

REVOLUTIONARY STATE IN EUROPE

J. POSADAS

Scientific, Cultural and Political Editions

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

J. POSADAS

Posadiststoday.com

Re-published 14.11.2024
mlynam79@hotmail.com

<https://en.quatrieme-internationale-posadiste.org>

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J POSADAS
29 September 1972

Presentation:

Although written in 1972, this document by comrade J. Posadas is utterly relevant. The USSR has dissolved, but China, Russia, Cuba, Vietnam, N. Korea still operate as Workers States. There are still Revolutionary States like Iran, Nicaragua - and Venezuela the staunchest of all. Their tenacity comes from a self-confidence based on that Russia & China¹ draw close in an anti-imperialist direction.

One of the basic material conditions for equality and justice anywhere, is to nationalise and plan the economy for human need. For this to start in the UK, and be sustained, a Revolutionary State will have to take command of the economy, and directly become a Socialist Republic.

The author recalls how Cuba proceeded rapidly from the armed struggle to the Workers State, with a very condensed stage of bourgeois democratic revolution (which may have lasted only a few months) – and no Revolutionary State stage at all. The author shows how the Revolutionary State depends on world structures, but its transition to the Workers State depends on leadership.

Having established that Revolutionary States tend to occur in 'less developed' countries, J Posadas does not discard the possibility of them arising in big capitalist countries like France, Italy or Britain.

In 2024-25, it is permitted to think that the unprecedented levels of capitalist crisis are opening the way to the formation of new Revolutionary States, and in Europe included. Wherever Revolutionary States occur, the author advises not to seek to bring them down, but to inspire the intervention of the masses, so that they form new leaderships and overcome the limitations.

Posadiststoday.com – 14.11.2024

1 With support in the BRICS and Russia-China backing, Venezuela triumphs repeatedly over the literally murderous attacks of Pentagon, Nato & European Union. And although imperialism has imposed partial political retreats on Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and others, it is important that Claudia Sheinbaum of Mexico invited Putin to her inauguration ceremony. She dissuaded the King of Spain from attending and refused to accept Zelensky's request (of Ukraine) that she should have Putin "arrested in accordance with the ICC warrant". The world moves away from monarchy on the anti-imperialist train.

THE ALTERNATIVE OF THE REVOLUTIONARY STATE IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORKERS STATE IN EUROPE ²

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The Revolutionary State is the culmination of an objective process, and it is also the result of it. It is not really conducted by leaders: it depends more on a series of factors than on individuals; it is an objective process where the economic structures of a country have acquired the ability to sway a part of society. These structures carry economic, social and political relations capable of generating further relations, new and outside the control of the capitalist system. In the Revolutionary State, it is these structures that incline the State to the left, forcing it forward. It is not the leaderships that do this. Indeed, the latter do not deliberately plan to make a Workers State, even less to pass from any Workers State to Socialism. The Revolutionary State is an intermediate stage between capitalist State and Workers State.

This process corresponds to what Bonapartism had been in previous times. Even then, the most elevated Bonapartist process had never built a structure comparable to what we call a Revolutionary State here. The government of Cardenas³ was Bonapartist. In Russia, so was that of Kerensky⁴. He wanted no more than the power to oppose Czarism. But in his case, the situation demanded more. It demanded the end of the war, and not just the end of the Czar. Things had come to the point where only the taking of power could put an end to the war, and bring peace.

Today, there are no more Bonapartist processes of the Kerensky type.

The Revolutionary State depends on structure more than on leadership

Revolutionary States have mainly happened in the so-called 'backward' countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. In the places where they happen, the revolutionary upheavals implicate social layers, social sectors

2 All titles and sub-titles are from the Editorial Board.

3 Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexico 1895-1970. Carried out a large programme of agrarian reform, nationalised the oil industry and defended Castro when Cuba was invaded at the Bay of Pigs. But he stayed within the confines of the capitalist state.

4 Alexander Kerensky, 1881-1970. Served as Minister in the Provisional Government of Russia, July-Nov 1917.

and social organs of the bourgeois camp. Not of the working class! Bolivia and Mexico are examples.

With its large Communist and Socialist parties, Chile has created an economic structure that escapes the control of the capitalist system. The government⁵ is not Bonapartist because – unlike what happens in the case of Bonapartism – it is led by a firm and resolute political team that is solid about its aim. It openly declares its aim to be socialism or a Workers State, but its policies set out no plan to pass from the capitalist State to the Workers State. The Allende government stasised⁶ many important branches of the economy, but the judicial structure of the country goes on being bourgeois.

To pass from Revolutionary State to Workers State, a conscious leadership is wanted

A Revolutionary State stands defined independently of its leadership. It is defined by established structures of economic and social relations. It is defined by ties between the social relations and the judicial structures – and this quite independently of who is in charge of the country. Chile has nationalised a lot of important enterprises, but not the land. It may continue to nationalise, but if it does not destroy the judicial structures, the country will stay at Revolutionary State level. If, on the other hand, Chile (or any other country) destroys the bourgeois juridical structures and the leadership is revolutionary, it can become a Workers State straightaway. This is what Lenin did.

When it comes to making the Workers State – i.e. to destroy the judicial structures – you cannot do without conscious leadership and programme. The creation of leadership and programme happens in a world context and every revolutionary leadership must take account of it.

Take Panama⁷ for instance. It is a very small country where agricultural development and industrial production are weak. Yet this is also the country that has put up a great fight against the Yankee imperialists. It achieved a lot that way. However, the profits the imperialists made in Panama's "free zones" were never reinvested in Panama. Perhaps imperialism had meant to set up adjoining key industries, but in the end, Panama was not allowed to

5 Government of Chile Sept 1972: The Communists, part of the Socialists and parts of the Christian Democrats formed a Popular Unity Coalition. At its head, Allende organised a land reform, controlled prices, increased wages, reduced taxes on the poor, got

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

7 Panama: When this was written, Panama was led by Omar Torrijos (1929-1981) as Commander of the National Guard, 1972-1981. He negotiated Panama's sovereignty over the canal in 1977.

develop an industry, and very little else was organised instead.

Panama resists Yankee imperialism staunchly. Where does it find the force? It finds some force in the fact that imperialism needs it; but Panama's greatest source of confidence comes from the Soviet intervention. Cuba too is another great source of strength for Panama, along with the revolutionary processes of Latin America. All these factors hamper imperialism. Any Revolutionary State must take these things into account.

The world conditions determine the local ones

The world situation does not decide everything of course, but it has a lot to do with what can be achieved in a given country. For this to be properly assessed and utilised, Party, programme, and audacity are required. It is the Party⁸ that studies such matters, analyses them, learns to take advantage. The role of the Party is to interpret the world process, to see how to limit imperialism and capitalism and encourage the greater action of the masses.

In any country, the existence of a Communist Party stands in the way of the bourgeoisie and the decisions it takes. Its presence perturbs the internal cohesion of the local bourgeoisie. A small group can triumph, and this is what Lenin did.

Peru⁹ has nationalised its main sources of production. Even some of its judicial structures are no longer bourgeois. But in Peru as much as in Chile, what remains to be overcome is the bourgeois judicial concept of the relation between the economy and society. This is more remarkable in Chile than in Peru because in Chile, the judicial structures are all bourgeois: parliament, judges, army, police – nothing changed. In Peru, important advances have been made. A lot of land has been expropriated and the government has attributed to itself a new legal code in property matters. This makes Peru more advanced than Chile in this sense. But seen from a global point of view however, Chile is much more advanced than Peru. This is due in Chile to the more conscious political orientation of its leadership. It might yet achieve more, because the masses of Chile intervene as the constitutive protagonists of their struggle.

8 The Party: In the texts of J Posadas, 'the Party' refers either to the Communist Party, to a Revolutionary Party in construction, to the need for a scientific revolutionary Party, or to a Posadist section – depending on context.

9 Peru in Nov 1972: Juan Velasco Alvarado, 1910-1977, was President of the Revolutionary Government of the Armed Forces (1968-1975). He nationalised IPC petrol, fisheries, mining, communications and power; introduced free education for all; made Quechua one of the official languages in 1975 (Aymara eventually too); carried out a large programme of agrarian reform, expelled the US Peace Corps in 1973. Linked with the USSR and Cuba.

This is the process which we call “the Revolutionary State”. It is neither a capitalist State nor a Workers State.

The dynamic within its structures leaves it with no alternative: it must answer favourably to the forces propelling it, because it will be crushed if it does not. From its very structures, the Revolutionary State stimulates the entry of superior social concepts in the economic relations, in the mentality of the petit-bourgeoisie and in the peasantry. Processes like the one we described in Chile are bound to recur in Latin America, Africa and Asia. We believe that they can even get hold of a big capitalist country like Italy, where the example of Chile might be repeatable. There are similarities between Chile and Italy.

The Revolutionary State could happen in France, Italy or Britain

Chile is a country relatively backward, but the essential bases for its retardation come from the Communist Party of Chile – the latter being a backward, colonial Party. Not a Party that responds to the call of the revolutionary programme or objectives. And when it does answer to something, it is from very far away. Enough to see how emphatically the masses stand for change, and the many actions they undertake which the Communists do not. The Communists are ‘behind’ the masses – but far, far behind! This happens in other countries. In Italy and also in France, it could happen that the Communist Party goes to government and starts nationalising, still leaving intact the bourgeois institutions. And what would you call this? A Revolutionary State!

The process represented by what we identify as the Revolutionary State could happen in France, Italy, or Britain. The onus is on us to create the slogans relevant to such situations, even when they last only a week. This is the technique of tactics. The problems we face are peculiar because our world contains 14 Workers States, 16 Revolutionary States, and no leadership! The world revolution beams out immense forces, but the local leaderships tend to oppose or curb them. It is our task at every turn to choose the slogans that regroup the forces of progress.

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

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

The Communists of Italy propose “a Government of Democratic Turnabout¹⁰”. In France, they propose “a Government of Popular Union¹¹” or “a Left Government”. So, the question to ask is: In what conditions can such governments be made? What do the Communist Party and the Socialist Party of France propose? They want to transfer private property to the State. This is an improvement compared with the capitalist State, but it does not achieve the Workers State. Judicially speaking, this is still a capitalist State. Although economically speaking, it is no longer a capitalist State either, because State ownership breaks the hegemony of capitalism; it profoundly impairs it, even with some capitalist enterprises continuing.

The nationalisation of the major sources of production rapidly demands further nationalisations. A measure like this, if implemented, transforms the capitalist system quite a lot. A point soon arrives when the nationalisations must continue, or let themselves be crushed and all rolled back. How do you call that point when the juridical structure is still capitalist and you take the next step of nationalisations? How do you call the State at that point? One must envisage such things, and define them, if only to know what sort of stage one is passing through.

Imperialism can declare war upon it all, but this does not cancel the elements that call for nationalisation. A world war intervening at that point can even accelerate matters in the way the First World War hastened the process of the Russian Revolution. The triumph of the *Popular Union* in France and the implementation of its programme of nationalisations would strike an enormous blow at the capitalist system. The bourgeois judicial structure of the State, because it is still in place, would rush to preserve the system - but then, the task is to demolish this judicial structure.

The essential condition to pass from capitalist State over to Revolutionary State and Workers State boils down to the steps needed to overrun the juridical structure of capitalism. Once these steps start being taken, people start thinking, judging and forming opinions through new and evolving anti-capitalist concepts. It is only as long as the capitalist structure keeps going that people continue to think as before, in terms of property, because the social and economic relations of the country are still being determined by capitalism.

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

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

The concept of the Revolutionary State helps with the creation of appropriate slogans

The *Popular Union* may triumph in France. Should it happen, Yankee imperialism will intervene against it, or launch the war. But this will not change the underlying necessity. The most this will do is hamper the revolutionary change. At every moment therefore, one must seek ways to shore up the revolutionary situation without overlooking the drawbacks.

If the *Popular Union* wins in France, US imperialism will intervene through NATO. But the Soviet Union will have to intervene too. It cannot just let imperialism install itself in France, there to pressurise Europe, gain military ground. The USSR cannot allow this. The strategic challenge is too great! This is why the Soviet Union insists on what it calls "European security". It is a bureaucratic policy, but it tends to counter the arrogance of US imperialism in Europe.

The *Revolutionary State* characterisation is important in that it offers a clearer definition of the revolutionary task. We do not choose this phrase to give ourselves a greater say in law or in politics. We use it as a tool in our activities and tactics. It gives us a clearer view of distinctions. Take Italy for instance, where the Communist Party proposes a *Government of Democratic Turnabout*. Here you have an invented concept alright, and a bad one, because it veils and underestimates the actual level of the revolution.

Instead of a *Government of Democratic Turnabout*, we propose in Italy a *Government of the Left*, with a programme of economic planning, the expropriation of big capital, and other points aimed at attracting the petit bourgeoisie organised presently in the Christian Democracy. The latter is very large in Italy. It influences layers not only in the army, in functionaries and in the State industries, but in workers' layers, in the peasantry, the employees. It was to attract these people that we chose the Government of the Left slogan; to raise their level of historic understanding and resoluteness. This slogan is only for this particular situation however. Had the Communists supported a revolutionary policy, we would have posed the struggle for power. We act as we do because the Communist Party refuses to struggle for power. It is opposed!

Should a *Government of the Left* happen in Italy with a programme like the one we propose, Italy would not become a Workers State. It would still be a capitalist State judicially speaking. But it would no longer be strictly a capitalist State! In the same way, the Socialists and Communists in France could win elections with the Popular Union; with the program they already have, they could nationalise the main sources of production. This would

not transform the structure of the State because it would remain judicially capitalist. More and more nationalisations do not change the bourgeois nature of the State - but how do you call that sort of State at that point? We call it a Revolutionary State. And note, not Bonapartism.

On the tactics to adopt towards the Revolutionary State

Our definition of the *Revolutionary State* is also a slogan. It means to give courage to the leaders who are steadfast about making the State apparatus serve human progress. In such situations, those in government - Communists, Socialists, petit bourgeois cadres - look up to the mobilised masses for support. It is not the time therefore, to go and vilify the government for its limitations. It is not the time to try and bring it down. The task is to let the masses hoist that government up, with a view to overtaking it when the time comes. Not showing the government in the light of an enemy, but still continuing to organise a new leadership.

We are not speaking here of every sort of capitalist government. We speak of governments like those of Alvarado in Peru or of Allende in Chile. It is about those particular governments that we say the task is not to overthrow them; although we do not capitulate to them, their intimidations or their policy aims.

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

Had the Communists developed a revolutionary policy, this would not have entirely suppressed the stage of petit-bourgeois nationalist governments, but it would have made it shorter, extremely so. But the opposite happened. The Communist parties did not grow, and they did not operate as mass parties. Their policies so contrary to the revolutionary tide, left them unable to interpret. They failed to understand that mass movements could develop under petit-bourgeois, and bourgeois nationalist leaderships.

In Latin America and elsewhere, the Communist parties failed to understand even the governments that were unquestionably of the left, like Peron in his

first stage¹², Alvarado in Peru¹³, Torres¹⁴ in Bolivia – and Cardenas (Mexico) before all of these. The Communist parties did not understand that it is possible to solve all the theoretical and practical problems by means of mobilising the working class and peasant masses; and that it is possible to carry out the bourgeois democratic tasks by means of the proletarian revolution.

The world revolution stimulates the Communist movement

What we set out above explains the stage of the *Revolutionary State* that we observe today. It did not have to happen this way. It happened because of the retardation of the Communist parties in front of the mighty revolutionary upswings in Latin America, Africa, Asia. Those upswings had tremendous effects in the world's Communist parties, Workers States included. In the communist militants and the communist leaders, the big advances of the masses in parts of the world triggered crisis conditions, stimulating the logical need to understand. Why such a thing as a Revolutionary State? What the Communists do not understand is the existence of a world structure that imposes itself on world capitalism; a world structure that makes capitalism incapable of stopping the process, incapable of stopping the formation of Revolutionary States.

In the Workers States, in the Soviet Union and Cuba, the leaderships are forced to understand this world revolutionary process better than before. They understand it better than the Communist parties do, although still without assimilating it integrally. In its very beginning, the leadership of the Cuban Revolution was no different from the other nationalists. But it changed politically as Cuba entered objectively the process of Permanent Revolution. The latter imposed itself on Cuba through a series of economic, social and political factors, combined with the crisis of capitalism and the political conjunctures in the Soviet Union.

From its semi-colonial State, Cuba went all the way to the Workers State; and this, without any appreciable stage of bourgeois democratic revolution. The bourgeois democratic revolution that Castro tried to implement with

12 General Peron in his first stage: Peron first became President in 1946. He raised the wages and pensions, invested in economic diversification to increase the country's independence. He invested in public transports and encouraged strikes against some employers. In 1946-47, the worker's centre (CGT) had 2 million members.

13 General Juan Velasco Alvarado: (1910-1977). President of Peru 1968-1975. Nationalised the oil fields, expropriated all large sugar estates and cattle farms, carried out the Agrarian Reform.

14 Military Officer Juan Jose Torres: (1920-1976). President of Bolivia 1970-1971. He cancelled the US steel concession on an important zinc mine. In Oct 1970, he negotiated with the workers who occupied tin mines. In 1971, he expelled the US Peace Corps from Bolivia. He was assassinated in Argentina in June 1976.

Urrutia¹⁵ and Grau San Martin¹⁶, failed - or rather, it boiled down to a struggle between them.

The brief struggle of Castro against these two others amounted to the bourgeois democratic revolution in Cuba. Exactly how long this took is not important here. Fidel Castro did not understand this, otherwise he would have eventually said: "Ah yes, we had the democratic bourgeois revolution; it happened during that short period against Urrutia". But Castro never saw that. In Russia, the bourgeois democratic revolution lasted 7 months. It took immensely less than that in Cuba.

The process of the bourgeois democratic revolution marks the start of the Workers State so long as the masses keep intervening in massive mobilisations. Without these mobilisations, Fidel Castro would not have succeeded. There was no *Revolutionary State* stage in Cuba. The process unfolded without stopping from the armed struggle over to the taking of the government, and from there to the dispute and the struggle that created the Workers State. This left no space for the stage of a Revolutionary State, not even the smallest. Hardly had Fidel Castro started in power than everything was nationalised and the Workers State was made.

Here you have the vital questions of this stage. One must give them full attention by assimilating them theoretically and politically. Because such situations are going to recur in other countries, although we reckon that the stages will be much shorter even than in Cuba, much shorter.

J. POSADAS - 28-29 Sept 1972 - (Extracts)

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

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- How to organise power to pass from Revolutionary State to Workers State
- Link the economic development of the Rev State with that of the Workers States
- The relations between the Party and the organs of Soviet functioning
- Stated property, dictatorship of the proletariat and the Socialist objective
- The role of the proletariat in Party functioning
- The way to develop the economy is to raise the capacity of the masses
- Cuba's role in the progress of the Revolutionary States

15 Manuel Urrutia: President of Cuba. In Jan 1959. Dismissed by Fidel Castro 6 months later. Urrutia then denounced the "communist tyranny of Cuba" and eventually went to live in the United States.

16 Ramon Grau San Martin: (1887-1969), Cuban physician. President of Cuba in 1944. Opposed Batista in 1952. Was running for Presidency again in 1958.



WHO IS J. POSADAS?

J. Posadas was born in Argentina in 1912 and died in Italy in 1981. He began his activities as a trade union leader in the footwear sector. He soon adopted Trotsky's ideas and joined the Fourth International. He then developed as a writer, Marxist theorist, political leader and revolutionary organizer. In 1947 he organized the Fourth International Group (GCI) and started the newspaper Voz Proletaria in light of the

birth of revolutionary nationalism with Peronism in Argentina. He wrote major works such as "Plan Quinquenal or Permanent Revolution" and "El Peronismo" 1963, and "From Nationalism to the Workers State" 1966.

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

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

Faced with the implacable and historic antagonism between the capitalist system and the Workers States, J. Posadas upheld Trotsky's 'unconditional defence of the Workers State', and analysed the inevitability of the atomic war. He devoted his whole life, and all his work, to giving to humanity confidence in its ability to organize in order to triumph, like Vietnam did, and to defeat world imperialism even in its own imperialist armies.

Some of his last words before he died were: "Life without the struggle for socialism has no sense, with all the consequences".

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mlynam79@hotmail.com

0770 993 2267