

Trotsky's Lies - What They Are, and What They Mean

Grover Furr
Montclair State University
Montclair NJ 07043 USA

The personality and the writings of Leon Trotsky have long been a rallying point for anticommunists throughout the world. But during the 1930s Trotsky deliberately lied in his writings about Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union. My new book, *Trotsky's 'Amalgams'*, discusses some of Trotsky's lies that have fooled people, and demoralized honest communists, for decades.

In January 1980 the Trotsky Archive at Harvard University was opened to researchers. Within a few days Pierre Broué, the foremost Trotskyist historian of his time, discovered that Trotsky had lied.

Trotsky had always denied that any clandestine “bloc of oppositionists” including Trotskyists, existed in the Soviet Union. Trotsky called this an “amalgam,” meaning a fabrication by Stalin. This “bloc” was the main focus of the second and third Moscow Trials of January 1937 and March 1938. Broué showed, from letters in the Trotsky Archive by Trotsky and by his son Leon Sedov, that the bloc did exist.

In 1985 American historian Arch Getty discovered that the Harvard Trotsky Archive had been purged of incriminating materials, but purged imperfectly. Getty also found evidence that Trotsky had indeed remained in contact with some of his former supporters inside the Soviet Union. Trotsky always strenuously denied this, claiming that he cut off all ties to those who “capitulated” to Stalin and publicly renounced their Trotskyist views. Again, Trotsky was lying.

In 2010 Swedish researcher Sven-Eric Holmström published an article on the “Hotel Bristol” question in the First Moscow Trial of August 1936. In it Holmström proves that Trotsky was lying here too.

In 2005 I began to systematically study all the accusations against Stalin and Beria that Nikita Khrushchev made in his infamous “Secret Speech.” I discovered that not a single one of Khrushchev's so-called “revelations” can be supported from the evidence.

But during the 1930s Trotsky had made the same kind of accusations against Stalin that Khrushchev later did. The fact that Khrushchev did nothing but lie suggested that Trotsky might have lied as well.

Thanks to Broué and Getty I already knew that Trotsky had lied about some very important matters. Any detective, in any mystery story, knows that if a suspect has lied about some important matters, he should ask himself: What else is this person lying about?

I set about studying his writings in order to determine which of Trotsky's statements could be tested. Wherever I had independent evidence to check the veracity of any accusation that Trotsky levelled against Stalin, I found that Trotsky was lying -- again.

Today I have so much evidence that even a whole book does not come close to holding it all. So there will be two more volumes concerning Trotsky's lies. The second volume will be published in early 2017.

Between September 2010 and January 2013 I researched and wrote a book on the assassination on December 1, 1934 of Sergei Mironovich Kirov, First Secretary of the Leningrad Party. That book, *The Murder of Sergei Kirov*, was published in June 2013.

The Kirov murder is the key to the Soviet high politics of the rest of the 1930s: the three public Moscow Trials of August 1936, January 1937, and March 1938, often called "Show Trials;" the Military Purge or "Tukhachevsky Affair" of May and June 1937; and the *Ezhovshchina* of July 1937 to October 1938, which anticommunist scholars call the "Great Terror," after a dishonest book by Robert Conquest.

Trotsky too wrote about the Kirov murder investigation. He identified the articles in the French communist and Soviet press that he read. I discovered that Trotsky lied about what these articles on the Kirov murder investigation said.

Trotsky fabricated a story that Stalin and his men were responsible for Kirov's death. Once again, Trotsky lied about what the articles he read in the French communist newspaper *Humanité* and in Russian-language Soviet papers, to which Trotsky had access within only a couple of days of their publication in Moscow.

Trotsky's lies would have been immediately apparent to anybody who set Trotsky's articles side by side with the French and Russian newspaper articles that he had read and which he claimed he was closely studying and analyzing. It appears that no one ever did that -- until now.

The result was that Trotsky's falsified version of the Kirov assassination -- that Stalin and the NKVD had killed Kirov -- was taken up not only by Trotsky's followers, but by Nikita Khrushchev.

In his completely fraudulent "Secret Speech" Khrushchev gave additional credibility to the "Stalin killed Kirov" story. Khrushchev and his speechwriters probably took this directly from Trotsky. Trotsky's tale that "Stalin had Kirov killed" passed from Khrushchev to the professional anticommunist scholar-propagandists like Robert Conquest and many others.

In the late 1980s Mikhail Gorbachev's men tried and failed to find evidence in the Soviet archives to support this story. Aleksandr Iakovlev, Gorbachev's chief man for ideology,

sent them back to the archives to try again. Once again, the Politburo research team filed to find any evidence to even suggest that Stalin had had Kirov killed.

The history of the “Stalin had Kirov killed” fabrication is a good example of how a number of Trotsky’s deliberate lies were taken up by Soviet anticommunists like Khrushchev and Gorbachev, and by pro-capitalist anticommunists in the West.

In my new book *Trotsky’s “Amalgams”* I uncover and discuss a number of other deliberate lies by Trotsky about Stalin and the USSR. All of them have been adopted by anticommunists and by Trotskyists. In the second and third volumes of this work I will discuss Trotsky’s conspiracies with saboteurs and fascists inside the USSR, and with the Nazis and the Japanese militarists.

In early 1937 Trotsky succeeded in persuading John Dewey, the famous educator, and a number of others, to hold hearings, supposedly to determine whether the charges leveled against Trotsky in the August 1936 and January 1937 Moscow Show Trials were true. The Commission duly concluded that Trotsky was innocent and the Moscow Trials were all a frame-up.

I carefully studied the 1,000 pages of the Dewey Commission materials. I discovered that the Commission was dishonest and shockingly incompetent. It made error after error in logical reasoning.

Of most interest is the fact that Trotsky lied to the Dewey Commission many times. The Dewey Commission could not possibly have declared Trotsky “Not Guilty” if the Commission members had known that Trotsky was lying to them.

I wish to briefly mention two more sections of my book. They are: my project to verify – that is, to check -- the Moscow Trials testimony; and my examination of the errors that most readers of Soviet history make, errors which make them unable to understand the significance of the evidence we now have.

The testimony of the defendants in the three public Moscow Trials is universally declared to be false, forced from innocent men by the prosecution, the NKVD, “Stalin.” There has never been a shred of evidence to support this notion. Nevertheless, it is staunchly affirmed by ALL specialists in Soviet history, as well as by all Trotskyists.

Thanks to years of identifying, searching for, locating, obtaining, and studying primary sources, I realized that there now exists enough evidence to test many of the statements made by the Moscow Trials defendants.

I devote the first twelve chapters of *Trotsky’s ‘Amalgams’* to a careful verification of many of the statements by the Moscow Trials defendants. I found that, whenever we can double-check a fact-claim made by a Moscow Trials defendant against independent evidence now available, it turns out that the Moscow Trials defendant was telling the truth.

Trotsky, Khrushchev and his men, Cold-War Soviet “experts,” Gorbachev and *his* men, and today’s academic scholars in Soviet studies, all claimed or claim that the Trials are frame-ups. I prove from the evidence that they are wrong. The Moscow Trials testimony is what it claims to be: statements that the defendants chose to make. I verify this with a great deal of evidence from outside the Trials themselves and even outside the Soviet Union.

This is an important conclusion. This result in itself disproves the “anti-Stalin paradigm” of Soviet history. It also contributes to disproving Trotsky’s version of Soviet history, a version that the Trotskyist movement worldwide continues to believe and to propagate today.

Those of us -- researchers, activists, and others -- who wish to find the truth about Soviet history of the Stalin period, and not merely attempt to confirm our preconceived ideas about it – we are in possession of a number of results that completely overturn the convention anti-Stalin paradigm of Soviet history. These include the following:

- * the fact that Nikita Khrushchev lied about every accusation he made against Stalin (and Lavrentii Beria) in his world-shaking “Secret Speech” to the XX Party Congress of the CPSU in February 1956. This clearly means that Khrushchev’s researchers could not find any true “crimes” that Stalin – or Beria – had committed, and so were reduced to fabrication.

- * the fact that, despite a very thorough and time-consuming search of the archives in 1962-1964, Khrushchev’s “Shvernik Commission” could find no evidence at all to suggest that either the Moscow Trials defendants or the “Tukhachevsky Affair” defendants were victims of a “frame-up” or had lied in their confessions in any way.

- * the fact that neither Gorbachev’s and Eltsin’s researchers, nor the anticommunist researchers since that time, who have had wide access to the former Soviet archives, have been able to find any evidence at all to challenge the conclusions in the Kirov Assassination, the Moscow Trials, or the Military Purges.

- * the fact that the testimony at the Moscow Trials was, in the main, truthful.

- * the fact that Ezhov and Ezhov alone, not Stalin and his supporters in the Soviet leadership, were responsible for the mass murders of July 1938 to November 1939 known to scholars as the “Ezhovshchina” and to anticommunist propagandists as “the Great Terror.”

- * the fact that, in his writings about the USSR during the period after the Kirov murder, Trotsky lied repeatedly in order to cover up his conspiracies.

* the fact that most of today's scholars of the Stalin period in the USSR lie in order to deceive their readers. But they do so in a way that can only be discovered by a very close, detailed study of their sources.

Trotskyist scholarship is consistently parasitical on mainstream anticommunist scholarship. Here is one example. In a recent review on the Trotskyist, and ferociously anti-Stalin World Socialist Web Site ([wsws.org](http://www.wsws.org)) of Princeton University historian Stephen Kotkin's book *Stalin*, a Trotskyist reviewer refers approvingly to the anti-Stalin statements of Oleg Khlevniuk, who is called

the respected Russian historian Oleg Khlevniuk.

- <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2015/06/04/kot4-j04.html>

Khlevniuk is a fanatical anticommunist and also a very blatant liar, in all his writings. Khlevniuk is anti-Stalin; WSWS.ORG, the Trotskyist publication, is anti-Stalin; therefore the Trotskyists "trust" the foremost anticommunist liar in the world today!

Meanwhile, mainstream anticommunist scholarship has been drawing upon the writings of Trotsky himself for decades.

Trotsky, of course, knew that he was lying:

- * about the "bloc of Rights, Trotskyists, Zinovievites, and other Oppositionists;"
- * about his own involvement in the assassination of Sergei Kirov in December 1934;
- * about his conspiring with the "Tukhachevsky Affair" military conspirators for a coup d'état against the Stalin government and to stab the Red Army in the back during an invasion by Germany or Japan;
- * about his conspiring with the Nazis and the Japanese militarists;
- * about conspiring with fascists and his own followers within the USSR to sabotage industry, transportation, and mines.
- * about the charges against, and the confessions by, the defendants in the Moscow trials, which Trotsky knew were true.

Trotsky knew that he lied, repeatedly, over and over again, in his *Bulletin of the Opposition*. Trotsky knew that he repeated these lies to the Dewey Commission.

The Spanish Civil War

And Trotsky knew that he lied to his own followers, including his closest followers like Andres Nin, Erwin Wolf, and Kurt Landau.

Nin had been one of Trotsky's closest political assistants. Nin is supposed to have broken with Trotsky in 1931.

But in 1930 Nin wrote, in a Trotskyist journal, that Trotsky's Soviet-based followers who had retracted their Trotskyist views and pledged loyalty to the Communist Party's line, had done so dishonestly. They had done so in order to remain within the Party so they could continue to recruit others to their secret conspiracies.

Therefore, though Nin openly broke with the Trotskyist movement in an organizational sense, his actions in Spain suggest that this was a cover for maintaining a secret connection with Trotsky. The Spanish communists and the Soviet NKVD in Spain suspected this too. Nin became one of the leaders of the POUM, an anti-Soviet and anti-Stalin party that was very friendly to Trotsky.

Erwin Wolf went to Spain as Trotsky's political representative. He did so in order to lead a "revolution" against the Spanish Republic – right in the middle of a war with the Spanish fascists, who were aided by Hitler and Mussolini.

Nin and Wolf ran these risks because they believed that Trotsky was innocent of the charges that were made against him in the Moscow Trials. They thought that Trotsky, not Stalin, was the true communist and true revolutionary. Consequently, they thought that they were going to Spain to do what Lenin would have wanted done.

In May 1937 a revolt against the Spanish Republican government broke out in Barcelona. POUM and the Spanish Trotskyists enthusiastically participated in this revolt. It appears that Nin, Wolf, and Landau thought this might be the beginning of a Bolshevik-style revolution, with themselves as Lenin, the POUM as the Bolsheviks, the Republican government as the capitalists, and the Spanish and Soviet communists as the phony socialists like Alexander Kerensky!

The "Barcelona May Days Revolt," was a vicious stab in the back against the Republic during wartime. It was suppressed in less than a week. After that, the Spanish police and Soviet NKVD hunted down the Trotskyists and the POUM leadership. Andres Nin was certainly kidnapped, interrogated, and then murdered by the Soviets and Spanish police. The same thing probably happened to Landau and Wolf.

The Soviets knew then what we know today: that Trotsky was conspiring with the Germans, the Japanese, and the "Tukhachevsky Affair" military men. But Nin and Wolf certainly did *not* know this. They believed Trotsky's professions of innocence.

If Andres Nin, Erwin Wolf, and Kurt Landau had known what Trotsky knew, and what we now know, would they have gone to Spain to try to carry out Trotsky's instructions? Impossible!

Therefore, Trotsky sent these men into an extremely dangerous situation by means of lying to them about his own activities and aims, and about what Stalin was doing. And it cost them their lives.

The same is true for all the Trotskyists who were executed in the Soviet Union itself. Evidently, there were hundreds of them. They all supported Trotsky because they believed his version of Soviet history, and had been convinced by Trotsky's writings that Stalin was lying, that the Moscow Trials were a frame-up, and that the Stalin regime had abandoned the goal of worldwide socialist revolution.

These men and women would not have followed Trotsky if he had not lied to them.

In the first chapter of *Trotsky's "Amalgams"* I examine the errors that most students of Soviet history, including academic professionals, make when faced with primary source evidence.

The truth is that very few people, including professional historians, know how to examine historical evidence. Very few Marxists know what a materialist examination of evidence looks like, or are capable of recognizing or critiquing an idealist argument when they are confronted with one.

These errors are not only errors of "denial" by persons who do not wish to have their pro-Trotsky or anti-Stalin preconceptions disproven. Most or all of these same errors are made by pro-Stalin, anti-revisionist people. Anticommunist arguments have been so overwhelming, not only in Cold War pro-capitalist form but especially in supposedly pro-communist but in reality anticommunist Khrushchev- and Gorbachev-era writings, that it has degraded the thinking of all of us.

The lies of Trotsky's that Pierre Broué and Arch Getty discovered 30 years ago have been ignored. This fact itself deserves explanation.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s Broué continued to find, and write about, more lies by Trotsky. But all the while he continued to deny that these lies were of any importance.

Broué also ignored Getty's two discoveries. First, that the Trotsky Archive had been "purged" of incriminating materials. Second, that Trotsky had indeed remained in contact with oppositionists like Radek with whom he swore he had broken all ties. Vadim Rogovin, the leading Trotskyist historian of the Stalin-era Soviet Union, went along with Broué's cover-up and also introduced some lies of his own.

Trotskyists and Cold Warriors continue either to ignore Broué's discoveries altogether or to echo Broué's claim that these lies were of little significance. We can understand why they do this. The fact that Trotsky lied dismantles what I call the "anti-Stalin paradigm": the Trotskyist and the Cold War anticommunist versions of Soviet history.

Trotsky, of course, had to lie. He was running a serious conspiracy to get rid of Stalin, in conjunction with many supporters inside the Soviet Union and the Bolshevik Party and in collusion with Nazi Germany, militarist Japan, England and France. A conspiracy requires secrecy and lying.

But who, above all, was Trotsky fooling? Not Stalin and the Soviet government. They knew he was lying.

The conclusion is inescapable: Trotsky was lying in order to fool his own supporters! They were the only people who believed whatever Trotsky wrote. They believed Trotsky was the true, principled Leninist that he claimed to be, and that Stalin was the liar.

This cost the lives of most of his supporters inside the Soviet Union, when Trotskyism was outlawed as treason to the Soviet state because of Trotsky's conspiracy with Germany and Japan. It has led Trotsky's followers outside the Soviet Union to spend their lives in cult-like devotion to a man who was, in fact, doing just what the Soviet prosecutor and the Moscow Trials defendants claimed he was doing.

The figure of Leon Trotsky casts a giant shadow over the history of the Soviet Union, and therefore over the history of the world in the 20th century. Trotsky was the most significant – in fact, the only outstanding – Opposition figure in the factional disputes that shook the Bolshevik Party during the 1920s. It was during the 20s that Trotsky attracted to himself the group of persons who formed the United Opposition and whose conspiracies did so much irreparable harm to the Party, the Comintern, and the world communist movement.

Conclusions

What does the fact that Trotsky lied, that Khrushchev lied, and that these facts were ignored for so long, mean?

What does it mean for the main question that faces us, and billions of working people in the world, today? I mean the question of why the wonderful international communist movement of the 20th century collapsed, the movement that 70 years ago, triumphant in World War 2, in the Chinese communist revolution, in the anti-colonial movements around the world, seemed to be poised to bring about an end to capitalism and the victory of world socialism?

How do we convince workers, students, and others that we know why the old communist movement failed and that we have learned what we have to do differently to avoid repeating those failures in the future? We must study this question. We also need to discuss it – to entertain and debate different, informed viewpoints.

Therefore we have to defend the legacy of the international communist movement during Lenin's and, especially, during Stalin's time. At the same time we must be fearlessly

critical of it, so we discover what errors they made and so not make the same errors again.

In my judgment – and I hope that it is yours as well – discovering the reasons for the collapse of the magnificent international communist movement of the 20th century is the most important historical and theoretical question for all exploited people today, the vast majority of humankind.

To have any hope of solving it, we must think boldly, “go where no one has gone before.” If we pretend that “Marx and Engels had all the answers,” or “Lenin had all the answers” (many Trotskyists, of course, believe that “Trotsky had all the answers”) -- if we believe that, then we are guaranteed, AT BEST, to fall far short of what they achieved.

Marx said that great historical events occur twice “the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.” The tragedy of the international communist movement of the 20th century was that, ultimately, it failed.

Unless we figure out where they went wrong then we are doomed to be the “farce.” And that would be a political crime -- OUR crime.

So we have to look with a critical eye at ALL of our legacy. Marx's favorite saying was: “De omnibus dubitandum” -- “Question everything.” Marx would be the last person in the world to exclude himself from this questioning.

History can't teach lessons directly. And history isn't political theory. But if we ask the right questions, history can help us answer them.

Meanwhile, we should all publicize everywhere and in every way we can that, like Khrushchev and Gorbachev, Trotsky lied – provably, demonstrably lied – and, what's more, that all the anti-Stalin, anticommunist “experts” anointed by capitalist universities and research institutes are lying too.

We need to point out that the only way forward is to build a new communist movement to get rid of capitalism. And that to do that, we need to learn from the heroic successes, as well as from the tragic errors, of the Bolsheviks during the period when the Soviet Union was led by Joseph Stalin.

My hope and my goal is to contribute, through my research, to this project which is so vital for the future of working people everywhere. Thank you.



第七届世界社会主义论坛

The 7th World Socialism Forum

创新 21 世纪马克思主义

Developing and Innovating Marxism in the 21st Century

论文集

Proceedings

(I)

中国 · 北京 2016. 10. 21 — 22

Beijing, China October 21-22, 2016

Grower Fair

Contents

Papers of the Speakers of the Forum

1. Socialism with Chinese Characteristics is Scientific Socialism Rather Than Other Types.
.....Li Shenming (1)
2. Collaboration networks and economic activity the paradigm of gift and construction of a new sociability to beyond market.....Agnaldo dos Santos (Brazil) (8)
3. To Gather Invincible Mighty Power, To Welcome Great Struggles with New Historical Characteristics——To Briefly Discuss Thoughts of the Party Central Committee with Xi Jinping as General Secretary about Chinese Power Xu Guangchun (12)
4. Foundation growth and fall of the GDR, part of the really existing socialism in Europe.
..... Egon Krenz (Germany) (19)
5. Reliable Friends of ChinaBob Briton (Australia) (24)
6. The World System of the Financial Imperialism Will be collapsed..... Zhang Quanjing (31)
- 7.The South African Communist Party in the context of the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union..... Gregory F. Houston (South Africa) (35)
8. Features of Xi Jinping's Thought on the Governance of ChinaJin Nuo (40)
- 9.Collaps of Soviet Union bloc and revival of socialismMauro Alboresi (Italy) (46)
10. The Characteristics and Influence of Contemporary Monopoly Capitalist Economic Financialization and China's Countermeasures - The 100th Anniversary of Lenin's Imperialism is the Highest Stage of Capitalism..... Cheng Enfu, Xie Chang'an (49)
11. Collapse of the Soviet bloc and revival of socialism Elshafie Khidir Saeid (Sudan) (53)
- 12.Уважаемые товарищи, дорогие друзья!Igor Karpenko (59)
13. Persisting in Marxism Has Great Significance for New Practices of ReformLiang Zhu (71)
- 14.China Scheme: New Attitudes to Global Governance and Economic Development
..... Lomanov Alexander (Russia) (75)
- 15.Evolution of the Cuban economy in 2015 and Challenges for 2016
..... Hernández Pedraza Gladys Cecilia (Cuba) (81)
- 16.Three Changes of Political Pattern in the World after the World War II and Appearing of "Critical Point" of Historical Qualitative Change- Based on the Analysis on the Geopolitical Structure of the World.....Zhang Wenmu (86)

Papers of Overseas Scholars

1. South- South Cooperation to Challenge the Exorbitant privilege of the US dollar Africans and the future of the BRICS Bank.....Horace Campbel (America) (88)
2. Trotsky’ s Lies - What They Are, and What They Mean Grover Furr (America) (104)
3. Away with All Pests, Revisited Ecological Agriculture As Policy Will Strengthen Marxism and Promote Ecological Civilization.....Wadi’ h Halabi (America) (113)
4. Occupy the Commanding Elevation of the Moral on theInitialIdeal of the Chinese Communist Party and the Reasons of its Victory Han,Dongping (America) (118)
5. The next wave.....Mario Toer (Argentina) (122)
6. Che Guevara the Cuban Trotskyists and Debate on the Restoration of Capitalism in Revolutionary Cuba.....Daniel Gaido (Argentina) (123)
7. Domestic policy in the global scenario an interpretation of the All-round and Deeper-Level Reform and the Foreign Economic Policy of China Gustavo E. Santillón (Argentina) (138)
8. The Time For Talk Is Over Real, Practical Cooperation Between Communist PartiesMichael Hooper (Australia) (144)
9. Lessons from the collapse of Soviet Union how to create a Socialist Society to beyond the State Marcos Cordeiro Pires (Brazil) (145)
10. Labor and Development differences between the Brazilian and Chinese models of development under the Marx's labor theory of value Luis Antonio Paulino (Brail) (152)
11. Brazil 2016 Politics and Ideological Mechanism of Coup of the ConservativesFabio Paraggio De Azevedo (Brazil) (159)
12. Imperialist war threatens Russia, China and the world..... Joti Brar (Britain) (165)
13. Reinvigorating the bandung spirit in global africachallenges and prospects for pan-africanism and socialism in the 21st century..... Lazare KI-ZERBO (Burkina) (171)
14. Marx and world aestheticsNkolo Ndjodo (Cameroon) (178)
15. Understanding 21st Century Imperialism Radhika Desai (Canada) (192)
16. Global economic crisis and empire of financial capital the guilty relation Jourdy James Heredia Faustino Cobarrubia (Cuba) (193)
17. A new trend of Marxism in Europe About Nicos Poulantzas reception by the contemporary “radical Left” Jean-Numa Ducange (France) (201)
18. Imperialism A continuous and renewed transformation processSraieb Hadi (France) (205)
19. India’ s Rise and Fall of High GrowthVenkata Ramana Murthy Rupakula y (India) (213)
- 20-. The fate of Kibbutz communities in Israel as a lesson for the sustainability of Socialist societyUriel leviathan (Israel) (220)

主办单位：

中国社会科学院

Sponsored by:

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

承办单位：

世界社会主义研究中心
科研局
国际合作局
信息情报研究院
马克思主义研究学部
马克思主义研究院
研究生院
中国社会科学杂志社

Organized by:

World Socialism Research Center
Bureau of Scientific Research Management
Bureau of International Cooperation
Institute of Information Studies
Academic Division of Marxism
Academy of Marxism
Graduate School
Social Sciences in China Press