Chapter 3: The survival and expansion of Stalinism after the second world war

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The continued existence of the Soviet Union as a degenerated workers' state into the 1980s can only be understood and explained by an analysis of the expansion of Stalinism since the end of the Second World War. The theoretical and political problems posed by this expansion have caused programmatic confusion amongst those claiming to uphold the banner of Trotskyism. In part or in whole this confusion has stemmed from an inability to creatively elaborate Trotsky's own analysis of Stalinism under the changed conditions of the war and its aftermath.

Ever since the early 1920s Trotsky sketched out the general contradictions which were pushing towards a new imperialist world war. He correctly recognised that the USA emerged from the First World War far stronger than both the victorious and the defeated imperialism of Europe. At that time Trotsky believed that a new war would arise out of a failed attempt at post-war USA expansion, a failure caused by an inability to accumulate sufficiently on a ruined European economy, and French and British unwillingness to be reduced to semi-colonies of the USA.1

The major impetus which forced Trotsky to concretise his analysis and discuss the tempo of the coming war in the 1930s, was of course, the rise to power of Hitler in 1933 in Germany.2 Precisely because Stalinism's fate was inextricably tied to the respective fortunes of imperialism and the working class, Trotsky drew a number of conclusions regarding the fate of the Kremlin usurpers should the expected war materialise.

Trotsky argued that the imperialist war and its accompanying revolutionary upsurges would sweep away the Stalinist bureaucracy. Either it would succumb directly to the onslaught of imperialism aided by restorationist forces within the USSR or a series of successful proletarian revolutions in Europe, arising out of the war, would lead to political revolution in the Soviet Union and destroy the Kremlin bureaucracy.3

Taken as a strategic prognosis, Trotsky's formulations retain their validity. The reactionary, utopian policy of ?detente? practiced by Stalinism in the USSR will lead, inevitably, to the destruction of the collectivised property relations should the working class not first come to the rescue. This undeniable tendency towards the destruction of Stalinism was, however, offset during the course of the second world war, by a set of conjunctural factors which Trotsky did not, and, in some cases, could not anticipate.

Stalinism and class struggle in the second world war

The divisions within world imperialism weakened its offensive capacity against the USSR. The very nature of the imperialist war - bloody conflicts over the division of the world markets - led to the Allied or ?democratic? imperialist nations (primarily Great Britain and the USA) eventually enlisting the support of the Stalinist bureaucracy for its war effort against the Axis Powers.

The defeat of the Axis countries and the various compromised national bourgeoises at the close of the war was accompanied by large-scale anti-capitalist mobilisations. This confirmed the objective potential for the revolutionary variant of Trotsky's programme for the war. In the Axis countries (Bulgaria, Romania, and Hungary) the upsurges were most pronounced after the German defeat. In Bulgaria, for example, The Economist (7 October 1944) noted that throughout Thrace and Macedonia, ?Soldiers councils have been set up, officers have been degraded, red flags hoisted and normal saluting has been abolished.?4
In Eastern Europe the working class was most to the fore in Czechoslovakia where plant committees, Councils and workers? militias were created, and dual power existed for many months in 1944 and 1945. It was a full year before the government dared limit workers? control in the factories. In Germany there were widespread workers? uprisings, particularly in Halle and Magdeburg. It has become commonplace, even amongst bourgeois historians to recognise that the defeat of Hitler in France during 1944 provoked extremely favourable conditions for the working class to seize state power.6

The successful imperialist bloc in the war was itself not able to crush this movement. Imperialism was forced to lean upon the Kremlin and its armed agencies to abort this rising tide of war and rising class struggle. The use of the Red Army to forcibly end workers? control in the factories was widespread, particularly in Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. In defeated Germany and Austria the working class suffered much worse. Many workers? districts were terrorised. Vienna was looted and pillaged for three days.

The continuance of the alliance had the effect of delaying an immediate confrontation between Stalinism and world imperialism. This unholy alliance against the working class took on a sickening dimension in Indo-China where the Stalinists, from positions of great prominence in the ranks of the workers and peasants, helped butcher the vanguard and delivered a broken proletariat into the hands of imperialism.

In Greece the Stalinists, acting in accord with Stalin?s directives, were guilty of a similar betrayal. ?Spheres of influence? deals struck between Churchill and Stalin in Moscow and by all the allies at Yalta had given Indo-China and Greece to the imperialists and Stalin was determined to honour this deal.

Trotsky?s prognosis had always insisted that the prerequisite for the revolutionary destruction of the Soviet bureaucracy during the war was the ascendancy of the leadership of the Fourth International (FI). However, the war came to a close, and working class struggles erupted, in a situation in which the FI cadre were aim completely marginalised, except for a few notable exceptions, such as Indo-China. The Stalinists in the USSR and elsewhere were able to survive, therefore, because the revolutionary upsurge lacked a leadership capable of directing it against the bureaucracy, as well as against imperialism. The role of the conscious factor in Trotsky?s prognosis should never be overlooked. Failure to recognise its importance led the FI movement, eventually, to believe that Stalinism and imperialism could be overthrown by the ?objective process?, unfolding independently of human will. This method of thinking was alien to that of Trotsky. He believed that prognoses had to be revised and corrected in the light of experience.

The survival of the USSR and Stalinism within it cannot just be explained by a series of international factors. Important internal events must also be taken into account. The swift and extensive construction of a war economy displayed the progressive potential of the planned property relations in the USSR. But the survival of the Soviet Union is ultimately accounted for by the heroism of the Soviet masses (e.g. 20 million dead) in the face of German imperialist aggression.

The resistance of the people to fascism, despite the tyranny of Stalinist rule, is explained, on the one hand, by the sobering experience of fascist rule in large western areas of the USSR, and, by the relative weakening of the Bonapartist state machinery over the masses, enabling them to efficiently organise their own defence against German imperialism relatively free from bureaucratic oppression as happened in Leningrad.

Although the property relations of the USSR were to prove resilient to the attacks of imperialism the war did wreak havoc on the productive forces of the Soviet Union. This manifested itself most dramatically in a severe contraction in accumulation and an absolute decline in the level of productive forces. In all 31,850 industrial plants were destroyed. 65,000 kms of railway track, 15,800 locomotives and Y(?) (CHECK) 2 million freight cars were ruined. Coal and steel production fell between 40-50 per cent in 1942-3. It only reached the 1940 level again in 1946. In addition, 4.7 million houses, 1,710 towns and 70,000 villages were destroyed.

In agriculture the picture was equally grim. Some 98,000 collective and 1,876 state farms disappeared. Seven million horses were lost as were 20 out of 23 million pigs. Only 3 per cent of the tractors survived in German-occupied Russia.7 Centrifugal tendencies undermining the planned property relations became more and more pronounced
between 1941 and 1944. Heavy industry, for example, suffered greatly as budget production costs were done away with in 1941, giving autonomy to the trusts. Light industry was often organised on a local scale and even reduced to handicraft production in some areas.

In the countryside the war witnessed an accelerated tempo of capitalist restoration in agriculture, with the extensive development of primitive capitalist accumulation which threatened to undermine the social regime in the USSR. As Germain observed:

?The corollary to greater freedom given to the richer peasants was a massive increase in draconian measures taken against the working class in the cities in order to meet the war?s demands. At the same time the privileges of the bureaucracy and its cohorts were extended. The right of inheritance was increased, the orthodox church re-established, and the army and GPU were given independence from the party. Despite this massive crisis the Kremlin rulers managed to reassert their rule and establish an unexpected level of stability. As the siege of Leningrad was lifted, for example, the GPU converged on the city once again. This was possible because of the exhaustion of the working class. Furthermore, the lend-lease aid given to the Kremlin by the Allies at Teheran and Potsdam served to shield the bureaucracy from the worst effects of its economic crisis. As it became clear that Hitler was going to be defeated the Kremlin took fright at the powerful restorationist forces it had unleashed and which threatened the collectivised property; a Five Year Plan (the Fourth) was drawn up for 1945-49 which aimed at a 10 per cent growth rate. At the end of 1944 large show trials of industrial bureaucrats were held for ?misappropriations? and at the end of 1945 in official pronouncements, the terminology of ?Marxism-Leninism? began to replace that of Great Russian/Imperial chauvinism that had been stoked up in the war.

Gradually the Bonapartist state machine was re-built up all over the country as a guardian of the bureaucracy?s interests against restorationist and proletarian threats to its existence. On the one hand, this bonapartism struck out against the elements of restoration in the countryside which had been let loose. At the same time, however, the Kremlin lashed out against the working class which had shown a developing independence from the bureaucracy during the process of defending the USSR.

However, the survival of the Stalinist caste was not, in the last analysis, a question to be settled on the national arena. Rather, it was the international scene at the close of the war which held the key to the future of the Kremlin bureaucrats.

Formal political and military contact between the USSR and the Allies was established in July 1941, a month after the German invasion of the USSR put an abrupt end to the Stalin-Hitler pact. The military bloc was always shot through with suspicion and hostility on both sides. Even the first meeting of the heads of the Grand Alliance in late 1943 in Teheran was a bitter affair at which the Soviet Union urged the immediate opening of a second front in Europe.

The Western Allies, in fact, had left the Soviet Union to take on the might of German imperialism in the East while they concentrated on reconquering lost colonies from Germany and Japan. While the US did give lend-lease aid to the USSR their policy was one of both defeating Germany and exhausting their Soviet ally. As token of its sincerity towards its democratic imperialist allies the Kremlin formally dissolved the Communist (Third) International in 1943, thus ending even the pretence of commitment to international revolution.

**Diplomatic manoeuvres between Stalinism and imperialism**

In the earlier part of the war the dominant thinking amongst US imperialist leaders was total US control over Europe. George Kennan, chief foreign policy advisor to Roosevelt and head of the Policy Planning Staff in the White House said in 1942:

?We endeavour to take over the whole system of control which the Germans have set up for the administration of the European economy, preserving the apparatus putting people of our own into the key positions to run it, and that we then apply this system to the execution of whatever policies we adopt for continental Europe, in the immediate post-war period.?9
The decisive shift in the balance of forces between Allied and Axis imperialism took place during the course of 1943, when the victory of the Allies became more and more assured. Soviet victory at Stalingrad and entry into Eastern Europe forced the imperialists to come to terms with the bargaining power of the Soviet bureaucracy within the anti-German alliance. At Teheran little consideration was given to post-war territorial divisions apart from a general agreement to dismember Germany. Stalin said: "There is no need to speak at the present time about any Soviet desires. But when the time comes, we will speak."\(^{10}\)

However, Roosevelt left the conference convinced that some tactical concessions would have to be made to the USSR after the war. It was only as the defeat of Germany became a certain prospect and the role that the USSR would play in the defeat became clear to the USA that such tactical concessions were even considered.

Roosevelt on his return from the Yalta conference in January 1945 confessed to a group of Senators:

> "The occupying forces had the power in the areas where their arms were present and each knew that the others could not force things to an issue. The Russians had the power in Eastern Europe ... The only practical course was to use what influence we had to ameliorate the situation."\(^{11}\)

Even in these moments of weakness the imperialists did not give carte blanche to the USSR. They insisted on spheres of "influence," not "control." Faced with this prospect the Kremlin was confronted with several acute problems, all of which necessitated a right turn in international policy. The chief problems was the containment of the rising tide of anti-capitalist upsurge throughout Europe which was largely outside the control of the Soviet bureaucracy or was threatening to get out of control of the indigenous Stalinists. But the Soviet leaders also had to be wary of the strategic threat from Anglo-American imperialism. Although the tactical alliance with the latter bloc was necessitated by the threat of German imperialism, as this threat subsided, so the threat of Anglo-American aggression resurfaced. It was essential for Stalin to take steps to prepare for this threat.

Such tactical concessions to the Kremlin were opposed by sections of the US ruling class. Acting Secretary of State throughout most of 1945 was Joseph Grew, a warmonger who argued in December 1944 (the eve of Yalta):

> "It will be far better and safer to have the showdown before Russia can reconstruct herself and develop her tremendous potential military, economic and territorial power."\(^{12}\)

At the Potsdam Conference in June and July 1945, the fine details of the post-war carve up were agreed. On 16 July the USA exploded the first atomic bomb in New Mexico. The existence of the bomb would render redundant the US imperialists request for a Soviet drive against Japan at the end of European hostilities and serve to shift the balance within the alliance against the Soviet Union. Churchill, on behalf of the British, was delighted at the new weapon. Before the news of Churchill's defeat in the July General Election forced him to take his leave of Potsdam, he wrote:

> "We now have something in our hands which would redress the balance with the Russians. The secret of this explosive and the power to use it would completely alter the diplomatic equilibrium which was adrift since the defeat of Germany."\(^{13}\)

In addition Churchill was determined to keep the German army intact as a bulwark against the USSR.

Aware of this potential threat Stalin recognised the imperative need to rebuild the ravaged economy as quickly as possible so as to re-establish his security both internally against the working class and externally against the threat from imperialism. In order to put pressure on the Kremlin, lend lease aid to the USSR was stopped in June 1945, immediately prior to Potsdam.

The US also took a much tougher line on reparations. Both these measures were designed to punish the USSR for supposedly overstepping the limits of the Yalta agreements. Consequently at Potsdam reparations were the sticking point, as Stalin was determined to make Germany pay for the cost of the war. In the end, the seal of approval was given to any reparations taken from USSR occupied territory and 25 per cent of "unnecessary" capital equipment from the
imperialist-controlled zone of Germany.

The politics of Stalinist reconstruction after the war
Given the crucial nature of the manifold threats to the existence of a stable, parasitic caste in the USSR, and the international character of the dilemma, the survival of Stalinism was inescapably bound up with the political consolidation of its military expansion in Eastern Europe.

Stalinism's expansion was marked by a number of specific features. Stalinism fears above all the threat of genuine proletarian revolution. Consequently, the expansion of its political influence was achieved in a manner which subordinated the interests of the working class to itself, and through it to imperialism. The reactionary, utopian theory of ?socialism in one country?, the credo of the Stalinist bureaucracy, leads programmatically to the illusory strategy of ?peaceful co-existence? with world imperialism. The interests of the working class were sacrificed on the altar of this strategy.

However, under exceptional circumstances, the strategy of ?detente? with private property on a world scale can lead, by its very logic, to its tactical negation on a local scale. In other words, the overall desire to strike a ?modus vivendi? with private property leads to the abolition of private property in certain, local circumstances where this proves unavoidable for the Stalinists.

This proved to be the end result in most of the areas that the USSR had occupied at the end of the war. But this only occurs when the balance of ?detente? has become very unfavourable to the Stalinists. It occurs only in order to re-establish ?peaceful co-existence? with the imperialists on a more stable basis on a world scale. It does not indicate that Stalinism has in any way become a revolutionary factor in events.

An extremely important impulse for expansion was the crisis of accumulation within the USSR. For example, the Soviet Union sought to repair its war-torn economy at the close of the war through forced transfers of raw materials and energy (i.e. plundering) and through unequal exchange (i.e. the ?mixed company?).

The previously Axis countries of Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary were hit first and hardest. Immediately they were occupied, about 70 per cent of their industrial machinery was removed. In Hungary some 90 per cent of industrial capacity in the metal and engineering industries was removed. In Rumania, between 23 August 1944 and 12 September 1944 equipment to the value of $2 billion was taken, including the entire war fleet, most of the merchant marine fleet, half the available railway stock, and the oil industry equipment. In Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia some 15-25 per cent of the industrial stock was removed. In the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia, sixty large industrial enterprises alone were dismantled.

In that part of Germany annexed by Poland after the war, it is estimated that up to 30 per cent of industry was uprooted and taken to the USSR. In addition, up to 30 per cent of each occupied country?s annual GDP was siphoned off by the Kremlin.

In theory the ?mixed company? was supposed to be an equal combination of Russian and national bourgeois capital. In reality very little of the Russian share was forthcoming. Under this guise lots of raw materials and energy supplies went to the USSR for next to nothing in exchange (e.g. Rumanian oil, Iranian oil, Yugoslavian bauxite).

We must remember Trotsky?s own warning that the rapacious insatiable appetite of the bureaucracy, with its desire to enhance its privileges and prestige over other areas, will always be a factor in any expansion. However, this will be very much a subordinate factor since alone it would not be sufficient reason for the Stalinists to risk their ?understanding? with imperialism nor provoke the possibility of unleashing unwanted revolutionary action by the oppressed masses.

In Eastern Europe (i.e. Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania, East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia) the political strategies pursued by the Stalinists at the end of the war, and the impetus behind them were essentially the same.
countries the defeat and retreat of German imperialism was accompanied by uneven and potentially revolutionary mobilisations of the urban and rural workers and peasants.

Although anti-capitalist in direction, these actions of the masses were without revolutionary Trotskyist leadership. The hold of indigenous Stalinism on the other hand, over the vanguard of the masses was very uneven throughout Eastern Europe. Czechoslovakia was the only Eastern Europe country on the eve of war to have even a semblance of bourgeois democracy. This helped the CP to operate fairly openly. At its lowest pre-war point the KSC (Czechoslovakian CP) had a membership of 24,000. Electorally it always managed to pick up at least [CHECK] million votes, although it only controlled about 12 per cent of file? trade union membership. It survived the occupation emerging with a membership of 27,000 in May 1945 in the Czech areas alone. This grew to 1,159,164 by January 1946.

On the other hand the Polish Communist Party suffered from the Stalin purges of 1938. It was virtually liquidated, with 12 of its Central Committee members executed. Reconstituted in late 1941, after the breakdown of the Stalin-Hitler pact (in preparation for which the Polish Stalinists had been killed), it still only had a membership of about 4,000 in 1942-3.

In the last analysis, though, the weakness of certain indigenous Stalinist parties was compensated for by the role and control of the Red Army. Given the sporadic and atomised nature of the resistance movements in Eastern Europe the major force for sweeping German imperialism out was the Red Army ? the armed wing of the Kremlin. From 1944 onwards, the defeat of German imperialism by the Red Army was accompanied by the deliberate destruction of the anti-fascist and anti capitalist movements of the Eastern European masses. Everywhere the Stalinists protected, and in some cases reintroduced, the rule of the bourgeoisie in the economy and prevented the seizure of private property by the workers and peasants. Where the workers had already seized factories then the Stalinists used nationalisation as a means of taking direct control away from the workers.

Molotov?s strictures to the Bulgarian working class were typical of this period: "If certain Communists continue their present conduct we will bring them to reason. Bulgaria will remain with her democratic government and present order."16

Of Bulgaria, the French bourgeois paper, Le Monde, was pleased to note in June 1946: "Moreover, the Fatherland Front, has been able to maintain a sound economic situation and to safeguard the financial stability of the country." The equally worthy Swiss publication, the Geneva Journal crowed the previous month, with regard to Hungary, "Wherever they can do so, the Russians block and oppose the taking over of large industrial enterprises under a new statist system."

In Rumania, the fascist collaborator and big oil trust magnate Tatescu was vaunted by the Stalinists as a national hero. Even the discredited Rumanian monarch, King Michael was brought back, decorated by Stalin and put back on the throne.17

In the occupied countries of Eastern Europe such as Czechoslovakia the German bourgeoisie owned much of the capital. In 1945 in Czechoslovakia more than 60 per cent of the industry, and virtually the whole of the financial system was in German hands.

With the retreat of the fascists the workers established workers? control throughout the nation. The workers? councils set up national managements, which the Benes government were forced to recognise. A short time after there were some 10,000 national managements embracing some 75 per cent of industrial workers. Nationalisation by the state and the gradual introduction of state functionaries into the plants as managers was the only way, short of terrible blood letting, of defusing the revolutionary situation.

At the same time there was considerable popular pressure for nationalisations from the working class who believed it would mean an end to capitalist exploitation. As a result, the October 1945 nationalisation decrees brought 61.2 per cent of the working class into nationalised industries (16 per cent of the enterprises). This did not represent the expropriation of the whole capitalist class by the Czech workers. On the contrary, as the KSC put it: "By nationalisation
we understand the transfer of the property of Germans, Hungarians, Traitors and collaborators to the hands of the Czech and Slovak nation.?19

One nationalisation decree was even more explicit, stating that the enterprises were to be administered in line with the principles of commercial business, independence, profit making and free competition.20 The impeccably bourgeois president of the first Czech government, Benes, stated the position clearly in an interview to the Manchester Guardian in December 1945:

?The Germans simply took control of all main industries and all the banks ... In this way they automatically prepared the economic and financial capital of our country for nationalisation. To return this property and the banks into the hands of Czech individuals or to consolidate them without considerable state assistance and without new financial guarantees was simply impossible. The state had to step in.? 

Dual power in Eastern Europe, 1944-47

At the level of the state, the Red Army served to stabilise and in some cases reconstruct the forms of administrative and repressive state apparatus associated with bourgeois rule: government centralised in the hands of a distant and unaccountable executive; internal and external security centralised in the hands of a standing army above and opposed to the mass of direct producers.

Given the highly statised nature of the property relations in these countries and hence the relative weakness of the individual representatives of capital in the economy, it was particularly important for the Stalinists to construct coalition governments with the representatives of the bourgeoisie in high, if not crucial, places.

In Bulgaria, throughout 1945 there was a wave of political executions possibly numbering 20,000. Nevertheless, the popular Agrarian Party leader, Nikola Petkov was in the government. In November the elections took place with an overwhelming majority for the Fatherland Front, a Stalinist and bourgeois nationalist coalition headed by the strident anti-communist Prime Minister Georgiev. In Romania the first government after the German defeat was made up by the National Peasants and National Liberals in September 1944, the only Stalinist representative being the Minister of Justice Patrascanu.

The machinations and brutal force of the Red Army over the next months in Romania were designed to remove the two major bourgeois parties (The National Democratic Bloc) and replace them with a government of the National Democratic Front (NDF), consisting of Stalinists, Social Democrats, Union of Patriots and the Ploughman?s Front.

Such a government would be an extremely malleable one for the Kremlin. In this period the Kremlin charge, Vyshinsky, dictated the sequence of events to King Michael. Eventually after a period of armed demonstrations an NDF government was installed in March 1945 with 17 Cabinet positions going to the NDF and three economic ministries to the oil magnate Tatarescu who was installed as foreign minister. These measures were clearly designed to placate the ?democratic? bourgeoisie.

A similar struggle took place in Poland this time between the US/GB backed London based group of Polish nationalists headed by Peasant Party leader Mikolajczyk and the Soviet backed Lublin Committee. In each of these cases the purges, intimidation and liquidation of prominent bourgeois figures must not be interpreted as the complete elimination of bourgeois rule, but as measures designed to crush bourgeois parties with strong roots in the national population and replace them with other bourgeois figures who would have little base from which to resist the designs of the Kremlin, but which could, at the same time, administer the economy in a way that would also serve the interests of the national bourgeoisie and even solicit aid from imperialism. In each of these countries the state apparatus had, to a greater or lesser extent, disintegrated in the last period of the imperialist war.

While the Stalinists prevented the workers and peasants from creating their own new state apparatus (based on Soviets and a workers? militia) and re-established bourgeois control in the economy, they kept the key levers of the reconstructed state apparatus firmly in the grip of the Red Army and its local allies and agents. The leading Hungarian
Stalinist Rakosi spoke for all his ilk in Eastern Europe in this period when he remarked:

“There was one position, control of which was claimed by our party from the first minute. One position where the party was not inclined to consider any distribution of the posts according to the strengths of the parties in the coalition. This was the State Security Authority... We kept this organisation in our hands from the first day of its establishment.”

In fact, it was in Hungary where the Stalinists had to make the most concessions on the issue. The coalition which emerged from the October 1945 elections haggled over portfolios. Eventually Imre Nagy secured the Ministry of the Interior but responsibility for the police was delegated to the Smallholders Party. With the exception of Czechoslovakia, the Stalinists also retained the post of Defence, again reflecting the relative strength of the bourgeoisie in this country.

Everywhere the levers of armed power were used in this period to intimidate opponents, fix elections and in general guide policy down desired channels.

The result was a dual power situation that reflected the balance of forces between the world bourgeoisie and the USSR as it manifested itself in the Eastern European area. Political power was split, or rather shared, between the Stalinists and the bourgeoisie.

The Stalinists held a monopoly of repressive power but the bourgeoisie were reintegrated into the political superstructure via their control of the highly statified economy. Nowhere was this more clearly the case than in Czechoslovakia. The Germans were finally driven from Prague only in May 1945. The first post-war government set up was a coalition of four bourgeois parties and two bourgeois workers’ parties. The KSC emerged from the war the strongest and they were given first choice of ministries, the 22 portfolios being divided up equally among the parties. The KSC chose Interior, Information and Agriculture, leaving the economic ministries in the hands of the bourgeoisie.

By defining this period as one of dual power we can understand its instability and its eventual outcome. In Eastern Europe after 1945 the dual power consisted of a pact between the Stalinists and the bourgeoisie. Such a pact was necessary for the bourgeoisie because they were weak and depended on the Stalinists to maintain private property. It was necessary for the Stalinists because during the period 1945-47 they wanted to maintain private property to fulfil their deal with imperialism and in return secure economic aid. Dual power was also necessary for the Stalinists because it was a means of crushing the independent activity of the working class. Trotsky, drawing on the experience of the English and French revolutions (17th and 18th centuries) anticipated the possibility of such a form of dual power:

“The splitting of sovereignty foretells nothing less than civil war. But before the competing parties will go to that extreme – especially in case they dread the interference of a third force—they may feel compelled for quite a long time to endure, and even to sanction, a two power system.”

The coalition governments were the sanction given by both parties in Eastern Europe in 1945 to the split sovereignty that existed. These governments had, to a greater or lesser extent, bonapartist characteristics. This was less so where the indigenous bourgeoisie and Stalinists represented genuine social forces, as for example in Czechoslovakia, more so where the new governmental form had little indigenous social foundations e.g. Soviet Occupied Germany.

The ability of the Stalinists to resolve the dual power from 1948 onwards without recourse to civil war can be explained by their dominance within those governments. Dual power does not necessarily mean that both sides are equal and balanced. The Soviet Army and police apparatuses established in Eastern Europe meant that repressive power lay exclusively in the hands of the Stalinists. There were therefore able to use this power to resolve dual power in a cold manner, when world imperialism moved against them.

Popular front and bourgeois workers? government

Within the coalition governments in existence throughout Eastern Europe in this period the Stalinist parties were the decisive force because of their relations to the armed forces of the USSR. Committed to the maintenance of private property and the demobilisation and continued exploitation of the masses they acted either in a form of popular front
with the bourgeoisie as in Czechoslovakia or as a specific form of a bourgeois workers government. These parties with roots in the national working class, owing their power to the Soviet bureaucracy, shaped the policies of government in the interests of a deal between imperialism, its own national bourgeoisie and the Soviet bureaucracy.

The two forms of government established by the Stalinist Parties were different. A popular front is an open coalition of bourgeois and workers’ parties, while the bourgeois workers’ government is a concealed coalition in which a workers’ party governs on behalf of and in the interests of, the bourgeoisie.

However, in content they are both designed to deflect the working class from seizing power and exercising it in its own name. Of the bourgeois workers’ government the Comintern rightly stated that they:

?are a means of deceiving the proletariat about the real class character of the State, or to ward off, with the help of corrupt workers leaders, the revolutionary offensive of the proletariat and to gain time.?24

Likewise with the popular front, as Trotsky pointed out, referring to its role in demobilising the French working class in 1936:

?The People’s Front in France took upon itself the same task as did the so-called ?coalition? of Cadets, Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries in Russia in February 1917 ? checking the revolution at its first stage.?25

He went on to point out that, like a bourgeois workers’ government, the popular front disguises the real nature of bourgeois power from the workers:

?The workers were deprived of these instruments [party and soviets? Eds] because the leaders of the workers? organisations formed a wall around the bourgeois power in order to disguise it, to render it unrecognisable and invulnerable. Thus the revolution that begun found itself braked, arrested, demoralised.?26

The bourgeois workers’ governments and popular fronts played exactly these roles in Eastern Europe. The bourgeoisie was extremely vulnerable. Its armed power was negligible. It lacked, at this time, decisive support from imperialism. The advance of the Red Army had aroused the expectations and activities of the masses. Everywhere the objective possibility of replacing the collapsed power of the bourgeoisie with genuine proletarian power existed. Such an outcome could have delivered a death blow to the Kremlin Stalinists.

For that very reason, rather than moving against the bourgeoisie, they either governed on their behalf (e.g. East Germany) in specific forms of bourgeois workers’ governments, or drew the bourgeoisie into open coalitions, i.e. popular fronts (eg Czechoslovakia and Romania). The dominance of the Stalinists in the bourgeois workers’ governments and the Popular Fronts did not alter their nature. It did alter the eventual outcome of these necessarily temporary government formations. The bourgeois workers? government, as the Comintern predicted, could objectively help to accelerate the process of disintegration of bourgeois power.?27 Thanks to the shift in imperialist policy and the dominance of the Stalinists, this objective possibility was realised.

The popular fronts were also superseded by governments in which the Stalinists had absolute control. They were able to dispense with their weaker coalition partners, when the main threat came from imperialism rather than genuine proletarian revolutions which the Popular Fronts laid served to check.

The nationalisations of the coalition period were carried through as the result of an agreement between the Stalinists and the bourgeoisie to nationalise that property which was owned by the Axis powers and their collaborators. Land reform affected only the largest estates and occurred generally within the first months of ?liberation?, but was uneven between countries and inadequate in scope.

Given the weight of the peasant-based parties in the post-war coalitions, the large-scale evacuations of the land by former landlords in the wake of the German retreat and the immense contribution of the peasantry in the various partisan forces, it was expected that there would be a considerable movement pressing for land redistribution. In
addition, the immediate need for increased food production required giving peasants the initiative to produce. The most sweeping reforms were in Hungary where all landholdings were reduced to 142 acres.

In Romania all holdings of more than 500 hectares were partitioned. Thousands more peasants ?benefited? from such decrees but the social condition of most remained the same. This was because the Red Army took the best agricultural machinery to the USSR as reparations and left untouched the crippling system of credit, thus condemning the small peasantry to perpetual crisis.

It is clear than between 1944-47 the Kremlin and the local Stalinists were committed to resolving the dual power situation through the creation of capitalist states friendly to the USSR. To this end they sought to maintain or partially reconstruct the old (i.e. bourgeois) official apparatuses. Only these apparatuses could have permanently guaranteed the protection of bourgeois property. Thus, in the period of dual power the states in Eastern Europe can be described as still, essentially, capitalist. However, this general statement is insufficient to explain the dynamics of a dual power situation which by definition is transitional and lends to the state itself a contradictory, transitional character. As Trotsky pointed out with regard to the Russian Revolution after February (i.e. before the proletarian revolution):

> "if the state is an organisation of class rule, and a revolution is the overthrow of the ruling class, then the transfer of power from the one class to the other must necessarily create self-contradictory state conditions, and first of all in the form of dual power..."28

The aim of the Stalinists was to prevent the resolution of dual power in a genuinely revolutionary direction. Two options alone were open to them in carrying this through. Either, they could fully reconstruct a capitalist state and cede power to it ? a course that would in fact have resulted in the restored capitalists dumping them from government and attacking them (as happened in Vietnam in 1945).

Or they could have carried through a bureaucratic revolution which from the outset, excluded the proletariat from direct political power as they had done in the Baltic states and Eastern Poland at the beginning of the war. The possibility of these two options for the Stalinists invested the state machine in Eastern Europe between 1944-47 precisely with a self-contradictory character. The Stalinists reintegrated sections of the bourgeoisie into the state machine, but their fear of the re-introduction of imperialism into their newly established ?buffer zone? led them to exclude the bourgeoisie from any control over the armed power of the state.

This does not mean, however, that these states became degenerate workers? states immediately after the entry of the Red Army. We do not, as Marxists, define the form or the content of the state according to the social or political composition of its personnel. That the Stalinist personnel were in the last analysis largely dependent on post-capitalist property relations but found themselves defending capitalist property relations further underlines the contradictory, transitory nature of the period 1944-47.

**From compromise to containment**

Shortly before his death Trotsky commented that should the Stalinists successfully make their peace with capitalist property relations in those countries it dominated politically for any length of time, then we would be forced to revise our understanding of Stalinism and the social nature of the USSR.29

A closer appreciation of Trotsky?s reasoning on this score allows us to affirm the correctness of his analysis. Trotsky?s statement was based on the irrefutable fact that with regards to an isolated workers? state, imperialism (i.e. world capitalism) remains stronger than the USSR. If Stalinists were to hold power then their reign must inevitably be short-lived as the national economic power of the bourgeoisie, itself drawing on the power of imperialism through its thousands of ties, would be marshalled to unseat the ?alien body? in the bourgeoisie?s state.

In this way a bourgeois political counter-revolution would destroy the political rule of Stalinism and the contradiction within the social formation would be resolved in favour of imperialism. For this reason the Stalinist project of consolidating capitalist states was necessarily utopian.
It is within this perspective and not by abandoning it that we must understand the situation in Eastern Europe at the end of the war. A situation that allowed this contradiction to exist in reality, but only for a short period. The stagnation of world trade and the protectionism of the decade before the war was at its height during the war itself and spilled over into the post-war period. With the partial exception of Czechoslovakia, the Eastern European countries had been bonapartist regimes throughout the 1930s and of semi-colonial status. Their economic and political ties with imperialism were severely dislocated during the war. The contraction of world trade and the fracturing of the world economy continued right through the 1944-7 years. However, relations between Anglo-American imperialism and the national bourgeoisies of Eastern Europe were virtually non-existent after the war.

In its turn, this reduced the power of the national bourgeoisies to resist the enforced direction of the Stalinists. This fracturing of the relations between imperialism and its national agents was a highly unstable, conjunctural factor which temporarily offset the contradiction between Stalinism and the bourgeoisie. But this strategic contradiction reasserted itself during 1947/8 when the long expected ‘united front’ of the successful imperialisms was directed at the Kremlin’s role in Eastern Europe.

The tactical united front between imperialism and the bureaucracy, put together to deny the possibility of a European revolution now subsided along with the threat of a revolution itself. Relations between the USSR and the Western Allies had deteriorated with increased rapidity during the course of 1946, which was a watershed year, a transitional year from compromise to containment on U.S. President Truman’s part. He had an ally in Churchill who had become the front runner for a more hawkish attitude ever since he detected a ‘betrayal’ of the Yalta agreement in 1945.

In fact, the first reference to an ‘Iron Curtain’ across Europe dates from five days after the German surrender in May of that year.

The celebrated reference in a major speech in the USA in March 1946 to the Iron Curtain was a pulling together of the threads of what was to later become called the Cold War stance of America and British imperialism against the USSR.

The reasons which underpin the gradual change in ideological stance in 1946 are not hard to find. The Yalta and Potsdam conferences had come to an agreement over ‘spheres of influence’ which basically covered Europe and the Balkans. But the Kremlin’s refusal to take its troops out of Northern Iran in February 1946, Molotov’s claim to the ‘trusteeship’ of Libya in North Africa, and the USSR’s fiery insistence on having the right of access to a warm water port in the Dardanelles in August, convinced the imperialists of the urgent need to contain the USSR. The imperialist offensive was led by the USA; the western nations, such as France and Great Britain, were in the midst of economic crises and were thus unable to relaunch a vigorous round of accumulation on their own.

British coal production in 1946 was 20 per cent down on its 1938 level; in Western Germany it was two-fifths of its 1938 level. Precisely because of the dominant position of Germany in the industrial field before the war, its crushing defeat was bound to have an enormous effect throughout Europe. In 1939, Germany had been responsible for one-fifth of all Europe’s industrial production.

Allied to all this was a severe agricultural and financial crisis in Europe. European wheat production fell in 1947 to less than half its 1938 level. In 1946, some 125 million Europeans were living on 1000-2000 calories a day, and this was to worsen. A measure of the financial instability can be gauged from the fact that wholesale prices in France in 1946 were rising at the rate of 80 per cent per annum.30 The USA’s own productive capital emerged from the war relatively untouched, indeed even strengthened.

Relative to its markets the productive forces were burgeoning. In 1945 the USA manufactured half the world’s products. In 1946 it accounted for half the world’s income. In short, it occupied a position of dominance in the world economy unparalleled since Britain of the 1850s. However the boom in the USA economy was facing the prospect of a major reversal if it allowed the stagnation in the markets of Western and Eastern Europe to continue.

Stalin’s hold in Eastern Europe and the spectre of revolution in the west, called forth the Truman Doctrine? the
doctrine of containment, not immediate war against the USSR, backed up by massive economic aid for anti-communist
governments. Greece proved to be the launching pad for this new policy. Rapidly crumbling as an imperialist power,
Britain refused to financially underwrite Greece in February 1947, then in the midst of civil war.

Fearing a communist (ELAS) victory, the US made an unconditional commitment to the right-wing government. More
than $300m was given immediately. On 12 March, Truman elaborated before Congress: ?It must be the policy of the
United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside
pressure.?31 The economic complement of this doctrine was the Marshall Aid Programme and the plans to introduce a
new currency unity in the imperialist-occupied zones of Germany.

General Marshall had replaced Byrnes as US Secretary of State in January 1947. His Plan was called the Truman
Doctrine in Action and was announced in June though it was to take nearly a year to be ratified by Congress. It was not
a programme of relief but of reconstruction, entailing some $17bn to Europe in return for massive US influence in
domestic and foreign policy. Sixteen countries had applied and accepted its terms by September 1947.

With this twin attack the US codified its Cold War stance; to draw the line on USSR influence in Europe, to burden the
Kremlin with sole responsibility for reconstruction in its own ?spheres? and to eradicate its influence in the imperialist
spheres. These events threw the Kremlin and the National Communist parties into a turmoil. In Western Europe the
Stalinists were unceremoniously dumped from the bourgeois coalition governments. It was the social instability arising
from the economic crisis that forced the French and Italian bourgeoisie to tolerate the Stalinists in government, since
they could control the working class. In May Marshall wrote to De Gasperi, head of the Christian-Democrat
Government, urging the expulsion of the CP and promising to underwrite their financial needs.

In Eastern Europe, where the levers of political power were in their hands, the Stalinists were compelled to choose
whether to confront the imperialist offensive or retreat and concede to it.

Consistent with their attempt to construct a strategic alliance with capitalism, several of the national communist parties
were prepared to accept Marshall Aid. The Marshall Aid Plan was formally open to the USSR, but this was merely a
deliberate ploy to put the onus on the Kremlin to make the split. Molotov attended the preliminary discussions briefly
before withdrawing.

The Czech and Polish Cabinets showed a positive response to the Plan, including the Stalinists. But they were soon
forced to decline by USSR pressure. As a counter measure the Kremlin drew up a set of improvised trade agreements
(the Molotov Plan) for Eastern Europe. If the road of the Marshall Plan had been accepted then sooner or later
Stalinism would have lost complete control in Eastern Europe and imperialism would have stood knocking on the door
of the USSR itself.

The Kremlin and Stalin were not prepared to risk this fate and so risk their own necks. Stalin tightened the reins of
power and ordered the elimination, from above, of the economic roots of the bourgeoisie, and their political
representatives in the state who could have been a potential point of departure for rebuilding their power in the future.

Counter-revolutionary social overturns in Eastern Europe
A preparatory and necessary step to the bureaucratic liquidation of bourgeois power in Eastern Europe was the
complete bureaucratic control of the national communist parties over the working class. Primarily this meant the
destruction of the influence of the Social-Democratic parties over the working class which rivalled and in most cases
outshone that of the Stalinists. This was especially so in Poland, Hungary and in what was to become East Germany.

The method was usually the same; intimidations, purges and forced fusions. In September 1944, a new pro-Stalinist
leadership was foisted on the Polish socialists (PPS) with a view to securing unification. The rank and file continuously
refused to endorse this so in December 1947, it was done anyway, a further 12 leaders being removed and 82,000
members expelled. The term ?salami tactic? was used by Hungarian Stalinist, Rakosi, to describe what was done.
Persistent resistance from the Hungarian socialists (SDP) was finally overcome in February 1948 when the pro-
Moscow minority in the SDP convened a Congress without the centre and right under the protection of the secret police and in June the merger was announced.32

Despite the risks this policy held for the future of ?detente?, the Kremlin reckoned that not to take this road was to risk its own destruction. Not only would the USSR have had to give up the enormous productive potential of Eastern Europe to imperialism, but it would have seriously threatened the continued existence of the bureaucracy itself. Faced with this extremely disadvantageous turn in the relationship of ?peaceful co-existence?? the Kremlin decided everywhere in these countries to economically and politically destroy the bourgeoisie. Everywhere the pattern was the same. Leading bourgeois figures were arrested or executed and opposition gradually banned. In Poland, the opposition leader, Mikolajczyk fled in 1947 to escape from the tightening hold of the Stalinists. In Romania King Michael was deposed in December and in early 1948 the now Stalinist dominated United Workers Party took control. The leader of the Agrarian Party in Bulgaria, Petkov, was arrested in June 1947 and executed in September.

20,000 were arrested and opposition papers closed for good. In Hungary, Kovacs, the former Smallholders leader, was arrested in May by the SAF. The Prime Minister fled to the USA in May. New elections in August saw the CP dominant, though they continued the facade of a coalition until the fusion with the socialists in 1948.

After 1947-48 the destruction of capitalism in these countries was undertaken bureaucratically from above and was combined with repression against the vanguard of the proletariat. One of the ways this repression occurred was through purging of the Communist Parties themselves. This was continuous after 1947 but received new momentum after the Stalin-Tito split in the summer of 1948.

In Poland, for example, between September and December 1948 30,000 members were expelled. The General Secretary, Gomulka was imprisoned. In Bulgaria, the vast majority of the leadership and 92,000 of the rank and file were expelled up to 1950. In Czechoslovakia, where the spirit of independence had long been nurtured via Czech nationalism, 100,000 were expelled between February and August 1948, The Stalinists were already in control of the political and repressive apparatus and could utilise this power against the bourgeoisie and its agents.

Only in Czechoslovakia, during February 1948, did the Stalinists mobilise forces outside their own security apparatus to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The period of dual power, an exact and precarious balance in the Czech Cabinet, came to a decisive end in late February 1948. On 20 February a dispute over Cabinet control of the police resulted in 12 non-CP ministers offering the bourgeois head of government, Benes, their resignations. It was understood that they would be refused, and was designed as an offensive against the KSC.

But the KSC staged mass demonstrations culminating in marches of armed trade union militia on 23 February. No independent organisations were thrown up; the demonstration was kept within strict limits designed to put pressure on Benes to accept the resignation which he did. The KSC was asked to form a government which it did comprising only the KSC and its allies.

The May elections went ahead under great repression, with one slate of candidates and a decree that a blank ballot paper was ?tantamount to treason?, the results gave a juridicial seal to the ?coup?.

Elsewhere demonstrations and rallies were used merely to legitimise the bureaucratic overturn in the eyes of the Stalinists base.

During this period the Stalinists did not constitute a ?revolutionary workers? government? acting under the pressure of the masses to take decisive measures against the bourgeoisie and its property.

The government was not a government of struggle based on independent workers? organisations ? militias and soviets. Instead the overturn was the work of a Stalinist bureaucratic anti-capitalist workers? government which had ensured that the masses were so disorganised, and that the state force at its own disposal was so considerable as to prevent the working class carrying out the expropriation of the bourgeoisie itself and replacing it with the forms of revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat based on workers? councils and a workers? militia.
Such a prospect would have both challenged the privileges and authority of the bureaucratic caste that had been coalescing in these countries between 1944 and 1947 and stood to challenge the political rule of the Stalinists in the USSR itself.

The qualitative transformation of these bureaucratised states into a bureaucratically degenerate form of the dictatorship of the proletariat takes place at that point when the regimes have expropriated the bourgeoisie economically and set out to subordinate and curtail the operation of the essential law of the capitalist economy — the law of value — and organise their nationalised economies on the basis of the planning principle — albeit in a bureaucratically deformed manner.

None of this is possible without the prior existence of nationalisation, the monopoly of foreign trade and the political expropriation of the bourgeoisie. But in themselves the existence of these features do not necessarily constitute a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e., a state based on post-capitalist property forms. Total planification and the complete elimination of the bourgeoisie was necessary on top of these features before a post-capitalist economy could be established. This aspect of these degenerate workers states and their method of creation distinguishes them from the period of a healthy workers state in the USSR created by the October revolution.

The characterisation of Russia as a workers' state in 1917 flows from the fact that state power was in the hands of the working class organised as ruling class with its own organs of class rule the soviets and the workers militia. This preceded nationalisation and planning in the USSR. In Eastern Europe the workers' states Established as a result of Kremlin policy — were degenerate from birth. From their inception a political revolution against the bureaucratic caste was the prerequisite for the working class to take political power into its own hands. With the introduction of the Five Year Plans in the Buffer Zones: Bulgaria 1948, Czechoslovakia 1949, Hungary 1950, Poland 1950, Rumania and GDR 1951, the process of the creation of bureaucratically degenerate workers' states was complete.

We reject the term 'deformed workers state' for the states created by the post World War II overturns. Terminologically 'deformed' does not adequately suggest the qualitative difference between such states and proletarian dictatorships where the working class holds political power. In the former case there may exist severe bureaucratic deformations — as Lenin admitted existed in Russia in 1921. But in this case the bureaucratic political counter-revolution still lay in the future, as does a political revolution to remedy it.

The post-war bureaucratic anti-capitalist revolutions were at the same time counter-revolutionary expropriations of the proletariat's political power. Therefore we designate such states degenerate workers' states as degenerate from birth.

Thus we identify these states in all fundamentals with the degenerated workers' state in the USSR, there being only the latter's origin in a genuine proletarian revolution to distinguish them.

Wherever it occurs and whatever form it takes, Stalinist bureaucratic social revolutions are counter-revolutionary. They are carried through against the prevailing level of consciousness of the forces necessary for the proletarian revolution in the country — i.e., the working class. They occur on the basis of a bureaucratic-repressive limitation of independent action of the working class and therefore devalue the very notion of 'revolution', 'socialism', 'workers' state and the planned economy in the eyes of the oppressed masses.

They retard the development of a revolutionary consciousness within the world proletariat. They create a congenitally bureaucratised state in which the working class is politically expropriated. The bureaucratic regimes represent an obstacle in the path of the world working class in the struggle for socialism and communism. The measures carried through by the Stalinists in the course of the social overturn (expropriation of the bourgeoisie, statification of the means of production), whilst themselves revolutionary in character, are achieved in a military bureaucratic fashion. This means that during the bureaucratic overturn, revolutionaries organised as an independent force, struggle to transform that overturn into a direct fight for proletarian power.

It was Trotsky himself who witnessed and recorded these things in the first case in which Stalinist expansion coincided with a bureaucratic social overturn — Poland and the Baltic states during 1939-40. Under the direct threat of invasion by
German imperialism the Kremlin felt compelled to secure the Western flank of the USSR by invading those countries. This adventure was kept within the strict limits of a bureaucratic-military straitjacket and was followed by generalised repression against the working class and the poor peasantry. This invasion led to the incorporation of these countries into the USSR and the destruction of the private property relations within them. Trotsky summed up his understanding of the nature of these overturns thus:

"The primary political criterion for us is not the transformation of property relations in this or another area, however important these may be in themselves, but rather the change in the consciousness and organisation of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones. From this one, and the only decisive standpoint, the politics of Moscow, taken as a whole, completely retains its reactionary character and remains the chief obstacle on the road to the world revolution."  

Footnotes
2. For a selection of his most prescient statements on this theme see Uneven and combined development and the role of American Imperialism?, in Writings 1933-34, (New York, 1975), pp.116-120, March 1933; ?Hitler and Disarmament?, ibid., pp.246-57, June 1933; ?Hitler?s Victory?, ibid., pp.133-7, March 1933; ?Hitler the Pacifist?, ibid., pp.144-8, November 1933. All these articles are full of a profound grasp of the central strategy of Hitler in Europe in his struggle against the Versailles Treaty and the USSR as well as an excellent insight into the diplomatic and military tactics that Hitler would have to employ to secure his aim. But perhaps the most perceptive estimate of the tempo and line up in the approaching war is to be found in ?On the threshold of a new World War?, Writings 1936-7, (New York, 1978), pp.379-96. Trotsky also predicted the Stalin-Hitler pact after the downfall of Czechoslovakia in 1938, and because of that pact, the inevitability of war between the USSR and Germany.
3. "In either case the war will lead to Stalin?s downfall." (Trotsky) Depending on which of Trotsky?s writings one reads, one can find sharp or guarded statements on the ?inevitability? of the destruction of the Soviet bureaucracy in the war. For the former see for example ?War and the Fourth International?, Writings 1933-4, (New York, 1975), Thesis 48, pp.316-7; or for one of the innumerable briefer passages on the theme see ?The Kremlin?s role in the European Catastrophe?, Writings 1939-40, (New York, 1973), June 1940, pp.290-1. For a more guarded and considered view see ?The USSR in War?, in In Defence of Marxism, (New York, 1973) ergo ?War accelerates the various political processes. It may accelerate the process of the revolutionary regeneration of the USSR. But it may also accelerate the process of its final degeneration.? (p.21).
6. For one such account, see E. Mortimer?s article on France in Communist Power in Europe 1944-49, (ed. M. McCauley, London, 1977) pp.151-3. He concludes that 1944 ?was the most favourable moment for a revolutionary insurrection...? . In Italy the defeat of the German troops occurred in 1945 and they were also accompanied by massive workers? strikes. Allum and Sassoon in ibid., show that in this period there was not a factory in the North and a few in the centre that was not armed. Churchill summed up the problem facing the imperialists in West Europe at this time in a letter to his Foreign Secretary Eden, in November 1944: ?...every country that is liberated or converted by our victories is seething with Communism and only our influence with Russia prevents her actively stimulating this movement?. Quoted in R. Douglas, From War to Cold War 1942-48, (London, 1981 ), p.61.
8. Germain, op.cit., p.3.
10. Quoted in Ibid., p.473.
11. Quoted in Ibid., p.58.
12. Quoted in Ibid., p.91.
13. Quoted in Ibid., p.120.

14. Trotsky first recognised this in his analysis of the soviet invasion of Poland in 1939: “This overturn was forced upon the Kremlin oligarchy through its struggle for self-preservation under specific conditions. There was not the slightest ground for doubting that under analogous conditions it would find itself compelled to repeat the very same operation in Finland.” Trotsky, In Defence of Marxism, op.cit., p.175.

17. P. Zinner in Revolution in Hungary, (New York, 1952), gives details of the factories returned to private owners. See also Schwartz, Germain and Harman. In Romania, Patrascanu, the Communist Minister of Justice, drew up a law allowing industrialists, businessmen and bankers to escape punishment as war criminals.
19. Quoted in ibid., p.89
23. The SAF reached its maximum size in May 1945, at the moment of Germany’s defeat and the height of the independent actions of the workers and peasants, when it stood at an enormous 11,365,000. Demobilisation began in June and in early 1948 it was estimated at 2,874,000, still twice the size of the imperialist troop presence in Europe. The role of the SAF in Eastern Europe was uneven between nations. In Czechoslovakia in late 1946 British intelligence believed that only 5,000 troops were in the country. Shortly after the “Prague coup” in 1948 American intelligence thought there were as few as 500 USSR troops left in the country. In other words, the strength of indigenous Stalinism enabled the construction of native security forces that was not possible elsewhere. Poland’s security, on the other hand, depended heavily on the SAF and the Soviet Security Corps (NKGB). The latter were particularly notorious, having been granted full control ‘over civiliansecurity in the Soviet Army’s rear’ by the Committee of National Liberation, see McCauley, op.cit., p.270, and Yergin, op.cit., pp.270-348.
26. Ibid., p.201.
34. For the relevant passages see Trotsky, In Defence of Marxism, op.cit., pp.8-20,26-29,56-59,81-90, 130-137, 170-178.
35. Ibid., p.19.