' book, as well as its contained political thesis, shows where essential agreement and secondary factional differences are located.

Dobbs' de facto orientation throughout the 1961-72 period is *essentially* a continuation of his policy from the period of the Cochran split. He states this clearly enough in the passage cited above. His concern is to maintain the continuity (existence) of the political trade-union experience from its point of cessation for him (1950-51) to the day of future re-emergence of such raw ferment. To that extent, he expresses the essence of the Cannonite side of the "Old Trotskyism," if in a bowdlerized form. The opportunist petit-bourgeois social orientation expressed by the Hansen-Breitman; theses is for him a necessary means for bridging a fallow period.

Fundamentally, Dobbs' view is in principled agreement with the methodological approach of Hansen-Breitman. The latter have, in essence, transferred the centrist principles of trade-union orientation to petit-bourgeois milieu, with one notable difference. The petit-bourgeois ferment to which Hansen-Breitman are oriented is, unlike ordinary trade-union "rank-and-file caucus building," more or less

self-defined as *political*. The centrist traditionally represents the party as the *political complement* of the organized labor union movement. The professedly apolitical character of *established* trade-unions is the working point here. In the case of the professedly political petit-bourgeois radical ferment, this fact creates an immediate formal conflict between the socialist party and the “spontaneity” (government-organized or other) which it tails. So the transfer of tailist methods from “labor” to petit-bourgeois strata did involve a crisis respecting the SWP’s conception of the socialist vanguard party.

In a labor upsurge, this difference would have caused a probable split in a Dobbs-led SWP. Was Dobbs insensible of this? The cited book, together with abundant correlating evidence over the 1960s, indicates business-manager Dobbs never took the petit-bourgeois perspective seriously as anything more than a source of party gate-receipts.

That is the essence of centrism. It is the essence of Communism in Dobbs’ vulgarized but otherwise faithful expression of its central distinction. That is key to the irony of Dobbs’ biography: that from the first instant he assumed sole leadership of the SWP, it proceeded to become an increasingly anti-labor petit-bourgeois anarcho-syndicalist cult, and then the LEAA-controlled fascist gang it is today.

### The “Old Trotskyism”

The degradation of Trotsky’s strategical conceptions to a bowdlerized catechism of “positions,” to the dead form of mere predicates of a religion, is the product of essentially the same ruse by which the 1891-1914 SPD partcihnoise similarly degraded the reading of Karl Marx. The kernel of this is Cannon’s “proletarian party” policy, a replication of the “proletarian kernel” policy of the Bebel-Ebert-Kautsky faction of 1907-13.

Taking his views more or less directly from the CPUSA tradition of the 1920’s, Cannon was always personally identified by vulgar social prejudice against revolutionary intellectuals. Although the surviving accounts suggest he was always prudent enough to rationalize his philistinism, by citing valid evidence against academic types of phrasemongering or mere existentialist absurdities, the pervasive dishonesty of his tactic was to amalgamate petit-bourgeois downing with its opposite, rigorous creative revolutionary thought.

The apparent difficulty in presenting a variety of exemplary cases is itself the most telling evidence against him. There was never a program in the SWP or its predecessors for developing promising cadres into qualified socialist thinkers. Any individual who attempted to pursue self-development to such an end was subjected to an increasing pressure of vulgar personal abuse, until he either

resigned or repented. A review of what passed for internally-developed “theory” in the pages of the 1930s and 1940s *New International* and *Fourth International* magazines reflects this. Excepting principally some work by John G. Wright and articles by Trotsky and other *non-SWP* authors, the only decent copy is of an ordinary journalistic sort of popular socialist reporting. Notable evidence includes the now-hoary series of published lectures on “dialectical materialism” by George Novack, a banal collection of vulgar homilies, whose hegemony in that organization is itself preponderant evidence of the wretched standard of “Old Trotskyist” intellectual life. To Cannon, the acceptable model of a party intellectual was a “politically reliable” academic recruit who could popularize the outcome of his bourgeois formal education in his field.

Cannon last exemplified this publicly in a 1964 address embracing the Ford Foundation-sponsored “Triple Revolution” statement as an authoritative bourgeois work for exploitation by the socialist movement. To the SWP leadership, it was sufficient to supplement the practical experience of “the day-to-day movement” with useful selections of reportage, statistics and assorted “new discoveries” from the work of accredited capitalist authorities. The party therefore required a not-excessive number of certified experts who could attend to the culling and popularization of such prefabricated “authoritative materials.”

Although Cannon has been variously reported to have occasionally cited the task of “intellectual hegemony,” the SWP leadership of even his reign was viciously opposed to developing within its ranks the quality of creative activity typified by even the leading revolutionary strata of the pre-1917 European socialist movement.

There was more to this anti-intellectual philistinism than personal social prejudice. *Cannon rejected the Marxian principle that the consciousness of even militant worker-organizers must be qualitatively transformed from a class-in-itself to a class-for-itself content.* He insisted that the militant worker already possessed the socialist world-outlook in an essential, rudimentary form. As the cited passage from Dobbs implies, thus merely simplifying the kernel of Communism, the SWP saw the workers as -requiring nothing more than the *informing* of their *already-existing* “proletarian outlook.” “Theory”, to Cannon et al., was the algebraic calculation of the need for socialism from the informational augmentation of the militant trade-unionists’ existing quality of “proletarian consciousness.”

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The Labor Committees’ Food Program brings forth the problem to be considered in its most accessible form. The worker and his wife who have jointly understood the world problem and the necessary means for self-consciously

remedying that have taken an initial, potentially decisive step from the bourgeois-ideological, parochialist outlook of alienated family life to a self-conscious class world view, the amplification of the food issue by the parallel NCLC-NUWRO Energy Program, the analysis of the bill of consumption, etc., provide such workers with a *qualitatively new sense of personal identity*.

This change is twofold. Not only does it involve a shift from a parochialist (e.g., militant trade-union chauvinist) view to an understanding of world classwide common interest, but it situates that interest *negentropically*. The cited NCLC programs represent Marx's fundamental conception of Freedom/Necessity in the terms of reference of the individual workers' existence, thus providing him the *unique means* for conceptualizing Marx's notion of *human practice*.

The way in which those programs were developed is an integral part of their content. Without that development the programs would not exist.

Immediately, the programs as such were the creation of teams of researchers, technically-qualified specialists, and statistical work, all coordinated by a leadership which was qualified to comprehend and judge the work and its results. These human ingredients of the effort were created, in turn, not only by educational programs in economic theory and dialectical method, but by seven preceding years of intellectual life involving these conceptions, the most intense and energetic intellectual ferment which has been seen in the membership of a political organization in human history to date.

That same distinctive quality of the Labor Committees which creates such materials is the essential resource of cadres who are qualified to sit with individual small groups of workers and present the programs in detail to the effect that those workers can, in turn, competently present the same conceptions to others.

This is the kernel of the socialist organizing process. The building of a socialist working-class mass movement begins with the creation of a vanguard of the qualities the Labor Committees represent today. At that point, the vanguard must proceed with a ruthless quality of *driving patience* to bombard the masses of workers with propaganda for the contrasting net immediate "tangible" result of smoking out a mere handful of exceptional individuals. (Although, at the same time, the "intangible" effects of the mass propaganda are an essential preparation for future fruition.) In this way, through developing such rarer individuals as cadres, the natural leading organic intelligentsia of the working-class social strata are educated and recruited, *their consciousness qualitatively transformed* to the class-for-itself outlook. These cadres, organizing in turn in the pores of the class, represent the growing network

through which organization around the program becomes increasingly influential and then potentially hegemonic.

The assumption of state power by such a mass is an assertion of competence to govern all aspects of political-economic life. Even more significant, the masses' fore-knowledge that it embodies, precisely such qualifications is the essential subjective motivation for its will to assume power.

*Cannon et al. expressly, angrily denied this, rejected the only policy by which a socialist transformation can be organized in the advanced sector.* Their conception of socialism was a transition through a political mass-based organization based principally on the existing trade-unions. The question of actual socialist program was deferred to a future point — and a future organization — after the transition had begun.

Two features are of decisive significance. There is a lack of *the quality of program* required to motivate a mass to make the first step of transition. The very essence of real class consciousness is rejected by the centrist, plainly in order to avoid an unpopular conflict with trade-union parochialist hostility to "outside interference." In sum, Cannon et al. based their "transitional" approach on a pre-capitulation to the form in which bourgeois ideology is expressed among militant rank-and-file trade unionists. The reactionary apolitical aspects of Cannonite policy in the Minneapolis movement, the adaptation to trade-union ideology, from even the period of the 1934 general strike, is exemplary.

Cannon's philistine anti-theoretical attitudes reflected his determination that there was not only, no need to introduce class-consciousness to trade-unionists "from the outside," but that attempts to accomplish this were downright pernicious. He therefore generally kept the party free of even the potential capacity and will to make itself revolutionary in fact.

The philistinism of the SWP required a dichotomy of "Trotskyism" into two parts. The earthly part, daily practice, was Feuerbachian in the worst sense, a vulgar, sentimental plodding left-opportunism toward the parochialism of union militants — as Trotsky angrily indicted Cannon et al. during the cited June, 1940 debate. Since this could absolutely never lead even to serious competition with the more energetically opportunistic CPs, and absolutely never toward socialist transformation, all the party's notions of revolutionary strategy were either relegated to the realm of "foreign policy" or out of even the universe itself, to the chiliastic domain of life after death.

As explored above, the principal miracle upon which the Trotskyist faith of 1940-58 was premised was the ever-coming wondrous day upon which Stalinist lies would be finally exposed and the entire left thus resound with the admission that "Trotsky was, indeed, the only true son of

Lenin.” When this miracle failed to work, during the 1956-61 period, the “Old Trotskyism” collapsed into agnosticism.

The very circumstances of renewed radicalism which had exposed the fraud of this miracle had created an opportunity for the demoralized organization to take on a new form of material existence. The aging functionaries subsisting on a pittance, many of whom had had no “regular life” outside the party for years, could either retire into the shock of impoverished isolation or, try to keep the organization in existence *for themselves* “somehow.” This was the essential point of agreement between Dobbs and the group around Mandel.

So, the fact that the demoralized SWP existed in 1960-67 was itself the principal reason it continued to exist. The “Old Trotskyism” was dead, discredited, but the party machine was still there and could be used for *something*. The Dobbs-Hansen-Breitman alliance used it, each part for a somewhat different particular purpose. The decayed relics of the old centrist method were applied to soliciting gate-receipts from a new social ferment — whatever that might lead towards. To hold the machinery together it was necessary to avoid unnecessary shocks in making the transition. The new agnosticism had to be packaged in the tattered literary trappings of the dead episcopal faith: “The New Trotskyism.”

## The Actual Trotsky

The actual Lev Davidovitch Trotsky is a contradictory figure. In his essential features and his best work he is a near-peer to Luxemburg and Lenin. Intellectually, he compares poorly with the magnificent Rosa, although in this respect he stands considerably above Lenin. He suffers most clearly in contrast to Lenin’s *potency*. Lenin may have been inferior to Trotsky in brilliance, but he was one of the most extraordinary individuals in history in his *capacity to act from self-consciousness*. It was exactly on this point that Trotsky, from 1907-13, 1923-29, and 1938-40, seems a tragic vacillator.

Trotsky suffered a visible agony of self-consciousness on this point. During the most heroic and potent period of his entire life, 1928-34, he is not only aware of his internal neurotic disorder, but manages to largely overcome it on all important matters of that period. Never, before or later, does his writing approach the quality of reflected world-historical comprehension and potent will we encounter in the writings completed during that interval.

## “My Life”

His autobiography, *My Life*, acknowledges his neurotic flaw in several ways. Most notable is his inclusion of the

text of Adolf Joffe’s testament. Joffe identifies the core of the character-flaw with as much perfection as could be attained outside a thorough psychoanalytical treatment:

[blockquote]

“You and I, dear Lev Davydovich, are bound to each other by decades of joint work, and, I make bold to hope, of personal friendship. This gives me the right to tell you in parting what I think you are mistaken in. I have never doubted the rightness of the road you pointed out, and as you know I have gone with you for more than twenty years, since the days of ‘permanent revolution.’ But I have always believed that you lacked Lenin’s *unbending will*, his *unwillingness to yield*, his readiness even to remain alone on the path that he thought right in the anticipation of a future majority, of a future recognition by every one of the rightness of his path. *Politically, you were always right*, beginning with 1905, and I told you repeatedly that with my own ears I had heard Lenin admit that even in 1905, *you, and not he*, were right. One does not lie before his death, and now I repeat this again to you ... . But you have *abandoned your rightness* for the sake of an overvalued agreement, or compromise. This is a mistake. I repeat: politically you have always been right, and now *more right than ever*. Some day the party will realize it, and history will not fail to accord recognition. Then don’t lose your courage if some one leaves you now, or as many come to you, and not as soon, as we all would like. You are right, but the guarantee of the victory of your rightness lies in nothing but the extreme unwillingness to yield, the strictest straightforwardness, the absolute rejection of all compromise; in this very thing lay the secret of Lenin’s victories. Many a time I have wanted to tell you this, but only now have I brought myself to do so, as a last farewell.”

[end blockquote]

This flaw is Trotsky squatting as a tolerated celebrity of the Menshevik “swamp” during the pre-war period. No competent Trotskyist apologist “explanation” can effectively diminish the literal intent absolute sincerity of Lenin’s fierce denunciation of Trotsky’s wretched neurotic character-traits during that period. In such miserable exhibits as his sycophantic public adulation of the SPD centrist “proletarian kernal” in Vienna Pravda, his political life is sometimes even swinish. He survived that worst period of his political life, and never again lapsed back into such personal opportunism. Unfortunately, his principal, related if less ignoble neurotic episodes from 1923 onwards had a decisive effect on the subsequent history of the entire human race.

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The single most important of those lapses is his 1923 violation of his agreement with Lenin, his spasm of moral imbecility in failing to throw Stalin out of the leadership — as Lenin had firmly instructed him — at the moment they

had that philistine son-of-a-bitch in a position to be toppled.[36] Trotsky could speak of the “objective bases” for Stalinism as much as he chose. It is a fact that if the murderous, counterrevolutionary bastard had been chucked out in 1923, there would have been no “Lenin Levy” of bureaucrats into the Bolshevik Party in 1924 — the (“objective”) key ruse by which Zinoviev and Stalin actually accomplished their Thermidorian counterrevolution. That “lapse” is the most important event of that period, which effectively determined — in a certain significant sense — the history of the human race over the past half-century. That was one of those *rare* critical single personal incidents which have the extraordinary quality of determining the course of history.

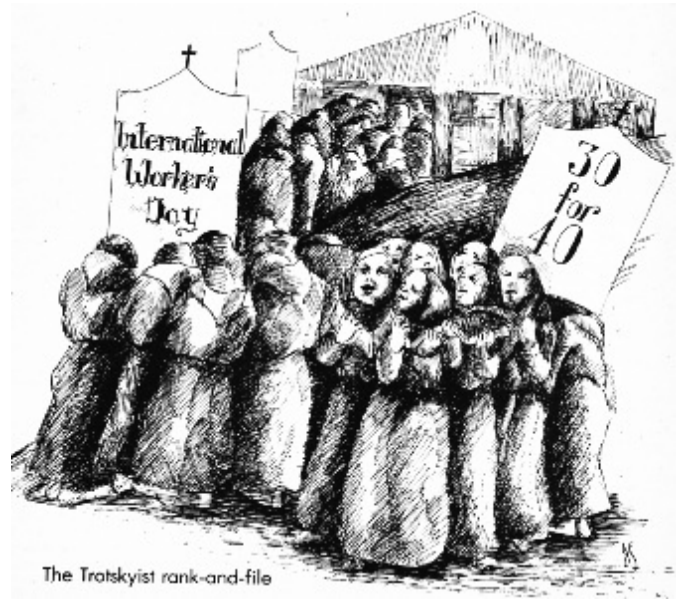
More blatant and only less significant in its results is Trotsky’s lie, denying authorship of his paper, “The; Real Situation In Russia.” This lie destroyed the possibility of building a *significant* Left Opposition outside the U.S.S.R. at the last gasp of opportunity for such an accomplishment.

The June, 1940 stenogram implies a parallel lapse. Why did Trotsky compromise with the urgent task of eradicating the centrist tendency from the SWP leadership? This compromise predetermined the impossibility of a viable Trotskyist organized faction surviving his assassination.

Of course, in estimating the importance of these errors, we are conceding the ‘ importance of Trotsky himself. After the assassination of Luxemburg and the death of Lenin, Trotsky was the only existing person who could have changed the course of history, away from the rise of fascism and the fifty years of continued imperialist domination. Without his neurotic flaw, there is no doubt, given the circumstances of 1923, that he would have accomplished no less. It may also be stipulated that in the three instances cited, a correct action would demand extraordinary perspicacity and a Promethean standard of resolution. Trotsky demonstrably had such perspicacity, and had self-consciously adopted such a, standard of Spinozan morality.

### Trotsky’s Failure

To comprehend the internal life of a man with the special attributes of mind and purpose that characterized Leon Trotsky, and only a very few other individuals in history demonstrably possess such extraordinary human qualities, no ordinary psychological standard will apply. Trotsky himself repeatedly emphasizes just this point. The character of a person’s internal mental processes is to be judged by the effect of those processes upon the course of human development. Is the material and social life of mankind richer because that individual existed? Questions of individual “personality” are meaningless if considered outside of this general criterion.



The Trotskyist rank-and-file

The Trotskyist rank-and-file

This is not only *our* standard of judgement to be imposed externally upon the subject, but it is uniquely the internal standard as well of those individuals who profess a revolutionary Spinozan ethical outlook. That worldview is Trotsky’s outlook precisely. But such a world historical sense of humanity and self-worth entails equally monumental responsibilities. To the extent that an individual has the ability and the opportunity to positively change the course of human history, he *must* do exactly that; nothing less will suffice. *Trotsky’s “tragedy” was that according to this revolutionary ethic, his own ethic, he failed.* And, ironically, it is just this *pathetic* feature of Trotsky’s character, the cause of his most agonized thoughts, which is the ritual subject of Trotskyism’s cult of impotence.

Nothing of what we have said previously concerning Trotsky’s manifest lapses at crucial historical junctures is subject to the slightest doubt. Trotsky commits himself unequivocally to that same evaluation. His views regarding his regrettable behavior during the Russian party split, as well as during the 1907-1914 period are well known. Referring to his agreement with Lenin to fight the Thermidorian clique, he states in *My Life*:

[blockquote]

On December 21, Lenin wrote triumphantly to me: “Comrade Trotsky; it seems that we have managed to capture the position without a single shot, by a mere manoeuver. I suggest that we do not stop but press the attack.” Our joint action against the Central Committee at the beginning of 1923 would without a shadow of a doubt have brought us victory. And what is more, I have no doubt that if I had come forward on the eve of the twelfth congress in the spirit of a “bloc of Lenin and Trotsky” against the Stalin bureaucracy, I should have

been victorious even if Lenin had taken no direct part in the struggle.  
[end blockquote]

Trotsky's manifest qualities of intellect and Promethean sense of purpose rule out, absolutely, the idea that such lapses could have even possibly been mere "honest mistakes." They could only have been the result of a crippling neurotic flaw. In fact, when one examines the two periods in question, it is virtually impossible to miss the disgusting fact that his actions during the cited periods were largely dictated by his concern for peer group opinion. Yet that is precisely the content of all neurosis, including the universal neurosis, bourgeois ideology; the pathological concern to propitiate some internalized body of "opinion" rather than to act according to a scientific comprehension of reality.

In his neurotic desire not to alienate the backward faction gathered around Martov, Trotsky repeatedly gave virtually all of his political principles to pawn; he became little more than a captive literary front man effectively controlled by the Mensheviks. Even they treated him with contempt behind his back. His major literary effort from the period of the initial Russian party split, *Our Political Tasks*, is an exceptionally cheap work, whose main interest is the large quantity of vile slander directed against V.I. Lenin.

From 1907 till 1914 his behavior is similarly reprehensible. His whole relation to the Mensheviks continued off and on throughout the period. As though that were not enough, his emigre participation in the German socialist movement was limited primarily to hobnobbing with the most degenerate philistine backside of that doomed behemoth: the Austrian party and its oleaginous Adlerite stewardship. The odor of the grocery store clinging to these self-satisfied petit bourgeois nobodies was so noxiously overpowering that it could only have been a strong neurotic capacity for self-degradation that allowed Trotsky to tolerate their presence for more than a moment.

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We repeat, he could not have been "merely mistaken"; he otherwise manifests an acute perception of just those psychological qualities which make certain people revolutionary fighters. He becomes especially pathetic in this period when one realizes that he had hardly anything to do with Rosa Luxemburg or her tendency during his sojourn in Vienna.

Indeed, at the time Rosa was one of the few individuals of stature fighting for his "Permanent Revolution" thesis. He could not have avoided an alliance with her if he had actually been engaged in a serious struggle for *his own political perspectives* for the Russian movement. He exhibits

the same *basic* tendency from the last period of Lenin's illness till his subsequent exile. In *My Life*, shortly after he states that *had he fought* he would undoubtedly have been victorious, he goes on to mention his reasons for *not* fighting. (hence, not winning!):

[blockquote]

Independent action on my part would have been interpreted, or, to be more exact, represented as my personal fight for Lenin's place in the party and the state. The very thought made me shudder .... Would the party understand that it was a case of a fight by Lenin and Trotsky for the future of the revolution, and not a fight by Trotsky for the place of Lenin ....?

[end blockquote]

Yet Trotsky's unique historic duty was precisely to "fight for Lenin's place in the party and state." Who else could take Lenin's place? Stalin? Zinoviev, the hero of 1917? Why should Trotsky have cared in the least what the party philistines thought of his "personal" motives so-called, especially since it was by and large just such people that Lenin was determined to boot out of the pay?

Trotsky continued to capitulate to party opinion throughout the ensuing period. Until it was too late, he constantly refused to "break Bolshevik discipline" (actually Stalin's discipline) and launch an open faction fight. When he did fight he persisted in making dangerous compromises, *which he knew Stalin would break* at the soonest opportunity.

Upon Lenin's death, Trotsky spoke in support of the disgusting "Lenin Levy;" yet it was just this indiscriminate recruitment of people lacking any revolutionary qualifications whatsoever which was used by Stalin to choke the Bolshevik party. At the crucial Thirteenth Party Congress immediately following Lenin's death, Trotsky spoke only once, agreed to the suspension of Lenin's will, and spent the rest of his time (invaluable time!) attempting to dissociate himself from the "embarrassing" support of the oppositionist "group of 46." As late as October of 1926 he agreed to "cease all factional activity," only to have Stalin break the worthless agreement within weeks, and then proceeded to disavow important supporters who had been expelled from the Third International, due to their public support of his faction. During the entire period it is not unjust to say that Trotsky spent relatively little time in serious fighting efforts, and a great deal too much time in futile back-room efforts to seduce the treacherous Zinoviev. Nor did Trotsky ever completely destroy this crippling neurosis. As late as December 1939 he could write to John G. Wright, concerning a totally corrupt *potential majority* (!) within the SWP (the Schachtmanites):

[blockquote]

But at the same time, I believe that the implacable ideological fight should go parallel with very cautious

and wise organizational tactics. You have not the slightest interest in a split, even if the opposition should become, accidentally, a majority at the next convention. (*In Defense of Marxism*)  
[end blockquote]

The foregoing conjunctures demonstrate the persistence of infantile neurotic tendencies within Trotsky's internal mental life, tendencies powerful enough to dominate his self-conscious reason at crucial historical junctures. We must now proceed to an examination of the specific quality of those tendencies.

Among most ordinary scribblers of the liberal or socialist variety, it is commonly held prejudice that the so-called "intellectual" outlook of an individual is not usually indicative of a person's psychological state. In fact, as Marcus has demonstrated elsewhere, ideas are never abstract when properly viewed, but rather express the essence of a person's inner map of the world. To believe the contrary is itself conclusive evidence of impotence. It is the hysterical belief of someone who is literally frightened out of his wits at the thought that some other person might indiscreetly peek behind the printed persona to glimpse the more vulgar activity underlying the literary result. One is, after all, not unjustified in assuming that the person who uses mouthwash may indeed be afflicted with bad breath, or at least with the fear of it.

To be more exact, certain central conceptions respecting an individual's epistemological view of the universe suffice to uniquely determine the psychological state of an individual at the time those views are uttered. *Psychology is empirical epistemology*. Speaking schematically, hubristic theories and hypotheses which reflect a living comprehension of "self-reflexive processes," "actual infinites," etc., are singularly characteristic of self-conscious states of mind. Serious preoccupation with fundamental antinomies or paradoxes is characteristic of "enlightened" states, in which an agonized conflict between the ego and self-consciousness is evident. Purely mechanistic notions of "bad infinity" suffice to indicate infantile ego states, and so on.

### Trotsky on Psychoanalysis

In his writings, Trotsky gives two **irreconcilable** accounts of the basis for Stalinism. In his autobiography, he gives the essentials of the correct approach:

[blockquote]

To absorb a certain philosophic outlook into one's flesh and blood, and to make it dominate one's consciousness, and to co-ordinate with it one's sensory world is given not to every one but to only a few. In the working masses, a substitute is found in the class instinct, which in critical

periods attains a high degree of sensitiveness. But there are many revolutionaries in the party and the state who come from the masses but have long since broken away from them, and who, because of their position, are placed in a separate and distinct class. Their class instinct has evaporated. On the other hand, they lack the theoretical stability and outlook to envisage the process in its entirety. Their psychology retains many unprotected surfaces, which, with the change of circumstances, expose them to the easy penetration of foreign and hostile ideological influences. In the days of the underground struggle, of the uprisings, and the civil war, people of this type were merely soldiers of the party. Their minds had only one string, and that sounded in harmony with the party tuning-fork. But when the tension relaxed and the nomads of the revolutions passed on to settled living, the traits of the man in the street, the sympathies and tastes of self-satisfied officials, revived in them. *My Life*.  
[end blockquote]

Yet, in contrast to this, he is also the originator of the crude, mechanistic edification widely cited by vulgar "Trotskyists": the "material greed" piece of "objective" intellectual masturbation. The first reflects the self-conscious Trotsky writing in his best period of life-work; the second represents the dejected Trotsky, forcing himself to continue the struggle while in an infantile Ego-state.

The "charge" of the infantile state is neither exaggerated nor lightly put forth.

The image of the *dejected Trotsky* is not comparable to the ordinary experience of the typical individual falling into maudlin fits of self-pity whenever denied its "own way," or subjected to the sort of oppression commonplace to workers and unemployed in capitalist life. From 1917 onwards, Trotsky was manifestly self-conscious of his special, Spinozan responsibilities to the future existence of humanity generally. He is often represented as "vain," but the reporters infallibly confuse his actual manifestations of Ego-state vanity with an hubristic quality which only imbeciles and philistines would regard as "vanity." The person who has assumed special responsibilities does not value his time or opinions as the mere "democratic equals" of persons who take their own responsibilities or intellectual development carelessly.

*Trotsky's actual vanity is manifest in his spates of self-effacement*. The moments of personal vanity of persons who rise to positions of extraordinary responsibility are moments in which he says in effect, "I have a right to an 'ordinary personal life,' to be liked as an individual, etc." A person of Trotsky's historical peer group, in particular, is, free of infantile Ego-pranks in exactly those moments of firm judgement in which anarchists and other moral imbeciles regard him as "elitist," "arrogant." The person of Trotsky's self-consciousness is reduced to dejection not on his own account, not even on the account of the personal suffering of



immediate friends and family. He is dejected only by failing to fulfill his power to remedy the great affliction of humanity. The weight of personal and *historic* oppression so imposed upon Trotsky is beyond the imagination of the ordinary person.

As we have noted previously, the “reductionist” viewpoint characteristic of classical materialism, empiricism, logical positivism, and existentialism is an infallible reflection of nothing but the domination of the self by Ego/witch identity.

Witness the following exemplary passage from Trotsky on psychology:

{blockquote}

Marxist criticism in science must be not only vigilant but also prudent, otherwise it can degenerate into mere sycophancy, into famusovism. Take psychology, even. Pavlov’s reflexology proceeds entirely along the paths of dialectical materialism. It conclusively breaks down the wall between physiology and psychology. The simplest reflex is physiological, but a system of reflexes gives us “consciousness.” The accumulation of physiological quantity gives a new “psychological” quality. The method of Pavlov’s school is experimental and painstaking. Generalizations are won step by step: from the saliva of dogs to poetry — that is, to the mental mechanics of poetry, not to its social content—though the paths that bring us to poetry have as yet not been revealed.

The school of the Viennese psychoanalyst Freud proceeds in a different way. It assumes in advance that the driving force of the most complex and delicate of psychic processes is a physiological need. In this general sense it is materialistic, if you leave aside the question whether it does not assign a too big a place to the sexual factor at the expense of others, for this is already a dispute within the frontiers of materialism. But the psychoanalyst approaches the problems of consciousness not experimentally, going; from the lowest phenomena to the highest, from the simple reflex to the complex reflex, but attempts to take all if these intermediate stages in one jump, from above downwards, from the religious myth, the lyrical poem, or the dream straight to the physiological basis of the psyche.

The idealists tell us that the psyche is an independent entity, that the “soul” is a bottomless well. Pavlov and Freud think that the bottom of the soul is physiology. But Pavlov, like a diver, descends to the bottom and laboriously investigates the well from there upwards; while Freud stands over the well and with penetrating gaze tries to pierce its ever shifting and troubled waters and to make out or guess the shape of things down below. Pavlov’s method is experiment, Freud’s conjecture, sometimes fantastic conjecture. The attempt to declare psychoanalysis “incompatible” with Marxism and simply turn one’s back on Freudism is too simple, or, more

accurately, too simplistic. But we are in any case not obliged to adopt Freudism. It is a working hypothesis which can produce and undoubtedly does produce deductions and conjectures which proceed along the lines of materialist psychology. The experimental procedure will in due course provide the tests for these conjectures. But we have no grounds and no right to put a ban on the other procedure which, even though it may be less reliable, yet tries to anticipate the conclusions to which the experimental procedure is advancing only very slowly. *Culture and Socialism.*  
[end blockquote]

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There are two features of this to be considered. Firstly, we have evidence of Trotsky’s Ego-state in the mere fact of his regarding Pavlov’s researches as having the slightest direct bearing on a scientific *human* physiology. This on Trotsky’s part is not only explicitly anti-Marxian and anti-dialectical, but is the most banal rejection *at the moment of his writing* of the broadest conceptions of humanism.

What could cause Trotsky, who otherwise knew better, to write such rubbish? The internal evidence of the cited piece gives the answer. Trotsky is arguing from the standpoint of momentary neurotic hysteria: *he is grotesquely elevating poor muddled Pavlov to the status of a scientific psychologist merely as a ruse for slandering Sigmund Freud!* Trotsky is hysterically fearful of psychoanalysis.

He was acquainted with Freud’s work from his period in Vienna, and certainly familiar with enough of its essential features (through the Adler family and so forth) to have recognized its *essential* competence. Indeed, his principled objections to psychoanalysis are identical with the usual empiricist slanders against the identical methodological features of Karl Marx’s writings!

To summarize the working point: the argument that experimental methods in the genre of Pavlov’s, is the “materialist” basis for a human psychology is the rawest, most vulgar sort of epiphenomenalism as well as the purest reductionism of the sort which Trotsky elsewhere usually repudiates in the most emphatic terms.

As to the motives for Trotsky’s silly slanders of Freud here, it is impossible for a person to develop as a revolutionary, showing the psychological insights which Trotsky shows throughout *The History of the Russian Revolution* (for example), until he has encountered the conflict between the Ego-state and self-consciousness in a special way. To a large extent, the knowledge thus acquired overlaps and exceeds the range of factual knowledge of mental processes of psychoanalysis.

The only possible reason such a person would *lie*

publicly as Trotsky does about the general merit of psychoanalysis as the *initiation* of a scientific psychology is that he is at considerable pains to suppress knowledge of certain features of his own mental life.

*Here we are at the kernel v/the "Trotsky Syndrome."* It is typified by the person who asserts to himself, "I know all about my little personal neurotic flaw, but I can function quite nicely, thank you, without rooting it out." The reflection of this personal obsession is support for the policy of limiting issues within the movement to the form of "objective differences" of formulation of "positions," ruling out of order the "subjective" issues.

Trotsky's hysterical attitude toward Freud is not untypical of individuals at certain crucial junctures of their psychoanalysis. Previously, they have made splendid progress, rooting out a wide variety of the Ego's neurotic tricks, showing consequently excellent progress in general functioning, etc. Abruptly, they plunge into an extraordinarily stubborn state of "resistance." They insist, in a variety of alternative sorts of tantrums, that they have gone quite far enough in "giving up my independence."

Trotsky too, "knows all about his problems of episodic impotence, psychosomatic illnesses, etc. He will not give up the residue of his attachment to his mother-image, his recurring lapses into tendencies to gain acceptance within a peer-group through propitiatory ruses of personal political impotence "Leninist organizational discipline." So, just as he wilfully slanders Freud, he wastes much of his invaluable energy and talent concocting elaborate "objective" edifying excuses for what he knows, as Joffe did, to be simply neurotic "cop-outs" with deadly consequences for the movement which he fails during such moments.

## Trotsky and History

A related case of such ambivalent and even childish conceptual states is to be found in Trotsky's widely differing judgements concerning the relation of the individual to history. This must have been an acutely painful conflict, when one recognizes that his conscious identity as a revolutionary hinged on just this question. It is yet more remarkable when one recognizes that *at times* he expressed a completely correct and self-conscious view of the matter, especially, though not accidentally, in *The History of the Russian Revolution*, wherein he correctly attributes an epoch-making role to Lenin. In other places Trotsky hysterically denies the power of the individual to make history, at times even reverting to Plekhanov-like mechanism, coherent with his own earlier denunciation of Lenin for attempting to "force the pace of history."

At the worst, Trotsky's profuse references to Dame History conceal shadings of the neurotic religious idea of

history as an external *destiny*. Ultimately, history is not subject to any human will, but plunges forward according to its own laws. The pathology emerges most perversely in *The Revolution Betrayed*:

[blockquote]

A political struggle of interests and forces, not of arguments. The quality of the leadership is, of course, far from a matter of indifference for the outcome of the conflict, but it is not the only factor, and in the last analysis is not decisive. Each of the struggling camps moreover demands leaders in its own image.

The February revolution raised Kerensky and Tseretelli to power, not because they were "cleverer" or "more astute" than the ruling tzarist clique, but because they represented, at least temporarily, the revolutionary masses of the people in their revolt against the old regime.

[end blockquote]

So far, one may be slightly uneasy, but the tone, and the reference to leadership as a "factor" are not decisive. He continues further on:

[blockquote]

The Bolsheviks in their turn conquered the petty-bourgeois democrats, not through the superiority of their leaders, but through a new correlation of social forces. The proletariat had succeeded at last in leading the discontented peasantry against the bourgeoisie.

The consecutive stages of the great French Revolution, during its rise and fall alike, demonstrate no less convincingly that the strength of the "leaders and heroes" that replaced each other consisted primarily in their correspondence to the character of those classes and strata which supported them. Only this correspondence, and not any irrelevant superiorities whatever, permitted each of them to place the impress of his personality upon a certain historic period.

[end blockquote]

This is the most blatant kind of historical determinism. If the history of the socialist movement in the twentieth century, especially the political history of Trotsky, has any lessons at all, it is that the quality of leadership is *everything*. The only thing inevitable about capitalist history is the collapse of capitalism itself.

In the normal course of capitalist development, the efforts of even the most gifted revolutionary have little tangible effect. It is at those critical junctures of collapse that single individuals visibly alter the physiognomy of world history. To make such a leap into a higher historical "manifold" is an innovative activity exactly the opposite of anything mechanically determined or inevitable.

The distinction here is the same as that between the

finite ordinal numbers and the first transfinite ordinal limit number. The former are created by following out a mechanically determined process of adding units. The latter existence, though it is the absolutely lawful successor to *all* the finite numbers, can not be discovered by following the unending natural increase of the counting numbers into oblivion. Such a new manifold is *created* by “stepping outside” the counting process, and self-consciously comprehending that process as an entirety. (This is the actual meaning of the phrase “quantity becomes quality” so often recited by so-called Marxists.)

In a certain sense, leading individuals are indeed only reflections of the interests and aspirations of their class, but it is the supremely ironic fact that the historic interest of the working class is not to be found in any fixed platform, but in the maximization of creative innovations (as represented heuristically by momentary exponential tendencies for the rise of  $S/(C+V)$  that determine that the uniquely appropriate representatives of a revolutionary working class are not the normal order of philistine politicians or swinish trade union bureaucrats, but the most gifted creative innovators-revolutionaries. Trotsky gives a high expression to this view in *The History of the Russian Revolution*:

[blockquote]

... Lenin was not a demiurge of the revolutionary process, that he merely entered into a chain of objective historic forces. But he was a great link in that chain. The dictatorship of the proletariat was to be inferred from the whole situation, but it had still to be established. It could not be established without a party. The party could fulfill its mission only after understanding it. For that Lenin was needed.

... From this extraordinary significance which Lenin's arrival received, it should only be inferred that leaders are not accidentally created, that they are gradually chosen out and trained up in the course of decades, they cannot be capriciously replaced, that their mechanical exclusion from the struggle gives the party a living wound, and in many cases may paralyze it for a long period.

[end blockquote]

It would be wrong to view his own particular lapse of intellectual power as the result of Trotsky's simple desire to “cover up.” his personal role in Stalin's victory. The conception at issue is the core of the dialectic method itself, and of Marx's central notion of expanded reproduction in particular.

The problem posed for conceptualization is no different from the question of the original evolution of man from the animals. Neither socialist society, nor man in general, emerges mechanically from a previously determined process; rather, they *distinguish themselves* from all predecessors, because their essential nature is defined not as just another

external category, but by qualities of *self*-development. Marx underlines this kernel of his method in the opening paragraphs of *The German Ideology*.

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The implications of this lapse on Trotsky's part are legion. Most important, however, is the immediate psychological point to be made. It is not insignificant that this type of antinomy, or even crude mechanism, arises most frequently when Trotsky is considering questions most directly relevant to the sense of revolutionary identity. His ego connives to preserve a finite realm for itself.

In effect, Trotsky rationalizes his failure of the 1923-1928 period by saying, significantly, that he will be the first servant of history, but he refuses to its master. By asserting that ultimately there is something un-cannot [sic] be submitted to human will, he is justifying the existence of a part of himself which refuses to submit to his own self-conscious will. Trotsky's world is not the absolutely infinite world of reality, but is more like an admittedly far-flung galaxy, which nonetheless continues to revolve about a fixed, mother-centered axis.

This fear of *total* potency before history, is strikingly summarized by the fainting attack which Trotsky suffered upon learning that the October insurrection, under his immediate direction, was a success. At least as significant as the event itself is the sequence of statements he uses to describe the attack:

[blockquote]

“Give me a cigarette,” I say to Kamenev. (In those years I still smoked, but only spasmodically.) I take one or two puffs, but suddenly, with the words, “Only this was lacking!” I faint. (I inherit from my mother a certain susceptibility to fainting spells when suffering physical pain or illness. That was why some American physician described me as an epileptic.) As I come to, I see Kamenev's frightened face bending over me. (*My Life*)

[end blockquote]

This might appear to be reasonably explained by the physically and emotionally exhausting period immediately preceding the insurrection. Such merely plausible explanations are belied by Trotsky's general psychology, as well as by the internal features of his own account of the matter. It goes without saying that the statement that he inherited his susceptibility to fainting *from his mother* is without basis in medical fact. It does however, have a significant basis in psychological fact, and Trotsky's acute, if intuitive, comprehension of psychology renders such statements all the more significant. Furthermore, he has already in the course of his autobiography referred to his frequent fainting spells, yet it is only here, while discussing the moment of the seizure of power, that he mentions his

curious superstition that they are a genetic inheritance from his mother.

In fact, throughout his life Trotsky was the victim of a large number of illnesses of a purely psychosomatic genesis. From early adolescence he suffered frequent fainting attacks as well as ulcerative colitis, both of which are almost always psychosomatic in origin, a fact recognized by any competent physician or psychoanalyst. Such psychosomatic symptoms are rather easily cured in most cases even within the early stages of analysis.

The presence of such symptoms in an individual indicates significant areas of the person's psychology which are neurotically preserved as unconscious mental activity, i.e., psychic activity. These areas are deliberately repressed so as not to be controlled by the conscious self-knowing faculties associated with the "will," processes correctly associated with the father by Freud. Such repressed features of the individual's mental life represent important areas of unresolved conflict. In such states of anxiety-ridden irresolution, the unconscious conflict may issue in a surrogate neurotic act (symptom) in place of self-conscious action in reality. In the case of psychosomatic symptoms, the repressed conflict results in a surrogate act directed against the person's own body.

That this was in fact the case with Trotsky, that significant parts of his mental life stayed neurotically unconscious in just this fashion, is strictly demonstrated by his well known "cryptogenic" (psychosomatic) fever which began in the early stages of his fight with the Stalin faction. The fever is clearly purposeful. *Its secondary purpose is to justify Trotsky's failure to act in a critical situation.* Primarily though, it is a surrogate for the political acts which the situation demanded of him and which he refused to carry out. *The mysterious fever intensifies at precisely those crucial moments when history demands that Lev Davidovitch act decisively and on his own.* In *My Life* he takes four pages (!) to explain the genesis of his world-historical fever. He concludes his medical apology with the words:

[blockquote]  
After the influenza, some cryptogenic temperature set in. The doctors ordered me to stay in bed, and thus I spent the rest of the autumn and winter. This means that all through the discussion of "Trotskyism" in 1923, I was ill. One can foresee a revolution or a war, but it is impossible to foresee the consequences of an autumn shooting-trip for wild ducks.  
[end blockquote]

At the next intensification of factional activity he remarks:

[blockquote]  
In the autumn of 1924, my temperature again began to mount. By that time, another discussion had blazed up,

brought about this time from above in accordance with some prearranged plan.  
[end blockquote]

And later he describes those "discussions":

[blockquote]  
The slander was like a volcanic eruption. It was a great shock to the large mass of the party. I lay in bed with a temperature and remained silent.  
[end blockquote]

During Lenin's death he was, of course, sick. He did not return to Moscow for the funeral. While it is undoubtedly true that Stalin misinformed him of the date of the funeral, it is inconceivable that Trotsky should have trusted Stalin at that point in time; in any event, political considerations demanded that he head back to Moscow with all possible speed. (It was at this time that Trotsky spoke in support of the Lenin Levy). Trotsky himself indicates his awareness of this fact in *My Life* by quoting the following passage written by his wife:

[blockquote]  
Our friends were expecting L.D. to come to Moscow, and thought that he would cut short his trip in order to return, since no one imagined that Stalin's telegram had cut off his return. I remember my son's letter, received at Sukham. He was terribly shocked by Lenin's death, and though suffering from a cold, with a wart; temperature of 104, he went in his not very warm coat to the Hall of Columns to pay his last respects, and waited, waited, and waited with impatience for our arrival. One could feel in his letter his bitter bewilderment and diffident reproach.  
[end blockquote]

At the end of the chapter Trotsky remarks laconically:

[blockquote]  
It is necessary to analyze the content of this slander. As I lay in bed, I had plenty of time to do so.  
[end blockquote]

Thus, returning to the October fainting spell, it is clear that there is more here than meets the naive eye. In clinical work, especially among gifted revolutionaries, just such psychosomatic reactions as fainting are readily observable under situations of acute anxiety-stress, and the most profound anxiety is especially observable when the individual's everyday sense of "I," the infantile witch/ego, is threatened with takeover by the self-conscious "I" — no longer in the form of the impotent superego, but as an identity associated with the most profound emotional powers of the human mind, emotions threatening in the extreme to the infantile ego.

On the night of the insurrection Trotsky is confronted with the inescapable fact that he is no longer merely a

brilliant actor within history, but that his self-conscious self has completely and potently changed and dominated the “inevitable” course of history. The implications of this confirmation of his self-conscious identity by reality itself are too great — he can only faint as did his mother before him. This is further confirmed by the brief outburst of modesty which struck him immediately after the seizure of power. Not only did he refuse the presidency of the Soviet Republic, which is perhaps understandable, but he refused to take on the commissariat of internal affairs, the most crucial post in the fledgling government. Lenin was not pleased.

## Trotsky and Lenin

Trotsky’s relation to his own self-conscious mind is laid bare in his attitude towards the figure of Lenin, for it was Lenin who was supremely possessed of that quality which Trotsky lacked: the ruthless determination to act according to the dictates of self-consciousness, and “opinion” be damned!

When this fact is understood, Trotsky’s capitulation to the “Lenin cult” is seen in its true significance. Isaac Deutscher uneasily attempts to account for this seemingly uncharacteristic *religious* act of Trotsky’s as a mere factional ploy designed to defuse Stalin’s slanders concerning his actual relation to the actual Lenin. In part, this is no doubt true. Trotsky was not above such justifiable overemphasis.

The kernel of the hagiolatry, however, is Trotsky’s consciousness of Lenin’s real superiority to himself, in the specific sense we have indicated. The *religious* content of his appreciation of Lenin is not that he exaggerates Lenin’s virtues or accomplishments, but rather his insistence that such qualities of self-consciousness are in effect *unattainable*. “Marx and Lenin, so closely linked historically and yet so

different, were to me the two unsurpassable summits of man’s spiritual power,” he writes in *My Life*. Lenin is the iconographic representation of his own self-conscious mind. Trotsky’s ego pays Sunday worship to self-consciousness, only to excuse itself during the ensuing week. To act completely from self-consciousness cannot be expected of a mere mortal. like Trotsky!

He makes the point with painful bluntness in his 1935 diary. In what is clearly a reflection on his own relation to the dead Lenin, he writes:

[blockquote]

Christianity created the figure of Christ to humanize the elusive Lord of Hosts and bring him nearer to mortal man. Alongside the Olympian Marx, Engels is more “human,” more approachable. How well they complement one another! Or rather, how consciously Engels endeavors to complement Marx ....

[end blockquote]

When it is most incumbent upon him to “be like Lenin” — to act unrelentingly according to self-conscious reason — he views Lenin (i.e., self-consciousness) as an unattainable ideal, something more than human (actually inhuman) — as a kind of Christian God of unchanging law. This attitude is quite consistent with his earlier attacks on Lenin in his pamphlet “Our Political Tasks,” written immediately after the Bolshevik -Menshevik split.

In the later years Trotsky recognizes Lenin as the appropriate standard of personal behavior, only to reject it as “Olympian.” In the earlier pamphlet he is also aware that Lenin’s course is that prescribed by self-conscious reason. In order to consummate his unprincipled alliance with the hurt feeling and backward politics of the Mensheviks, he is forced to attack his own self-consciousness; hence his wild, vituperative attacks against



the external representative of his own self-conscious mind  
— Lenin:

[56]

[blockquote]

The Mensheviks were the first group “trying to establish itself on the shoulders, not on the broken bones, of its predecessors”; and this alone was a sign of maturity ... *Iskra*, on the other hand (as opposed to the economists), had addressed its social democratic message to the intelligentsia, not to the workers. Lenin had bullied the revolutionary intelligentsia into a Marxist orthodoxy, into an unconditional surrender to Marx’s authority, hoping that in this way he would train the men of the intelligentsia into reliable leaders of an immature and timid labour movement. But Lenin was merely trying to force the pace of history; for to be in possession of a proletarian doctrine, such as Marxism, “was no substitute for a politically developed proletariat.” Lenin distrusted the masses and adopted a haughty attitude towards their untutored activities, arguing that the workers by themselves could not rise from trade unionism to revolutionary socialism, and that socialist ideology was brought into the labor movement “from outside,” the revolutionary intelligentsia. This, Trotsky wrote, was the theory of an “orthodox theocracy.”

[end blockquote]

“Trying to force the pace of history,” “doctrine not enough,” “haughty attitude,” “from outside”; what a consummate collection of all those epithets which have for years been hurled by mealy-brained scribblers against Marx, Luxemburg and Lenin, not to mention Trotsky! One would think that the object of such a vicious attack could be none other than Lucifer himself. Precisely! When Trotsky was not forced by external circumstances or internal conviction to identify with Lenin’s party, the unattainable God of unchanging law is revealed in his true guise as the hubristic Lucifer, the religious symbol of revolutionary man.

The problems of Trotsky’s illnesses and the relation to self-consciousness come together in a demoralized dream which Trotsky records in his 1935 dairy. For the very reason that it is the only adult dream which Trotsky has recorded, it gains added significance:

[blockquote]

I go on being sick. It is amazing how much difference there is in me between health and sickness. I am like two different people, even in external appearance, and sometimes this happens within twenty-four hours. Hence there is a natural supposition that the cause is my nerves. But the physicians diagnosed an infection a long time ago, in 1923. It is possible that it is my “nerves” that give such, a wide range of external manifestations of the illness.

Last night, or rather early this morning, I dreamed I had a

conversation with Lenin. Judging by the surroundings, it was on a ship .... He was questioning me anxiously about my illness. “You must have accumulated nervous fatigue, you must rest ...” I answered that I had always recovered from fatigue quickly, thanks to my native *schwungkraft*, but that this time the trouble seemed to lie in some deeper processes ....” I answered that I already had many consultations and began to tell him about my trip to Berlin; but looking at Lenin I recalled that he was dead. I immediately tried to drive away this thought, so as to finish the conversation. When I had finished telling him about my therapeutic trip to Berlin in 1926, I wanted to add, “This was after your death”; but checked myself and said, “After you fell ill ....”

[end blockquote]

Aside from the obvious wish-fulfillment in making Lenin come to life, the significant aspect of this dream is the relation between Trotsky’s psychosomatic illness, his incapacity to act, and Lenin as the image of his self-conscious mind. Here, both waking and asleep, Lev Davidovitch comes closer than anywhere else to admitting the psychological origin of his illness. He admits to Lenin that the trouble lies “in some deeper processes.” Beneath the cover story, Lenin advising a friend to get medical help, L.D.’s besieged self-consciousness demands that he, Trotsky, “*seriously* [the words emphasized]” resolve the illness, i.e., stop vacillating and act.

Trotsky begins to answer, saying that he had “already had many consultations.” “I tried my best but ....” Suddenly, a thought intrudes upon his consciousness which he cannot drive away; Lenin is dead, the moment for self-conscious action is irrevocably dead (this is 1935)! At the end he wishes to conclude “This was after your death,” but instead he attempts to protect himself from the horrifying reality, only to reveal himself the more: “After you fell ill ....” Is it not *Trotsky* whose illness is at issue? When Lenin died, Trotsky fell ill, *his self-conscious mind fell ill*. A flaw that indeed proved fatal.

It is just this supposedly “human” Trotsky, this Christ-like impotence, which is revered by Trotskyism. It is not accidental that most Trotskyists are victims of “Trotsky fantasies,” whereas “Marx fantasies” are experienced with far less frequency. Trotsky’s religious view of himself is that he will be among the greatest mortals, but he refuses to become “one of the gods.” In more conventional political terms, his self-conception is equivalent to that of a great *secondary leader*. Yet, as his otherwise titanic capacities demonstrate, the only thing which prevented him from rising to the first rank, as historical necessity required, was just this determination to remain in the second rank. As long as this was all that was demanded of him, he was capable of Promethean qualities of intellect and morality. His ego would put up with *that degree of freedom* for his self-conscious self, but no more.

Had Trotsky launched a serious fight against the triumvirs in 1923, he would have had to have been prepared to assume the isolated role of Lenin, no longer the second in command of the party and state. This is the source of his obsessive concern that the party not “think” that he wanted to succeed Lenin. To “be like Lenin” would have meant relinquishing the last vestige of his infantile ego. That he refused to do. “The thought made me shudder.”

Trotsky reveals the infantile genesis of his neurotic relation to self-consciousness in his account of his childhood in the first chapter of *My Life*. From this it becomes clear that Lenin, and less significantly, Marx, are father figures for him, not in the crude sense of normal dependency, but insofar as he viewed them as unattainably superior self-consciousnesses in the sense we have discussed. This neurotic image coheres with his infantile relation to his own father.

His childhood picture of his father, a wealthy peasant, is undoubtedly that of a potent, warm and lively person for whom he expresses a deep sense of love. Yet, despite this; there is an unmistakable sense of almost “Olympian” distance which L.C. feels in relation to him. When one strips away the purely external circumstances, the father is remarkably similar to Trotsky’s characterization of Lenin. For example:

[blockquote]  
Nevertheless, my father slowly but obstinately kept climbing upward .... By indefatigable, cruel toil that spared neither himself nor others, and by hoarding every penny, my father rose in the world.  
[end blockquote]

In themselves, these statements are not sufficient to establish any reliable conclusion. What makes them definitively significant is the peculiar fact that the adult male figure who assumes the greatest emotional presence in L.D.’s childhood recollections, a presence overshadowing that of his actual father, is one Ivan Vasilyevitch. Vasilyevitch is the *second in command* at Yanovka, *father’s right hand man*. It is he who stirs the greatest warmth in Trotsky. Vasilyevitch is the more “human” figure who in important ways mediates his relation to his more sternly distant father.

Trotsky’s depiction of his father cannot but recall the echoes of his earlier statements concerning Lenin; statements which strangely, after insisting on Lenin’s essentially scientific and internationalist outlook, make a sly attempt to reduce Lenin’s one most profound quality of ruthless self-conscious action to — peasant practicality.

[blockquote]  
There is no dogma here, no elaborated system and, of

course, no posturing; it is simply the outward expression of inward conservation of strength for action. It is a peasant’s practical proficiency but on a colossal scale. [Deutscher, ed., *The Age of Permanent Revolution*, “Lenin on his Fiftieth Birthday.”]  
[end blockquote]

And:

[blockquote]  
When Lenin, screwing up his left eye, listens over the radio to a parliamentary speech of one of the imperialist makers of destiny or goes over the text of the latest diplomatic note, a mixture of bloodthirsty duplicity and polished hypocrisy, he resembles a very wise muzhik whom words cannot cajole not sugary phrases ensnare. This is the peasant shrewdness elevated to genius, armed with the last word of scientific thought. [*Ibid.*]  
[end blockquote]

## The Creative Process

Since we have cited certain critical lapses in Trotsky’s theoretical outlook in order to demonstrate the neurotic aspects of his character, it is incumbent upon us to discuss the overall quality of Trotsky’s creative faculties in terms of those neurotic effects which must inevitably distort any creative mental process. Our standard for judgement is once again, a totally Promethean standard. By submitting the quality of Trotsky’s thought to such a standard we are of course, admitting his unusual intellectual talents. It is not gratuitous, therefore, to compare him to his most gifted contemporary, Rosa Luxemburg.

[58]

Overall, Trotsky compares poorly with Rosa. His style and mode of polemic, while often brilliant, lack the highly fertile “flowing quality” of Luxemburg’s best efforts. This “flowing quality” is no mere stylistic device, but is an epiphenomenon of the profusion of idea-content in her writing. Nor is this some elusive “feminine” quality: among socialist writers there is perhaps nobody outside of Marx himself whose briefest sentence carries that density of thought, with the consequent richness and multiplicity of overtones. Trotsky’s best writings theoretically, tend to shorter simpler sentences; ideas are spread more thinly and have a more linear quality, at times approximating the crude notion of “making points.” Compare for example two of Trotsky’s better pieces, “Tolstoy: Poet and Rebel” and “Results and Prospects” with, respectively, Luxemburg’s pieces “The Spirit of Russian Literature: Life of Korolenko” and “The Mass Strike.”

“Style” may seem to be a vague conception to those who have learned to regard it as a trick or embellishment.

But that “ineffable” quality of style, at least among talented writers, is perhaps the most exact single key to the gestalt of underlying conceptual processes. In Lev Davidovitch’s case, there is a clear “stylistic” reflection of the already cited infantile mechanistic defects from which he suffered throughout his life. It is not accidental that he writes his most potent prose when he is analyzing superstructural social processes, e.g., in *The History of the Russian Revolution*, for it is in just that realm that he rises to the height of his revolutionary-capacities.

In fundamental questions of dialectical method, and especially economic theory, despite brilliant intuitions, Trotsky compares very poorly with Luxemburg. That is, he is weakest intellectually imprecisely those areas which demand *a sustained self-conscious mastery of creativity itself*. Nor is this an academic matter, for in her lifetime Luxemburg far surpassed both Lenin and Trotsky in wealth of basic *strategic* conceptions for the *international* movement as a whole.

The self-conscious Trotsky is the self who characterizes best his own noetic processes.

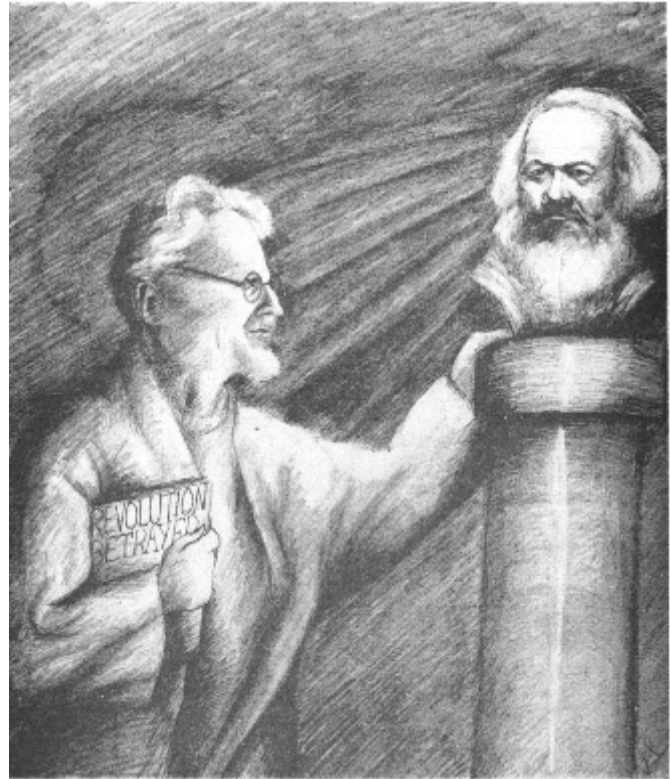
[blockquote]

Marxism considers itself the conscious expression of the unconscious historical process. But the “unconscious” process, in the historico-philosophical sense of the term — not in the psychological [sic] — coincides with its conscious expression only at its highest point, when the masses, by sheer elemental pressure, break through the social routine and give victorious expression to the deepest needs of historical development. And at such moments the highest theoretical consciousness of the epoch merges with the immediate action of those oppressed masses who are farthest away from theory. The creative union of the conscious with the unconscious is what one usually calls “inspiration.” Revolution is the inspired frenzy of history.

Every real writer knows creative moments, when something stronger than himself is guiding his hand; every real orator experiences moments when some one stronger than the self of his every-day existence speaks through him .... The utmost spiritual vigor likewise infuses at times all personal activity connected with the movement of the masses. This was true for the leaders in the October days. The hidden strength of the organism, its most deeply rooted instincts, its power of scent inherited from animal forebears — all these rose and broke through the psychi routine to join forces with the higher historico-philosophical abstractions in the service of the revolution. Both these processes, affecting the individual and the mass, were based on the union of the conscious with the unconscious: the union of instinct the mainspring of the will-with the higher theories of thought. [*My Life*]

[end blockquote]

This passage so accurately describes the awakening of



[**Revolution Betrayed**] Trotsky’s ego pays Sunday worship to self-consciousness, only to excuse itself during the ensuing week.

the powerful forces of human creative potential, that it could only have been written by an exceptionally gifted individual. It is not, emphatically, the experience of an *essentially* self-knowing intellect. The passage describes perfectly the emotional and intellectual process experienced by someone possessing a strong sense of self-conscious identity, whose “everyday” sense of self is still to some degree that of the infantile ego, when that individual’s self-conscious “I” is suddenly “filled” with emotions uniquely associated with creativity, and given emotional force and potency. Under these special conditions the normal “I” of the ego is taken over and subordinated to the newly potent “I” — self-consciousness. This is the self “stronger than the self of everyday existence,” precisely.

Trotsky’s comprehension of creativity is absolutely correct, from the standpoint of the ego’s oceanic experience of creative activity. Expressions such as “inspiration” and “the creative union of the conscious with the unconscious” indicate that for Trotsky the full depth of such processes is not at the *command* of his everyday self. To his ego they remain unconscious. His self-consciousness is an *other* self.

He says, “The hidden strength of the organism, its most deeply rooted instincts, its power of scent inherited from animal borebears.” While we cannot assume that this is meant as a literal scientific statement, the imagery suggests



the bourgeois-reductionist attitude toward the unconscious as categorically unconscious, e.g., Freud; as primitive or animalistic emotions and processes impenetrable to self-conscious control. Normally, self-consciousness is the impotent superego of bourgeois society. The actual quality of “revolutionary will” is alone the property of the self-knowing self, the self which knows its own mind. When L.D. states that “instinct” is “the mainspring of the will,” he is describing a self-consciousness without will, which depends upon transfusions of emotional energy from a source outside the control, and impenetrable to the gaze of a passionless self-consciousness. Thus, will appears in the guise of instinct! (Recall his depiction of Lenin’s peasant qualities.)

For Freud, the will is identified with the superego and the infantile emotions with bestiality. Trotsky, who is aware of loftier emotions, the emotion of creativity and potent human loving, views “everyday” self-consciousness also as a superego, but for him this is nothing but a pathetic weakling next to the “instinctual” force of will of unconscious creative emotion. For the actually self-conscious mind, that quality of creative emotion is the opposite of anything instinctual, bestial or unconscious, but is the most human, most conscious, most willful, most everyday quality of self-conscious life. That quality is the passionate source of Spinoza’s “calm,” of Marx’s relentless hubris.

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While Trotsky was capable of brilliant insights and discoveries of historic significance *and brilliance* that process of discovery was not itself, completely, the self-conscious subject of mentation. His mental processes were not consistently those of a “transfinite” self-consciousness.

In later years especially, as in *The Revolution Betrayed* and his biography of Stalin, the image of the dejected Trotsky prevails as he strives desperately to muster his elusive creative powers, which remain essentially uncontrollable. The struggle of the dejected Trotsky, the Christ-Trotsky, is best portrayed by Shelley, who had similar limitations, who prays to the uncontrollable West Wind, his all too changeable creative powers:

{blockquote}

“Oh lift me, as a wave, a leaf, a cloud, I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed.”

{end blockquote}

### “The Imitation of Christ-Trotsky”

The “Old Trotskyist” movement adopted from the whole reality of the actual Trotsky the false, one-sided image of the heroic, tragic self-righteous failure.

Immediately, this fallacy of composition had the effect of denying the requirement of eradication of crippling neurotic flaws, degrading everything to the realm of scholasticism: objective literary postures, “position” taking. The same fallacy reduced Trotsky to the form of the desired Christ figure.

The disgusting impotence-policy was the essence of the “Old Trotskyist” movement.

The “Trotskyist” profession became, for both political and “independent” academic posturers, a cult of self-righteous impotence: “I represent a noble, correct minority view in, every walk of life. However, I am a prudent and scrupulous person, never unduly rude to prevailing opinion, circumspect in my observance of the rules of conduct imposed by duly-constituted enemy opinion. I always defend my right to be a minority in terms of strictest legality of trade-union and other institutions managed by my bitter opponents. When I become the majority, I shall change the rules. Meanwhile, happily lacking such rights to act, I can safely do nothing more significant than duly publish my ‘position’ on passing events. Therefore, one Great Day, When The Roll Is Finally Called Up Yonder, The Great Historian In The Sky will review my life-long list of ‘positions’ and He will shake His Head with wonder that my extraordinary wisdom was not heeded by my fellow man.”

This was the rule of internal factional life within the SWP, for example. The leadership, in day-to-day practice, might show its real political tendency and outlook. It was deemed outrageous, even among the minorities victimized by the leaders, to attribute the quality of a political tendency to a pattern of day-to-day frauds and swindles. Such issues were entitled conventionally “organizational beefs,” “apolitical,” etc. The rules stipulated that the political tendency of a leading faction was essentially only that view which could be attributed to textual criticism of its literary contributions. The molecular process of daily practice, by which the actual political outlook of an organization is efficiently shaped and expressed, was not an admissible topic of analysis.

Real revolutionary practice begins with a strategic overview of an entire ensuing period of world history, with emphasis on predicting as accurately as possible both the form and term of the processes leading toward a new conjunctural crisis. Within this framework, one determines the quality of the forces which must be mobilized to act in a certain way at each decisive progress-interval of the process. Such forces must be brought into being and *it must be pre-determined* that they will act appropriately at each future point. Within this overview, the individual and group must determine the program; the specific tasks of self-development by which to achieve the necessary qualifications and means, to force the accomplishment of

each step.

The impotent socialist, by contrast, waits for a “new Trotsky” to magically appear and deliver a strategic outlook in the fashion of the mythical Moses descending Mount Sinai. He situates “necessary actions” in limited terms of the short-term tactical reflex-action of a given organization to a given situation, and defines this always in terms of the crudest features of both. He considers the “act of mission” as either a remarkable high-flown or ineffably speculative consideration. The issues of self-development of necessary future qualities for competent decisive action do not much concern him. Whether he actually shifts the course of history at critical times is of entirely secondary concern to him — as lone as he adopts the “correct position” of mental attitude concerning which outcome he deems relatively more desirable. A purely contemplative, academic commentary on desirable-undesirable outcomes is the essential thing for him.

If his party manifests a wholly imbecilic policy toward new developments, the important aspect of this evidence is the good issues it will represent at next year’s party convention! The exigencies of time and space are secondary to the tempo and protocol of his party’s organizational ritual.

His concern is not to willfully, ruthlessly, efficiently determine the course of history, but to play the game of socialist politics in the way that will earn him merit in the Great Beyond. Hence, such a “Trotskyist,” exemplified in the crudest extreme by the little sectlets, is preoccupied chiefly with the imitation of a Christ-Trotsky who passionately failed and went to a Great Reward.

The immediate personal issue embedded in this wretched cult is the Feuerbachian refusal to eradicate the neurotic flaw, to supersede the Ego-state which prevents him from becoming self-conscious, becoming “intellectual” in the Labor Committees’ meaning of that term. Like Feuerbach, the victim of the Trotsky Syndrome not only regards the creative understanding as incomprehending to him, but stubbornly refuses to give up those neurotic passions which, as flaws, prevent him from comprehending that understanding. Hence, decreeing his pathetic state of impotence the “normal,” unalterable condition of mortal man, the victim of the Trotsky Syndrome demands that he be “left as I am,” in a state of impotence, unable to judge and act according to self-consciousness.

### Epilogue: “The Fourth International”

By *empiricist criteria*, Deutscher was totally justified in viewing the 1938 founding of a “Fourth International” as the comi-tragic gesture *which the organization itself has always been*. By “business standards,” there could not have been a

poorer occasion for that formation. The labor movement in Europe lay in the worst ebb in decades, the Left Opposition cadres (the core of Trotsky’s support) had recently been virtually wiped out. The only stable if tiny organized section was the SWP, not strictly a Trotskyist group at all, and in a country in which early-to-middle 1930’s political ferment had degenerated into mere left trade-unionism.

Yet, by *other criteria*, Trotsky’s decision was correct.

The essential, historic decision was twofold. The principal consideration was the establishment of a self-consciously organized, self-maintaining *germ-form* to conduct continuity with the world-outlook of Bolshevism *into future decades*. For such a purpose, there could be no circumstances more appropriate than those of 1938-40, especially under the conditions in which Trotsky’s assassination was already imminent. The loose federation of existing national “Trotskyist” factions could not fulfill such a role. It was essential to drastically counteract *the centrist tendencies immanent in autonomous national formations*, by subordinating the national groupings *politically* to the hegemony of a group of persons whose primitive outlook was *international*. *However tiny, however isolated, an international executive must exist.*

At first glance, this purpose failed. The two principal, schismatic heirs of that international stand in ruins. The largest of the two, the “New Trotskyist” Unified Secretariat, is an eroding shambles, whole national sections collapsing even as the opposing, split-oriented factions of Mandel and Barnes maneuver over possession of the spoils. The former principal competitor, the London-based “International Committee,” has already split, many of its former elements already dissolved or collapsed. Yet, neither of these decaying hulks represents even a form of the “Old Trotskyism.” The organized expressions of “Old Trotskyism” died during the 1961-66 period. Worse, from the time of Trotsky’s assassination there never existed an international executive which expressed the strategical method and conceptions which Trotsky aimed to secure against the future.

It might appear that Deutscher’s criticism is historically vindicated, after all. Perhaps Trotsky’s writings themselves were the only efficient source of “continuity.” Such a case for Deutscher’s argument is merely specious.

Relative to Trotsky’s writings, we may usefully compare the case for written music. Contrary to the formalists, the written score does not speak for itself. It is merely the composer’s mnemonic ruse, by which he communicates to a musician, *provided the musician is familiar with the conventions by which the score is to be interpreted*. In music, such a problem arises notoriously respecting the performance of scores from as recently as the eighteenth century — e.g., Bach, Telemann, on which there are regularly new upsetting

general discoveries. Similarly, Trotsky's writings are constantly addressed to terms of reference which exist only in the experience of vanguard socialist parties; a person from such a milieu may usually not comprehend Trotsky's argument, but only a person of such experience could understand the bulk of his strategic outlook.

The comparison is in no way strained.

The point of view of the leading activists in a vanguard grouping is the problem of connecting a general transformation of society to "molecular" interactions with individuals. Even the centrist, who degrades transformation to chiliastic "policy postures" or so-called "positions," confronts this problem as it bears upon achievement of even modest intermediate organizing accomplishments. The daily life of the organized movement is situated in the problem of the organizing process through which a handful of accredited pariahs (socialists) attempt to effect a favorable change in quality of attitudes toward socialism among anti-socialists. It is the molecular tactical day-to-day experience which the socialist leader addresses as referent in efforts to supersede the tactical by a strategic policy outlook.

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The daily life of socialist organizations confronts their active members — especially the leaders — with an overview of problems whose experience is only implicit and undefined for persons outside such experience. Hence *the continuity of essential socialist theoretical work requires a continuity of organized socialist activity governed by such theoretical inquiry.*

Deutscher's argument is more directly refuted by pointing to the emerging importance of the Labor Committee organizations of North America and Western Europe. Despite the "Old Trotskyism," etc., *the Labor Committees were made possible by Trotsky's decision to form the Fourth International!* His purpose was successfully realized *despite the Trotskyists.*

The initiation of the Labor Committees, from proverbial "scratch," back in mid-1966 was the direct outcome of a deliberate negation of both the "Old Trotskyism" and of the principal errors of Trotsky himself. This developed out of an examination of the vicious discrepancy between the practice of the various schisms of the "Fourth International" from the standpoint of organizing practice. This outcome reflects the essential, historic validity of the 1938 founding: to create the continuity of organized practice in which socialist theory might dialectically correct itself. The proper purpose of the international was not to pass along an unaltered body of *fixed* Bolshevik doctrine and experience, but to maintain a body of *creative activity* which situated and tested itself *sensuously* in ongoing organizing practice. What the "Old Trotskyists" did was to regard continuity as a



[The MILITANT : The Truth of the Stalinist Betrayals] "When I become the majority, I shall change the rules. Meanwhile, happily lacking such rights to act, I can safely do nothing more significant than duly publish my 'position' on passing events."

matter of Talmudic continuity of orthodoxy, merely adding new lemmas to a fixed body of theorems of air "essential, unalterable" core body of doctrine. Hence, they merely perpetuated every Bolshevik and Trotsky blander and otherwise degraded their political life to a religious cult practice. The same body of experience, as the reference for creative activity, produces the opposite result: the overthrow of Lenin's, Trotsky's, etc. errors, and the supercession of religious cultism by revolutionary practice.

Throughout the series applying the "new psychoanalysis" to political questions, we have necessarily emphasized the opposite epistemological qualities of self-conscious reason and Ego-state formalism. That same point is the key to the ironical connections through opposition of the Labor Committee to the "Fourth International."

The possible order of conceptions of the Ego-state is limited to a view of the universe as a "bad infinity" of ultimately elementary, self-evident, linearly homogeneous discrete existences: at best, the mechanistic world-view. This is determined by the alienated Ego-state relationship to the fixed object-image and the linear quality of the infantile emotions of *fear*, *hatred*, and *object-possession elation*. This world-outlook is incapable of even "making sense" of such dialectical conceptions as expanded reproduction. The point

of view of the cultured person whose sense of “I” is located in self-consciousness is of a universe whose *primitive* quality is *process, not things, a true continuum*. Contrary to naive (i.e., Ego-state or logical-formalist) interpretations of this, the *transfinite* quality of primitive continuity is not simple “bad infinite” linear extension. It is *self-subsisting positive* (i.e., *negentropic*) extension, of the form typified by *socialist expanded self-reproduction* as we have outlined that elsewhere. Relative to the Schelling fallacy (Hegel: “a night in which all cows are black”), in which there is no *necessary* determination of objects from the self-definition of continuity, the characteristic of a negentropic transfinite quality of extension is that extension of continuity is mediated through the *necessary* determination of subsumed object-arrays of higher orders of formal complexity.

The difference between the two opposed world-outlooks is located in the different qualities of emotion characteristically “cathexized” to the respective Ego and self-conscious locations of the primary sense of “I.” It is only from the standpoint of the self-conscious “I” that “I” have an immediate internal referent for transfinite continuity, that referent is the *fundamental emotion*, which is itself of the quality of transfinite extension. In the Ego-state, the only direct referents for a *primitive* sense of reality are object-images (taken as self-evident) and linear emotions. The Ego can assess the creative powers of self-conscious reason, but only *indirectly*, experiencing them merely as “pre-conscious” *intuition*.

The distinction extends to the immediate form of social relationships, in which the Ego-state knows “love” only as the most intense expression of *infantile object-possession elation*, and only fixed, parochialized objectives of impassioned behavior. In the Ego-state, the individual is sexually impotent and politically impotent. Since he cannot conceptualize transfinite extension, he cannot comprehend the complete reordering of the quality of social reality through a change of the invariant quality of generalized social reproduction. Hence, his conceptual powers are limited to partial insight into a social reality determined by the invariant principle of capitalist modes of social reproduction. More immediately, since he is himself attached to the Ego-state, he cannot conceive nor undertake that *revolutionary human practice* which is changing the workers’ sense of identity from the Ego to self-consciousness.

As we apply those principles, summarized just above, to the “Fourth International,” we have the solution to the apparent paradox of the Labor Committees’ connection to its origins in that international. Once the banalized activity and conceptions of that international are superseded by rising to the standpoint of self-consciousness, a whole new world-outlook, a replication of Karl Marx’s, arises.

The supersession thus described corresponds exactly to the supersession of religion by sanity. Religion is the sense

of one’s estranged human qualities for alienated, Ego-ridden man. The self-consciousness of former religious behavior from the vantage-point of the holistic tasks of human evolutionary social reproduction is sanity.

The essential point, what was essential in the Fourth International despite its religion, was the situating of the conceptual tasks of socialist strategy within the framework of a political organizing experience. This was essential because the empirical problems thus submitted to the powers of conception embodied the actual problem to be solved, however religiously distorted the form in which those problems were initially represented.

What Trotsky accomplished in founding the Fourth International was this. Firstly, the Trotskyist rejection of the “theory of states” and “popular front” reduced the definition of the socialist organizing task to its proper, rigorous terms as a practical problem: If one excludes the “stages” and “popular front” ruses as solutions, how does one organize effectively within such a tactically-narrowed range of methods? Secondly, the situating of the political task within a uniquely international framework, discounting solutions which might be mooted on a national qua national basis. The issue here is whether one treats an international strategy and its subsumed tactics as the eclectic aggregate culled from a confederation of “national roads to socialism,” or considers the formulation of international strategy as the *primitive* policy, in respect to which national-section policies are merely tactical predicates. Despite the streak of “national exceptionalism” dominant in the Cannonites and others, Trotsky succeeded in “spoiling the well” of such chauvinism, such that the conscience of the “Trotskyists” repeatedly forced them, however reluctantly, to concede the primacy of strategy.

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The actual elaboration of the latter feature of Trotsky’s initiatives is a subject in itself. In practice, the attempt to suppress “the international question” by any “national exceptionalist” national section leadership created the most invaluable tactical advantage for opponent factions. The SWP, the most parochialist of the principal groups, was constantly embarrassed to find its neglect of internationalism resulting in successful tactical grabs by its Trotskyist factional opponents abroad. Some factions, such as Pablo’s, would take possession of the International Secretariat machinery, and therewith proceed to define current “world Trotskyist” policies from that platform, using such a resource to license endorsed factions within various national sections. Otherwise, as in the instance of the Cuban Revolution, developments outside the USA (for example) would for a period decisively affect the milieu from which the parochialist national section was pursuing gate-receipts, in which guise the question of the “Fourth International” would rise to prominence afresh. By

establishing a “Fourth International” Trotsky in effect set a diabolically clever trap for the “national chauvinists” among his heirs; none of his principal heirs dared openly decanonize the international; as long as its existence — and maintenance — remained canonical, the fact of its existence would periodically spoil the chauvinist antics of the parochialists.

In fact, the overwhelming majority of the factional and split affrays within the main currents of organized Trotskyism were situated in international terms: “The Russian Question,” “The Eastern European Question,” “The China Question,” “The Cuban Question,” “The Algerian Question,” etc. International factional allies for a factional affray in any national section was always an important longer-term issue. If a significant weight of “foreign” Trotskyist factions defined “world Trotskyism’s position” on any subject contrary to the adopted “majority” ruling in any one national section, this itself created the most potent immediate basis for bumptious minority revolts or even substantial splits with that national section. Whether Cannon et al. liked it or not, Trotsky’s foundation of the international saddled his heirs with its nagging implications for two generations to come.

It was exactly this juxtaposition of the cited two features of Trotsky’s founding of the international which confronted L. Marcus with the fruitful form of the problems to be solved. The international political-economic strategy issue, which impelled him to an impassioned attack on the issue of theoretical economics, was prompted by his view of the sterility of both factions on this question during the split of the Fourth International in 1952-53. The second principal feature leading toward the founding of the Labor Committees, the social process, came in response to the failure of all Trotskyist groups to deal with the then-emerging imperialist worldwide policy response to the threat of a late 1960’s monetary crisis. Although the distinguishing influences prompting Marcus to approach these issues in a dialectical fashion lie entirely outside the Trotskyist movement itself, it was the experience of the way in which Trotsky’s influence defined the international’s organizing experience which supplied the necessary terms of reference for those studies.

Thus, through the fact of the Labor Committees, the fact of that tendency’s powerful growth in quality and influence, vindicates the *essential* correctness of Trotsky’s 1938 decision on the international. It has succeeded despite the existent “Fourth Internationals” and the successive centrist and agnostic phases of decay of the “Trotskyist” organizations.

Whether Trotsky himself would agree with us today is approximately as irrelevant as the question whether Johannes Kepler would accept Einstein’s Riemannian universe. The idea of a “Trotskyist orthodoxy,” even if it

were premised on Trotsky’s actual conceptions, represents a bankrupt substitution of religion for living revolutionary practice. Everything which is of continuing value in Trotsky’s outlook we have carried forward; most of what was shallow, neurotic, or otherwise wrong in his views we have superseded. Trotsky has a viable place in the present only to the extent that we locate his work entirely in the past.

The prime lessons to be learned from his life and work are, generally, the principle identified by Adolf Joffe: to pursue in practice the dictate of self-conscious reason at all times, at all costs, despite any amount of contrary mere personal opinion from any overwhelming number of sources. Conversely, particularly, the tragic element of his life, the ferocious cost to humanity of several of his typical neurotic lapses, warns us to be wholly intolerant of such neurotic flaws, especially of the cult of self-righteous impotence associated with the sort of pathetic “objectivity” seen in the religious life of the “Old Trotskyist” movement.

What must be especially extirpated from today’s revolutionary movement is the Trotsky Syndrome, the pose of self-righteous agony of self-consciousness: “I must respect the limitations imposed upon my Ego; I cannot part with my internalized mothers’s fears. I must soothe her fears by being a prudently impotent mere small voice of minority views, essentially passive within the inevitable course of events as determined by the enemy polemics.” Trotsky hesitating to chuck out Stalin in 1923, Trotsky denying his authorship of “The Real Situation In Russia” in 1926, Trotsky temporizing with Cannon’s centrism in 1938-40 — all out of scrupulous respect for the ordered ways of “organizational discipline,” all the tragic self-degradation of a Promethean playing “acceptable” Apollonian, must not be a tolerated pattern for the present and future.

### An Epitaph for L. D. Trotsky

L. D. Trotsky has been dead for thirty-four years. The recent virtual extinction of the professedly Trotskyist movement is the vanishing of a tendency which had been a decaying cult for a quarter-century after Trotsky’s assassination. To the extent one attempts to evaluate Trotsky as the originator of a Marxian tendency, one must regard the end of his life’s efforts as tragically misguided. Is that the end of the matter; is that his proper epitaph?

If the human race survives this decade, a revitalized Communist movement (with a capital C) will routinely re-adopt Trotsky as a leading Bolshevik, restoring the official view of him to approximately that held by Lenin during his own last illness: That will represent the epitaph which corresponds to Trotsky’s own strategic outlook of the 1923-1940 period.

Trotsky was not a “Trotskyist.” His persisting post-1917 self-image was that of Lenin’s junior partner in the Bolshevik leadership. His factional activities, even after 1934 were strategically oriented toward a united front of his tiny forces with the main bodies of the mass-based Communist parties — as one notes in the 1940 factional differences between him and the Stalinophobic Cannonite leadership of the SWP.

Trotsky’s general view, the locus for his self-estimation, was that the Stalin faction’s accommodation to the layer of bureaucrats assimilated into the CPSU during the “Lenin Levy” amounted to a decapitation of the Communist movement. As the purges obliterated the Bolshevik Left Opposition and finally the near-entirety of the 1917 Bolshevik leadership, he found himself the sole surviving exponent of the Bolshevik point of view. His strategic policy was to attempt to mediate the replication of the outlook of the Bolsheviks in handfuls of cadres recruited and trained within the movements of the capitalist world. The ultimate function of this replicated Old Bolshevik leading stratum was to connect itself to the mass oriented to the Communist parties.

This was a correct policy. Anyone who writes off in advance the cadres of mass-based Communist parties and the left-wing factions of mass-based social-democracies is no revolutionary at all. The only viable basis for existence of definite Marxian tendencies outside those parties is the development of a revolutionary intelligentsia which is being prepared to connect itself to (especially) the mass-based Communist parties in alliance with the left-wing forces of mass-based social-democracies.

That principle is being freshly demonstrated in life in Western Europe today. Today, whoever writes off in advance the potential revolutionary viability of the mass-based Communist parties and mass-based left-wing social democracies has wilfully handed the human race over to a fascist world order and nuclear holocaust without a struggle.

It was correct for the Trotsky of 1934-1940 to situate himself as the individual principally responsible for making such an effort. He was after all, the only surviving authoritative agent for the outlook of the Old Bolsheviks. Unfortunately, insofar as his policy was broadly correct, he failed to win any faction to it among his professed followers. The immediate causes for this failure are properly located within the social strata from which the Trotskyists were recruited, but the tolerance of such endemic reactionary tendencies among those recruits must be blamed upon the psychoneurotic and intellectual flaws of Trotsky himself.

## Oblomovism

In each national-cultural sector we encounter

characteristic neuroses, neurotic complexes usually identified with the associated pathological behaviorisms of their male victim. Since these pathologies involve the bestialization of the victim, they are invariably associated with some particular beast -totem. In Spanish cultures the self-identification of the neurotic male as a subhuman animal is the *Macho* (from *masculu*, for male donkey or jackass). In Italy, it is the Pappagallo (peacock) or cazzist (mere extension of one’s own penis). In Germany, the wolf-dog. In Russia, the bear who sleeps through unpleasant seasons, identified with the chief character of a famous novel, Oblomov.

The certification of Oblomov as the prototype of the neurotic Soviet revolutionary leader was made by Lenin. Lenin’s perception on this point can not be considered accidental, since his political life represents in the main a self-conscious, successful struggle against precisely such tendencies within himself. Trotsky, as we have demonstrated here, was a raging *Oblomovist* by comparison with Lenin, literally taking to his bed with “cryptogenic” (i.e., psychogenic) maladies whenever confronted with acute problems whose psychological implications he was unwilling to face.

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As we have emphasized, Trotsky was neurotically preoccupied with his *persona*, with peer-group opinion of him. His long years of relative isolation from 1929 onwards, and his maverick independence prior to 1917 are deceptive phenomena; as Joffe’s testament accurately emphasizes, Trotsky lacked precisely Lenin’s fierce independence.

Within the leading strata of the North American and European Labor Committees, we understand the relevant problems most clearly. In the conclusion of “The Case of Ludwig Feuerbach,” we distinguished categorically between the *enlightened* and *self-conscious* individual. The enlightened individual may have developed creative powers of the sort corresponding to self-consciousness, but he locates such achievements as *predicates* of his bourgeois ego, rather than as the subject, the substance of his identity. Self-conscious insights are for him achievements to be possessed by his bourgeois ego, rather than the substance, the identity of his existence. The psychodynamic of this atavistic tendency among revolutionaries is found in the victim’s feeling-state, his determination not to let go of that feeling of being the loved infant in his mother’s arms, his willingness to mature beyond a state of innermost identity involving attachment to the warm comfort of mother’s skirts. We have pointed out Trotsky’s explicit admission of such neurotic obsessions, and the direct connection between his psychopathology, his Oblomovism, and the Russian/peasant traditions of his social origins. To be the son of a Russian peasant mother who is also a Jewish mother is to suffer the preconditions for

*Oblomovism* with a vengeance.

Such tendencies appear clearly in Lenin only when we contrast Lenin with Rosa Luxemburg. Lenin's inability to actualize his internationalism is exemplary. Despite his impulse toward an internationalist outlook, during his years abroad he was detached from involvement in the German, Austrian and French movements, and never developed a competent insight into them. His rejection of the Austrian-Menshevik "theory of national stages" during the war never led him to break with the nationalist correlatives of that misconception. Lenin's clinging to his psychoneurotic nationalities policy was the clearest expression of the unresolved residue of Oblomovist tendencies in himself.

This problem is no historical curiosity. The Tavistock think-tanks, including the RAND Corporation, have not only studied Oblomovism in psychological depth-studies, but Rockefeller manipulation of the Soviet leadership today is chiefly premised upon programs based on those specific neurotic susceptibilities.

Trotsky's break with Lenin in 1903, his wretched role in the Russian movement during the 1911-14 period, his "cryptogenic" illnesses, his hysterical disregard for the actuality of the international movement during the 1923-27 period, and his opportunist concessions to the Stalinophobic centrist tendencies among the Cannonites, are all examples of this persisting Oblomovist flaw.

Admittedly, Trotsky's Oblomovism was relatively a state of Olympian mental health when contrasted with the paranoid extremes of the same disorder in Stalin. The most extreme forms of Oblomovism within the Soviet leadership are identified by the use of *cosmopolitanism* as a term of opprobrium; Oblomovism in its extreme expression as naked Great Russian chauvinism. (It is not difficult to understand the roots of the paranoia in Georgian Stalin's profession of Great Russian chauvinism.)

### Intellectual Flaws

In his frequent expressions of self-conscious awareness, Trotsky emphasized the non-existence of a specifically Trotskyist tendency; his was, for him, simply a Leninist tendency. He was too sensible of reality to imagine that he had contributed any qualitative theoretical advance to Marxian thought.

The one point on which he injudiciously veered from that was on the theme of "permanent revolution." On this point he may have erroneously considered himself, momentarily, a significant innovator, but then precluded such pretenses in a characteristic gesture of pride-filled self-deprecation. In fact, his only contribution in that vein was a correct assessment of the special tactical policies-required for

a proletarian revolution in a peasant-dominated Russian population. Insofar as this tactical insight from the 1905 experience was woven into a general theory, that theory had been earlier developed by Rosa Luxemburg and was contributed to the Parvus-Trotsky these through Luxemburg's earlier, vigorous education of Parvus on this point.

Similarly, the strategic and tactical formulations of the Third Congress of the Comintern, which Lenin and Trotsky jointly sponsored at that time, were a rather truncated version of Luxemburg's organic development of united-front policies from the body of her mass-strike conception. This approximation of Luxemburg's conception is the most positive feature of Trotsky's 1929-33 Germany writings.

Despite his own considerable intellectual powers and collateral contributions, Trotsky was never a theoretician. He had a certain grasp of Marxian dialectical method and economic theories, but no real mastery of either. Consequently, it is not surprising that he lacked a firm sense of the prerequisites for building a viable, self-reproducing socialist organization. The most obvious type is the mass-based party, which exists as the institutionalized form of political organization of the most advanced strata of an entire working class, for which the Communist parties of France and Italy or the German social-democracy are the prototypes. Even as a centrist formation without a socialist strategic outlook, such mass-based parties embody a self-reproducing function. The second type is the small cadre-organization, whose historic value is uniquely located in its development of strategic and tactical perspectives. In this case, its peculiar viability and ability to reproduce that viability are independent of the attributes of mass support. This quality depends uniquely upon the qualifications of the organization as a revolutionary intelligentsia. The criteria for leadership within the organization are predominantly those of profuse mastery of Marxian theory, as expressed by creative contributions to that theory. Such a party thus represents uniquely essential qualities which the broad masses lack the means to develop independently. Such an organization meets those qualifications only to the degree that its leaders are at least relatively the peers of Karl Marx, Rosa Luxemburg, V.I. Lenin, and that the standard of membership is a commitment of the new recruits to developing such qualities in themselves.

If the Trotskyist factions were to have fulfilled the historic function which Trotsky wished to project for them, of supplying the mass-based Communist parties with the necessary strategic and tactical orientations through united-front formations, the essential quality of the faction would have had to be emphasis upon the development of a revolutionary intelligentsia.

The development and presently accelerating influence of the Labor Committees, are the most appropriate contrast

with the imminently bankrupt Trotskyist organizations of the 1940-58 period. The Labor Committees are the successful fulfilment of everything the Trotskyist factions failed to achieve. That success is also in part the result of a pre-calculated determination not to replicate the bankruptcy of Trotskyism.

From the outset, the criterion for Labor Committee cadre status was a receptivity to and ability to apply the most advanced and comprehensive dialectical and economic-theoretical conceptions. Cadres were recruited through classes of a more advanced type than had been given before in the socialist movement, and “drop-outs” from, that instruction were thus automatically self-excluded from involvement in the building of the organization. The selective process was intensified by a policy of ruthless factionalism against all nonsense in the socialist movement.

For example, in the course of the Columbia strike, the Labor Committees refused to adapt to the prevailing moods of the majority. When it became apparent in early June of 1968 that Mark Rudd et al. were replicating the outlook and policies of Benito Mussolini and Gregor Strasser, the Labor Committees committed their members to explicitly identifying and orienting factionally to that fact. During the summer and fall of 1968, the Labor Committees were unique in the entire U.S. socialist movement in leading an attack upon the Ford Foundation’s “educational counterinsurgency” strikebreaking program, to the effect that the members endured accelerating bitter enmity and actual hooligan attacks from other professedly socialist groupings on this account.

In sum, the development of the Labor Committees as a revolutionary intelligentsia was premised on the organic unity of advanced education and ruthless adherence to the tactical consequences of policies adduced from the standpoint of the most advanced theory. The result, as has been demonstrated increasingly, is the forging of talented young potential revolutionaries into hardened cadres who will act ruthlessly for a scientific perception of reality against all odds.

It is that specific quality of Promethean hubris which distinguishes the revolutionary intelligentsia, the natural leadership of the mass movement. The forging of such a cadre-organization begins with the problems of such intellectual commitment in struggles on a more modest scale. Subsequently, by constantly forcing the cadres to escalate their responsibilities for struggles approaching those of socialist transformation itself, the cadres are organically hardened in the qualities required to lead mass movements.

It is such selection and development policies which uniquely produce a vanguard organization capable of developing and acting upon the development of strategic and tactical policies for the socialist transformation.

The present world situation exemplifies this point. The fate of humanity depends upon a distinct, reciprocal connection between Labor Committee efforts in Western Europe and North America. (A special, immediate role is seen for the Japanese and Australian working classes, and a subsequent role by the working class of the underdeveloped sector; the initiative role must come from Western Europe and North America.) In North America, the only vanguard force worth mentioning is the Labor Committees and their collaborators. Around this kernel, the entire mass workers movement must be directly built. However, the possibility of actualizing the accelerating Labor Committee influence among millions of workers into a mass organization depends significantly upon the establishment of an international programmatic united front in Europe. That European effort then depends upon the reciprocal effects of its activity upon the potentialities of the North American working class. Thus, in effect, the North American movement is organically linked to the European (and Japanese and Australian) movements.

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In Europe, the possibility of stopping fascism depends upon the programmatic alliance of the Communist parties, the left wings of mass-based social-democracies, and the Labor Committees. Why, one might ask, is this role of the small Labor Committees essential to the success of the role of the mass-based workers’ parties? In sum, the Labor Committees offer not only the uniquely correct strategic and tactical programmatic outlooks, but also represent the only repository of *the capacities for necessary further development* of those strategic and tactical policies under the conditions of mass struggles. The role of the Labor Committees as a revolutionary intelligentsia is indispensable, such that without them the Communist and social-democratic mass-based organizations would be disoriented and so defeated in an actual decisive struggle.

It is *the active qualities* of the vanguard which are essential. Any small organization which premises itself upon the perfection or semi-perfection of either simple recipes or even articulated bodies of “orthodox doctrine” is a useless sect, with no positive role to contribute to the struggles of mass-based vanguard organizations.

Trotsky himself had no conception at all of such a development of an organization of the revolutionary intelligentsia. In part, this was a reflection of his *Oblomovist* flaw; he ridiculed the notion of a revolutionary intelligentsia in 1903 and regarded this notion of Lenin’s as “exaggerated” even later in life. In part, his lack of conception of building a viable tendency was a direct result of his failure to develop adequately such qualities in himself. He did not recognize the rampant philistinism of the Cannon crew as constituting in itself the pervasive bankruptcy of the organizations identified with his name.



## The Outcome of Trotsky

Today, as the professedly Trotskyist organizations have, omitted themselves as a faction of the current socialist movement, the word *Trotskyism* has lost all meaning. There is no Trotskyist faction within the movement to be treated as a ponderable current, and there is no corpus of thought called Trotskyism worth anyone's resurrecting. All that remains are the lessons of Trotsky's efforts and the obligation of the future Communist movement to restore L.D. Trotsky himself to his proper status as a past contributor to the struggles.

If there might have been something hypothetically useful in Trotsky's role in the Left Opposition, something to focus upon for leading suggestions for today's efforts, we have long since eliminated that possibility.

To the extent that Trotsky's views may coincide with notions of continued usefulness to the movement, we have developed conceptions which are far superior to Trotsky's, and which are grounded in the work of Trotsky's predecessors, such as Marx and Luxemburg.

Under these circumstances, to turn to Trotsky for authoritative guidance on such matters would be to take a significant step backwards.

This warning is not made lightly nor arbitrarily. In the recent year's experience within the Labor Committees we have found that cadre's sudden preoccupation with the study of Trotsky's writings for guidance on a question with a regression to impotence in his or her current political activity. This recurring correlation prompted us to investigate the phenomenon of endemic "Trotskyism" within the Labor Committees more deeply. That study was made during the spring and summer of 1973, during which period we examined a number of individual cases with the resulting clinical definition of what we termed the "Trotsky syndrome." It was that study which led directly to this present article.

The healthy revolutionary cadre of today will regard L.D. Trotsky as one of the principal Bolshevik leaders whose failure to establish a viable tendency was not accidental. His achievements were real, and lawfully so. His failure, however his effort was correctly premised in part, was also quite lawful. Consequently, there is a role in the movement for those who graduate from Trotskyism, but no useful place for those who return to it. Trotskyism *today* is a psychoneurotic socialist' determination to be impotent, so as not to unduly offend the dangerous ruling capitalist circles.

[No footnotes appended in the original.]