

# Introduction: Ukraine as the Object of World Counterrevolution, by Mikhail Pavlovich

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Today, the *World Socialist Web Site* is publishing the first complete English-language translation of an important revolutionary pamphlet from the Russian Civil War. The work, *Ukraine as the Object of World Counterrevolution*, by Mikhail Pavlovich, was first published in Russian by the Third International in 1920, in an edition of 100,000 copies. Excerpts in English were published by *Communist International*, the journal of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, also in 1920, and an excised Ukrainian language translation was published in Winnipeg in 1922 by the newly founded Communist Party of Canada.<sup>[1]</sup> Other than these publications, Pavlovich's writings have remained undeservedly obscure, as they were suppressed due to the rise of Stalinism.

Even if this book were of only historical interest, its renewed circulation on a world scale would mark a significant contribution to the struggle of the international working class to deepen its political and historical understanding of the Russian Revolution. But the political questions developed in the essay remain the central issues of our own time—the class character of bourgeois nationalism and its relationship to imperialism, the relationship between the struggle of the oppressed for national liberation and the struggle of the working class for world socialism. Thus, this work's assimilation by workers in 2026 will greatly assist them to develop a more complete understanding of their own world-historical task—the overthrow of capitalism and the struggle for a socialist world society.

## Historical background

Mikhail Pavlovich's pamphlet was written during the maelstrom of socialist revolution and civil war. Pavlovich was sent to Ukraine 1919, first in a military capacity on the southern front against Denikin, and then as Deputy Peoples' Commissar for Education of Ukraine. This pamphlet, along with many other works, was part of the Bolsheviks' *political intervention* in the Civil War, without which no military campaign could have succeeded.

As Pavlovich writes his pamphlet, the Bolshevik Revolution is besieged on all sides by world imperialism. The victorious workers' state is fighting for its very survival, after the invasion of Ukraine and Russia variously by German, and then French, English and finally by Polish troops. The "White" monarchist General Anton Denikin occupies Kiev and leads a series of anti-Jewish pogroms. Tens of thousands are murdered. In the wake of the revolution, which dissolved the Tsarist empire and promised national self-determination for oppressed national minorities, Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists have declared an "independent" Ukraine. They promise liberation of the long-oppressed Ukrainian peasants through the creation of a "democratic" capitalist state. But in reality, the bourgeois nationalists are oriented toward the various

imperialist powers, who continue the battles of World War I over trade routes, sources of raw materials and fuel. Their extreme economic weakness renders the Ukrainian nationalists the *servants* of imperialism. Their actions demonstrate their claims of "independence" to be mere pretense.

German imperialism demands the starving Ukrainians hand over their grain and foodstuffs, to such an extent that the Ukrainians would themselves starve. Ukrainian nationalists enforce these orders. The Ukrainian peasants rise up against the Ukrainian nationalists and German imperialism imposes a dictator, Hetman Skoropadskyi, to enforce their brutal demands. A socialist revolution in Germany breaks out in November 1918, forcing the abdication of the Kaiser, resulting in the withdrawal of imperialist German troops from Ukraine. Though the German revolution is put down by the Social Democrats working hand in glove with the most reactionary social forces, the resulting end of the German occupation of Ukraine ensures the survival of the revolution in Russia.

After German imperialism withdraws its troops from Ukraine, British and French imperialism move in, as does Poland. Once again, the Ukrainian nationalists serve as their local enforcers. The English demand the coal fields and factories of the Donetsk basin, replicating many of the German demands for grain. France demands Ukraine's railways. The Poles demand the enforced Polonization of much of the country. The Ukrainian nationalists are ready to sell it all, to make any deal with imperialism, if only to preserve their place as the "independent" capitalist exploiters of Ukrainian labour and resources, with the troops of imperialism standing directly behind them. Their claims of "independence" serve merely to dress up their own rapacious class interests—and their own economic weakness—in noble-sounding language.

The Bolsheviks explain that true independence for the workers and peasants of Ukraine can only be achieved on a socialist, and not a capitalist basis. The most basic demands for Ukrainian democracy cannot be reconciled with the class interests of the native bourgeoisie, which draw them into an alliance with German, French and Polish imperialism, against Ukrainian peasants and workers.

But the revolution, if confined to Ukraine and Russia will not be safe while Germany, England and France remain imperialist states. The struggle for an independent Ukraine thus also requires the struggle for a socialist Germany, a socialist France, England and Poland. It requires a Ukraine which is part of a larger, socialist federation of states. The Bolsheviks are fighting to extend the socialist revolution beyond the borders of Russia, beyond Ukraine, because as Marxists, they understand that it is only on an international basis, and not confined to a single country, that the revolution can not only survive, but triumph. The victory of the national revolution can only be achieved on an international scale, by means of the *permanent revolution*.

In his pamphlet, Pavlovich writes:

The treasonous slogan “Ukrainian People’s Republic” is only a cover for subjugating Ukraine to international capital and the Ukrainian kulaks (rich peasants. Ed.). During the first Ukrainian People’s Republic, Austro-German imperialists and General Skoropadsky ruled Ukraine.

This was the time when, after the treaty with the Germans and Austrians, Petliura’s Ukraine undertook to give Austria and Germany 75 million poods of grain, 11 million poods of live cattle, etc.

During the Second Ukrainian People’s Republic, Ukraine was a colony of French capital in accordance with the agreement that the venal Petliura signed in Odessa with the French general d’Anselm. After that agreement, almost all Ukrainian railways, financial and military enterprises were to pass into the hands of French stockbrokers.

The third Ukrainian national republic, promised by the same Petliura, was only a veil for the hated black power of the Polish nobility established in Ukraine.<sup>[2]</sup>

Pavlovich explains the attraction of the imperialist powers to Ukraine. Part of the answer lay in Ukraine’s vast natural wealth:

The fact is not only that Ukraine is generally one of the richest countries in the world with its natural treasures, but the fact is that Ukraine possesses the main elements of production—coal and iron, without which it is impossible to start a single factory, but also the main elements of food for the human body—bread, sugar, fats and salt.<sup>[3]</sup>

The second part of the answer lay in Ukraine’s geo-strategic location. Pavlovich writes, World War I

... was fought over major trade routes and sources of raw materials and fuel. Ukraine with its boundless natural wealth, with its famous geographical position, is located at the crossroads from Western Europe to the Black, Azov and Caspian seas, to the Caucasus with its mineral wealth and giant oil deposits, with every day increasingly important in the economic life of peoples, and further to Turkestan with its cotton plantations, to Persia and the whole of Central Asia, it could not but become an object of desire on the part of all imperialist powers.<sup>[4]</sup>

But the primary interest of the imperialist powers in Ukraine was to strangle the biggest threat to imperialism—the newly established workers’ state. Pavlovich writes,

The Krasnovs, Kaledins, Denikins, and their European patrons dreamed of seizing the Donetsk Basin from Russia and Ukraine in order to put both Soviet republics in a stranglehold of cold and hunger, cause a complete paralysis of the railways in Russia and Ukraine, and bring all economic life in the country to a standstill. and provoke an uprising of the population, driven mad by hunger and cold, against Soviet power.<sup>[5]</sup>

The relevance of Pavlovich’s polemic 106 years later is immediately

apparent. The villains of Pavlovich’s pamphlet, Hetman Skoropadsky and Symon Petliura—not to mention their fascist and Nazi successors who emerged from these defeated nationalist elements in the years after Pavlovich’s death—are the heroes of today’s petty-bourgeois Ukrainian nationalist ideologues and the ruling class of gangster-capitalist oligarchs who fund them. They remain ideological links to present-day Ukraine’s imperialist sponsors in Germany and Poland, whose eyes remain firmly fixed on the Donetsk basin, and the Russian lands to the east. While the Stalinist bureaucracy destroyed the Soviet Union, the region’s vast natural wealth and geography remain.

It is of critical political significance to recall that contemporary Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism owes its second reincarnation to the politically degenerate Stalinist bureaucracy. The bureaucracy dissolved the USSR in 1991 in a social and political counter-revolution which restored capitalism and opened up the newly created “independent” states to imperialism. Ukrainian bourgeois nationalist ideology, incubated after World War II by western intelligence agencies and their Nazi collaborator accomplices, was transplanted back into Ukraine proper, as the WSWS has extensively documented here and here.

Ukrainian workers, cut off politically from their class brothers and sisters in Russia and the other Union states, politically isolated from the revolutionary socialist tradition and thrown into extreme exploitation and poverty, have since 1991 been prescribed for their pains ever larger doses of political poison — the ideology of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, OUN, who helped the Nazis carry out the Holocaust in Ukraine. Hatred of all things Russian is cultivated to divide Ukrainian from Russian workers, to prevent their unified struggle against their exploiters.

World imperialism elevated these social forces to power in the 2014 Maidan coup. American, British, Canadian and German imperialism then re-armed them, deploying them as their military and political proxies for the war against Russia. The reactionary 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine was a desperate response of the Putin regime to negotiate a deal with the same imperialist powers who have invaded Russia by the same route twice in the last 100 years.

Changing what must be changed, the same essential class and geopolitical dynamics described by Pavlovich remain operative.

The Ukrainian bourgeoisie has once again put Ukraine up for sale to the lowest bidder. In an effort to secure an endless supply of western armaments, the Zelensky regime has signed an extremely disadvantageous deal with the fascistic Trump regime to exploit Ukraine’s supply of critical minerals, permitting US corporations to pillage the country. As the World Socialist Web Site has explained, imperialism’s need to appropriate for itself Eurasia’s immense stock of natural wealth, mineral, energetic, natural and human, in an effort to postpone capitalism’s ultimate crisis, is a key factor driving its rearmament and plans for war against Russia and also China.

Today, US-based asset management corporations such as Blackrock and Oaktree Capital are scooping up Ukrainian farmland.<sup>[5]</sup> Monsanto, Cargill and Dupont by themselves already own 40 percent of this farmland.<sup>[6]</sup> Ukraine’s debt now stands at \$152 billion, 70 percent of which is owed to external creditors.<sup>[7]</sup> Today’s Ukrainian “independence” is every bit as much of a cruel hoax as it was a century previous.

### **Permanent Revolution, the national question and the peasantry in Ukraine as Object of World Counterrevolution**

Although Pavlovich does not use the phrase in his book, the events he describes illustrate Trotsky’s conception of permanent revolution.

Pavlovich's own political orientation to these events was that of the Bolshevik Party, which was at that time led by and fighting for this perspective.

As early as 1905, Leon Trotsky recognized that in the course of a revolutionary struggle in countries of belated capitalist development, the proletariat would be required to fight for state power. Even bourgeois democratic political tasks could henceforth only be accomplished by the working class, which would require socialist means for their realization.

The Tsarist empire's peculiar industrial development, which relied on the most advanced technologies and finance capital from Europe, thrust forward the working class as the principal revolutionary social force in society. Meanwhile, the bourgeoisie was tied closely to foreign capital, and the absolutist Russian state.

In his book *Results and Prospects*, Trotsky notes,

The (Russian) proletariat immediately found itself concentrated in tremendous masses, while between these masses and the autocracy there stood a capitalist bourgeoisie, very small in numbers, isolated from the "people," half-foreign, without historical traditions, and inspired only by the greed for gain.<sup>[8]</sup>

The Russian bourgeoisie's financial ties with world imperialism both drew the bourgeoisie towards imperialism and drew in world imperialism to take the side of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

This same political dynamic also drew the Russian and Ukrainian working class towards the international proletariat, and the international proletariat into the Russian revolution. "Should the Russian proletariat find itself in power, if only as the result of a temporary conjuncture of circumstances in our bourgeois revolution, it will encounter the organized hostility of world reaction, and on the other hand will find a readiness on the part of the world proletariat to give organized support," Trotsky wrote in 1906.<sup>[9]</sup>

Pavlovich's pamphlet documents the "organized hostility of world reaction" to the Bolshevik Revolution in Ukraine, and its fear of a corresponding revolutionary outburst at home, demonstrating in the real, historical development of the revolution the necessarily international character which Trotsky had theorized 14 years earlier. Pavlovich notes, in respect of Polish intervention in Ukraine, that "The war with Russia and Ukraine is a war to suppress the revolutionary movement in Poland itself, a war aimed at keeping the eastern revolutionary flame as far as possible from the Polish powder keg, which could explode at the slightest spark."<sup>[10]</sup>

The leading revolutionary role of the working class and the objectively international quality of its revolutionary activity, bound up with the increasingly international nature of capitalist production, had implications for the national question in Ukraine in 1919, where the overwhelming majority of ethnic Ukrainians were peasants. Trotsky, while recognizing the immense importance of the "agrarian question" in the revolution, insisted that the peasantry could play no *independent* political role.

Trotzky writes,

The history of capitalism is the history of the subordination of the country to the town. The industrial development of the European towns in due course rendered the further existence of feudal relations in agriculture impossible. But the countryside itself never produced a class which could undertake the revolutionary task of abolishing feudalism. The town, which subordinated agriculture to capital, produced a revolutionary force which took political hegemony over the countryside into its hands

and spread revolution in state and property relations into the countryside. As further development has proceeded, the country has finally fallen into economic enslavement to capital, and the peasantry into political enslavement to the capitalist parties.<sup>[11]</sup>

The "political enslavement" predicted by Trotsky proved in fact to be the lot of the Ukrainian peasantry under the various bourgeois nationalist regimes established in Ukraine after the February Revolution of 1917. In June of that year the Central Council of Ukraine declared Ukrainian autonomy, and in January 1918, the Ukrainian Peoples' Republic was formed in response to the seizure of power by the working class in the October Revolution. Among its political leaders were the Socialist Revolutionaries (the SRs), the main reformist party of the peasantry. On February 23, 1918, the Ukrainian Rada invited German and Austrian troops into the country, which overthrew the government and set up a dictatorship under the "Hetman" Pavel Skoropadsky when the Central Rada (parliament) refused German demands to seize the grain of the Ukrainian peasants. Pavlovich describes these events in detail.

If bourgeois "independence" meant de-facto economic enslavement to imperialism for the peasants, it also meant the suffocation of the striving for a free development of Ukrainian national culture. In his pamphlet, Pavlovich describes the wholesale attack on Ukrainian culture which accompanied the Polish invasion of Ukraine, which was once again sponsored by the bourgeois nationalists under Semyon Petliura, in order to defend their class interests against the Ukrainian revolutionary workers and peasants.

Drawing together these threads, Pavlovich's work underlines the fact that the political and cultural liberation of the Ukrainian peasantry is inextricably bound up with the fate of the world socialist revolution, with the liberation of the European and entire international working class. He writes,

Only in close alliance and unity with the working masses of Soviet Russia will Ukrainian workers be able to defend their language and their culture, created by the masses. How much blood have Russian workers and peasants already shed on the fields of Ukraine in the struggle for happiness and freedom! And what do those pitiful eight thousand poods of grain, which have been taken to Russia during the current period of Soviet power in Ukraine, mean in comparison with these rivers of blood, with this heroic self-sacrifice of Russian workers and peasants?

The Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic is a member of the All-Russian Socialist Federative Republic, which in the near future will become the Great International Republic of Soviets.<sup>[12]</sup>

After the victory of the Bolsheviks in the Civil War, a policy of supporting national languages and cultures (*korenizatsiya*) was introduced in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and throughout the newly created Soviet Union. The 1920s saw a flowering of national minority languages and cultures which had been suppressed under the Tsarist empire, and a flowering of Soviet culture as a whole.

The reversal of the Bolshevik nationalities policy by the Stalinist bureaucracy in favour of a return to reactionary great Russian chauvinism was entirely bound up with its hostility towards the internationalist program of the October revolution and its shift toward the nationalist program of building "socialism in one country." The bureaucracy's subsequent repression of Ukrainian culture in the 1930s, and the famine which arose from its rushed collectivization policy permitted all of the enemies of the working class to falsely conflate the bureaucracy's crimes

in Ukraine with “socialism” when in fact they represented its repudiation.

One hundred and five years later, the theoretical insight of Leon Trotsky into the permanent and international nature of the coming socialist revolution, and the historical proofs of this theory provided by Mikhail Pavlovich are as politically relevant, immediate and pressing as the day they were written.

## The political life of Mikhail Pavlovich

Mikhail Pavlovich’s numerous books and essays, well-known during his lifetime, have been kept largely obscure, due to their incompatibility with Stalinism, and all forms of national socialism. With a few small exceptions, his collected works, published in part by the state publishing house Gosizdat in 1925-26 remain untranslated into English.

This is due, above all, to his close political connection to Leon Trotsky and the Left Opposition, and his principled socialist internationalism. Pavlovich served alongside Trotsky in several responsible capacities during the immediate aftermath of the October Revolution, and in his later life his journal *Novyi vostok* published the works of leading members of the Opposition. Having risen to their feet to observe a minute of silence in his memory at the opening session of the 15th Party Congress in 1927, the Stalinists rapidly proceeded to pretend that Pavlovich had never existed.<sup>[13]</sup>

Pavlovich was born Mikhail Lazarevitch Veltman into cultured Jewish family in Odessa in 1871. A contemporary of Lenin and his fellow Odessan David Ryazanov, with whom he was close, Pavlovich was shaped by all of the critical political experiences of that great generation of revolutionary socialists. Pavlovich grew up as the influence of “Narodnik” populism on the Russian socialist movement was superseded by Marxism. Populism had idealized the peasantry as the social class upon which a future socialist society in Russia would be based. Pavlovich, like Lenin and Ryazanov, turned towards the working class under the powerful influence of Plekhanov’s writings.

Like Lenin, his first political experiences revolved around the campaigns of students in the 1880s for their own democratic organizations within the Russian school system. Accepted to the Faculty of Law, Veltman declined the opportunity and in 1891 went out into the Odessa factory district and began to agitate among the working class.

In 1894, he was arrested, along with Grigorii Tsyperovich<sup>[14]</sup> and more than 50 workers in the first large trial of Russian Social Democrats for political opposition to the Tsarist autocracy. After serving 18 months in an Odessa prison, in 1896 he was forced to walk into exile all the way to Verkhoyansk in the far east Sakha (Yakutia) region, over several months. He remained exiled until 1899.

Upon his return, Pavlovich settled in Chi?in?u (now in Moldova), where he threw himself into revolutionary work. The date of his entry into the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party is unclear. Some sources state he was a member from 1898, but this seems unlikely, as he was still in exile. Others state he joined in 1903.<sup>[15]</sup>

In 1901 Pavlovich authored his first book, a study of the Boer War, which “would mark the beginning of new developments in international foreign policy that would have an enormous impact on the internal situation in all states.”<sup>[16]</sup>

Pavlovich writes in his own autobiographical sketch that “during the (1903) split in the party, ‘I remained with the Mensheviks’ as he ‘was not interested in party disagreements, I did not read anything except that which had a direct bearing on international politics and the East.’” This account was written in 1926 as he was dying of lung cancer, during the sharpening “party disagreements” between the emergent Stalinist

bureaucracy, which demanded the party abandon the internationalist perspective which had been the basis for the October Revolution for the policy of socialism in one country, and the Left Opposition which insisted on adherence to an internationalist perspective. His account should be taken in that historical context. Pavlovich in fact participated in party disagreements, as did every party member, by virtue of his political interventions and publishing work.<sup>[17]</sup>

Some revolutionists, such as Trotsky, had opposed Lenin’s split of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party, while simultaneously opposing the Mensheviks’ opportunist orientation to the liberal bourgeoisie. Not recognizing Lenin’s far-reaching conception of the role of the party and the centrality of the struggle against political opportunism, Trotsky’s concern in 1903 was that a split in the social democracy would weaken the working class and the socialist movement. However, he was later won to Lenin’s positions. So was Mikhail Pavlovich.

Having returned to St. Petersburg, Pavlovich actively cooperated with the Bolsheviks during the 1905 Revolution, “conducting propaganda in the Preobrazhensky and Semenovsky regiments among the garrison of the Peter and Paul Fortress.” He was arrested and imprisoned in Moscow at Taganka in 1906 but released on bail after six months. Upon release, Pavlovich began once more to agitate among the soldiers and sailors, in St. Petersburg, contributing to the Bolshevik soldiers’ newspaper *Kazarma*.<sup>[18]</sup>

Pavlovich was arrested again in October 1907 and imprisoned at the infamous Kresty prison in St. Petersburg. He recounts how the Russian ruling class, fearing the potential of the working class for social revolution, took brutal revenge on the prisoners.

They threw out all the faint-hearted, the soft-hearted, all those who could not hate political prisoners, who did not want blood. Now every warden, every doctor and paramedic had to be a member of the Union of the Russian People.

Now a different era had arrived. The ruling classes saw that the old regime was indeed facing a formidable enemy, that it was a fight to the death with this enemy. And now they took revenge on this enemy for everything, they took revenge for the fact that they once considered revolutionaries empty dreamers who would never succeed in winning the masses to their side, they took revenge especially for the fear of them in 1906, they took revenge for all the previous indulgences and liberties in prisons.<sup>[19]</sup>

Escaping the Kresty prison with the help of one of the few sympathetic prison wardens, Pavlovich fled via Finland to Paris, where he wrote for Lenin’s newspaper *Iskra*.<sup>[20]</sup>

This initiated a period of intense political activity, in which he authored important works on imperialism and the colonial question. With the outbreak of World War I, Pavlovich “collaborated from the moment of its founding in the Parisian *Nashe slovo* [Our word], where Trotsky, Antonov-Ovseenko, Lozovsky and other internationalists began the struggle against Plekhanov, Kautsky and the social patriots.”<sup>[21]</sup>

The betrayal of the Second International of 1914, in which most of its parties voted to support their respective bourgeoisies in the war, was a political watershed in the development of the revolutionary socialist movement.

Pavlovich sided with the internationalists. He understood the war to be an imperialist war, and he rejected the ‘national self defence’ position of the Second International.

Already in 1912, he had written: “Socialists fight first and foremost against the expansionist plans of their own government, while ‘pacifists’ are primarily concerned with the ‘good behaviour’ of other countries’

governments.”<sup>[22]</sup> For the *Sovremennik* (Contemporary) journal, Pavlovich authored a series of articles in 1912 and 1913 detailing the industrial competition between the imperialist powers over strategic trade routes and natural resources. Some of these articles were amalgamated into a book, *Imperialism, and the struggle for the great rail and sea pathways of the future*,<sup>[23]</sup> in which the author detailed the tendency of imperialist powers to compete for railway and sea routes. These he illustrated with hand-drawn maps.

Some of Pavlovich’s anti-imperialist articles were also published in English, in the *New Review*, a socialist publication in New York City.

The last decade of Pavlovich’s life was his most productive. It divides into two periods; his revolutionary activism from the February Revolution to the founding of the Soviet Union, and the final chapter, marked by the struggle over political perspective and program which developed between the right-nationalist forces in the Soviet bureaucracy, and the Bolshevik internationalists led by Leon Trotsky.

During the February Revolution, Pavlovich assisted in analyzing the secret files of the Tsarist secret police in Paris, exposing 60 Tsarist *agents provocateurs* inside the socialist émigré movement. He organized two ships, the Tsaritsa and the Dvina, to take more than 500 revolutionary socialist exiles back to Petrograd, returning with them to Archangelsk, sometime before the October Revolution.

The day after the seizure of the Winter Palace, Pavlovich was seconded to the People’s Commissariat for Foreign Affairs as an expert on the political machinations of world imperialism, examining secret papers from the Russian foreign ministry in which the imperialist powers plotted to divide the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East. These were exposed to the public by Leon Trotsky in *Izvestiia*, on November 23, 1917.<sup>[24]</sup>

Pavlovich then accompanied the Soviet delegation to Brest Litovsk as an adviser under Joffe and Trotsky, later authoring an article, “Lenin and Brest Litovsk.” The Soviet diplomat and later Left Oppositionist Adolf Joffe noted that “at Brest, M.P. [Mikhail Pavlovich] earned everyone’s respect for his enormous erudition, and his extraordinary modesty.”<sup>[25]</sup>

Pavlovich joined the Bolshevik Party in 1918, and at the outbreak of the Civil War was transferred to the Red Army General Staff, once more under Trotsky. Pavlovich helped establish the Soviet Military Academy in Petrograd.<sup>[26]</sup> He was also appointed to head all state construction projects in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR).

In 1919 Pavlovich was sent to the southern front in Ukraine during the advance of Denikin, also to supervise wartime construction activities. His expertise on the railroads, which was the “expertise” of a political journalist, was now employed to blow them up at strategic locations to thwart the advance of the White Army. According to his private notes in the Russian archives, this wartime assignment deeply troubled him, and he requested a transfer back to the Military Academy.<sup>[27]</sup> Joffe recalled an incident in which Lenin, seeing Pavlovich mounted, armed and in military uniform remarked to Pavlovich, “What has the Entente brought us to that they’ve even put Pavlovich on a horse!”<sup>[28]</sup>

His transfer back to Moscow proved more traumatic than his military assignment. Pavlovich was one of 55 leading members of the party injured when a member of the peasant-based Socialist Revolutionary Party threw a bomb into a meeting of party propagandists on Leontevsky Lane on September 25, 1919. Twelve comrades were killed, and Pavlovich was hospitalized with a head wound.

Three years later, as the inner-party conflict was mounting, Pavlovich published a book on the incident, highlighting Trotsky’s eulogy:

Each of us, despite the severity of our loss, must say: it is hard to die young, but enviable is the death of those who fall at their post and at such a time as ours, when the fate of the masses is being decided for many years to come; enviable is the fate of the fighter

who fulfilled his duty to the last moment, to the treacherous blow... Such are the comrades we are burying here.<sup>[29]</sup>

Pavlovich returned to Ukraine, first again in a military capacity on the southern front, then later being named Deputy Commissar for Education. Here he authored his work, *Ukraine as the Object of World Counterrevolution*. During this time Pavlovich also developed the Red Army’s political course on imperialism which he directed for several years at the Red Army academy, another project which was closely associated with Leon Trotsky. His lectures were translated into English in 1922 as *The Foundations of Imperialist Policy* by the Labour Publishing Company in London England.

Pavlovich was elected as a candidate member of the Comintern on August 6, 1920, and assigned the organization of the Congress of Peoples of the East in Baku, which took place in September.

### *Novyi vostok—The New East journal*

The decision to form the All Russian Association of East Asian Studies (VNAV being its Russian abbreviation) was taken at a June 18, 1920, meeting of the Central Committee (CC) at which Lenin was present.<sup>[30]</sup> The CC decided to recall Pavlovich from Ukraine to take charge of the creation of the institute. The purpose of the institute was to promote and disseminate knowledge of Asia in the workers’ state, which was rapidly being drawn into revolutionary events in Turkey, Persia, Central Asia and China. The institute would publish a journal, *Novyi vostok* (The New East), until 1930. Pavlovich was chosen to lead the institute for his contacts and experience with Asian revolutionaries, and his decades of writing on the revolution in the oppressed countries.

Its first issue appeared in 1922, and Pavlovich edited the journal until his death in 1927. In one sense, the journal arose out of and supported the Bolshevik’s policy of *korenizatsiia*—the promotion of indigenous and minority cultures and political self-expression. The journal featured many writers from Soviet minority nationalities, Tatar, Buryat, Tajik, Turkmen, Tibetan, Jewish, Uzbek, Mongol as well as Russian academic experts on ethnography, the economics, art history and economy of Asia and also Africa.

The journal also published discussion on the Turkish, Iranian and Chinese revolutions, including articles from leading members of the Left Opposition, including Adolf Joffe, Christian Rakovsky, Grigory Safarov, Raifil, Sibiryakov and Varesenika Kasparova.

Pavlovich responded to Lenin’s death in January 1924 with an article, “Lenin and the East,” upholding Lenin’s insistence on the political leadership of the working class in the revolution, in which he wrote that the ending of national oppression in the colonial countries will “require direct intervention and active action by the international proletariat.”<sup>[31]</sup>

When the Chinese Revolution erupted in 1925, Pavlovich published a report from sources in China, and insisted that the working class must play the leading political role in the struggle: “The Chinese proletariat, yesterday still ignorant, yesterday still a submissive slave, is raising its head and increasingly emerging as the leader in the struggle for the national liberation of a country of 400 million people. The hour is not far off when the Chinese proletariat, in its heroic struggle against the vultures of world imperialism, will lead not only the students, small shopkeepers, labourers, etc., but also the millions of peasants of their country.”<sup>[32]</sup> The essentially Menshevik position of the Stalinist bureaucracy was that the working class would play a subordinate role, and that the national revolution in China would be led by the bourgeoisie, a policy that led the

revolution to catastrophic defeat.

Mikhail Pavlovich passed away from lung cancer at the age of 56 on June 19, 1927. His funeral was attended by his comrades, who buried him in Moscow's Novodevichy Cemetery.

The hostility of the bureaucracy towards the internationalist perspective of the October Revolution, towards the theory of Permanent Revolution, culminated in Stalin's political genocide of the Great Terror, in which not only the entire revolutionary cadre of the party and the Red Army was exterminated, but also leading intellectuals, academics and artists, along with their families. Out of over 100 individual authors who contributed to *Novyi vostok* during Pavlovich's term as editor, at least thirty-one were repressed. Seventeen were shot. Eleven perished in prison or shortly after release. Joffe committed suicide in 1927. As more scholarly work is done on *Novyi vostok*, this list will surely grow.

In 1930, as if to end all further debate on the subject, an essay by Stalin on the national question appeared as the lead article in the final issue of *Novyi vostok*, in which the dissolution of the All-Russian Association of East Asian Studies and its journal was announced. During a January 1930 meeting of the Institute of Red Professors at the Communist Academy, the Association had been declared to be a "camp of bourgeois fellow travelers calling themselves Soviet Orientalists" and its functions transferred to the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

The Stalinist Semyon Dimanshtein, who assumed editorship of *Novyi vostok* after Pavlovich's death and announced the dissolution of VNAV, was shot on August 25, 1938, on the orders of Stalin and Molotov. He had been accused, however untruthfully and absurdly, of being a member of the Trotskyist Opposition.

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We hope that the publication of this translation and the rediscovery of this important figure in the history of the revolutionary socialist movement will contribute to the political education of the working class, now confronted, once again, with imperialist war and fascist barbarism.

The first three sections of the text in English appeared in the journal of the Comintern, *The Communist International*, Nos. 11-12, (June-July, 1920), 2327.

Mikhail Pavlovich, *Ukraina kak ob'ekt mezhdunarodnoi kontrrevoliutsii*, [Ukraine as the Object of World Counterrevolution] Third International, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1920, 24.

Op. cit., 8.

Op. cit., 6.

European Parliament:

[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2024-002526\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2024-002526_EN.html)

<https://euvsdisinfo.eu/report/ukraines-fertile-lands-no-longer-belong-to-the-ukrainians/>

<https://www.reuters.com/world/how-much-money-does-ukraine-owe-whom-2024-06-13/>

Leon Trotsky, *Results and Prospects*. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/tpr/rp-index.htm>

Leon Trotsky, *Results and Prospects*, Chapter IX. Europe and Revolution. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/tpr/rp09.htm>

Pavlovich, *Ukraina kak ob'ekt mezhdunarodnoi kontrrevoliutsii*, 21.

Leon Trotsky, *Results and Prospects*.

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During the opening session, presided over by Alexei Rykov, the Congress observed a minute of silence in which all rose to their feet in memory of the deceased, F. E. Dzerzhinsky, L. B. Krasin, P. L. Voikov, A. McManus, C. E. Rutenberg, as well as N. N. Baturin and M. P. Pavlovich (M. L. Veltman), whom Rykov described as "leading workers in the international worker's movement." As described in '*Otkrytiye s'yezda, rech A. Rykova' 'Piatnatsatyi s'yezd vsesoyusnoi kommunisticheskoi partii, (bol'shevиков), Stenograficheskii otchet'*

[Opening Remarks of A. Rykov, 15th Congress of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Stenographical Report], Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1928, 1.

Grigorii Vladimirovich Tsyparov was a Russian revolutionary, Menshevik Internationalist who was arrested multiple times for revolutionary work during the Tsarist period. He took an active role in the October Revolution, preparing the insurrection of workers, and in 1918 was named to the Presidium of the Soviet of Trade Unions, joining the Bolshevik Party in 1919.

The journal *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'* [International Life] of which Pavlovich was a founding member, claims he joined in 1898. <https://interaffairs.ru/paged/show/90year/sotr>. Kemper, relying on the Soviet scholar of the 1960s Kuznetsova, claims 1903. *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'* also claims he briefly joined the Bolsheviks after the 1903 split.

Pavlovich, *Avtobiografia*, [Autobiographical sketch], 1926. URL: [http://az.lib.ru/p/pawlowich\\_m\\_p/text\\_1926\\_autobiografia.shtml](http://az.lib.ru/p/pawlowich_m_p/text_1926_autobiografia.shtml)

Michael Kemper, "Red Orientalism: Mikhail Pavlovich and Marxist Oriental Studies in Early Soviet Russia," *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 50, Nos. 3-4 (2010): 435-76. Kemper claims that Kulagina remarks that Pavlovich clashed with the Menshevik leader Martov over his (Pavlovich's) open support for organizing an insurrection in St Petersburg.

Pavlovich, *Avtobiografia* [Autobiographical sketch], 1926. URL: [http://az.lib.ru/p/pawlowich\\_m\\_p/text\\_1926\\_autobiografia.shtml](http://az.lib.ru/p/pawlowich_m_p/text_1926_autobiografia.shtml)

Pavlovich, *V tiur'makh tsarskoi Rossii, iz vospominanii zakliuchchonego*, [In the Prisons of Tsarist Russia (Reminiscences of a Prisoner)]. *Katorga i ssyl'ka. Istorichno-revolutsionnyi vestnik. Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo politicheskikh katorzhan I ssyl'no poselentsev*, Moscow, 1926. [Katorga and Exile, Historical Revolutionary Herald. All-Union Society of Political Convicts and Exiles, Moscow, 1926. Katorga and Exile, Historical Revolutionary Herald. All-Union Society of Political Convicts and Exiles, Moscow, 1926.

Only the early issues of *Iskra* [The Spark] are available online at <https://archive.org/details/iskra/1902-30%20%20%28OCR%29/> ?he task of examining Pavlovich's contribution to *Iskra* requires additional research.

Pavlovich, *Avtobiografia* [Autobiographical sketch], 1926. URL: [http://az.lib.ru/p/pawlowich\\_m\\_p/text\\_1926\\_autobiografia.shtml](http://az.lib.ru/p/pawlowich_m_p/text_1926_autobiografia.shtml)

Pavlovich, *Vokrug voiny*, [War all around], in *Sovremennik*, [Contemporary] Vol #11, 1912, St. Petersburg: Ulei printing house, 333.

This book was published by Gosizdat, the state publishing house of the RSFSR in 1922.

Leon Trotsky, "Publication of the Secret Treaties", November 23, 1917. URL: <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2017/11/20/twrr-n20.html>

<https://soviethistory.msu.edu/1917-2/treaty-of-brest-litovsk/treaty-of-brest-litovsk-texts/publication-of-the-secret-treaties/>

Adolf Joffe, *Nemnogo vospominanii*, [A few recollections] *Novyi vostok*, No. 18 (1927), 8. This article was published the occasion of Pavlovich's death.

Kemper, "Red Orientalism", 443.

Op. cit., 444.

This story appears in Pavlovich's 1926 autobiography, unattributed to Joffe. Joffe's tribute to Pavlovich after his death in the 1927 No. 18 issue of *Novyi vostok* contains the anecdote.

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*V.I Lenin i stanovlenie sovetskogo vostokoveneniia*, [V. I Lenin and the Establishment of Soviet Oriental Studies] A.N. Haifetz and P. M. Shastiko, in *Stanovlenie sovetskogo vostokoveneniia, Sbornik stat'ei*, [The Establishment of Soviet Oriental Studies, a Collection of Essays], Moscow: Science Publishing, Chief Editorship of Eastern Literature,

Academy of Sciences of the USSR: 1983, 22.

Mikhail Pavlovich, *Lenin i vostok* [Lenin and the East]. *Novy vostok*, No. 5 (1924).

Mikhail Pavlovich, *Poslednie sobytia na vostoke*. [The recent events in the East], 'Novyi vostok', No. 10 (1925), xxii.

[1] The first three sections of the text in English appeared in the journal of the Comintern, *The Communist International*, Nos. 11-12, (June-July, 1920), 2327.

[2] Mikhail Pavlovich, *Ukraina kak ob'ekt mezhdunarodnoi kontrrevoliutsii*, [Ukraine as the Object of World Counterrevolution] Third International, Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1920, 24.

[3] Op. cit., 8.

[4] Op. cit., 6.

[5] [https://europeandbeyond.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2024-002526\\_EN.html](https://europeandbeyond.eu/doceo/document/E-10-2024-002526_EN.html)

[6] <https://euvsdisinfo.eu/report/ukraines-fertile-lands-no-longer-belong-to-the-ukrainians/>

[7] <https://www.reuters.com/world/how-much-money-does-ukraine-owe-whom-2024-06-13/>

[8] <https://www.trotskyResults/archResults/1931/tpr/rp-index.htm>

[9] Leon Trotsky, *Results and Prospects*, Chapter IX. Europe and Revolution. [www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/tpr/rp09.htm](http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/1931/tpr/rp09.htm).

[10] Pavlovich, *Ukraina kak ob'ekt mezhdunarodnoi kontrrevoliutsii*, 21.

[11] Leon Trotsky, *Results and Prospects*.

[12] Pavlovich, *Ukraina kak ob'ekt mezhdunarodnoi kontrrevoliutsii*, 25

[13] During the opening session, presided over by Alexei Rykov, the Congress observed a minute of silence in which all rose to their feet in memory of the deceased, F. E. Dzerzhinsky, L. B. Krasin, P. L. Voikov, A. McManus, C. E. Rutenberg, as well as N. N. Baturin and M. P. Pavlovich (M. L. Veltman), whom Rykov described as "leading workers in the international worker's movement." As described in 'Otkrytiye s'yezda, rech A. Rykova' 'Piatnatsaty s'yezd vsesoyusnoi kommunisticheskoi partii, (bol'shevikov), Stenograficheskii otchet' [Opening Remarks of A. Rykov, 15th Congress of the All-Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) Stenographical Report], Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo, 1928, 1.

[14] Grigorii Vladimirovich Tsyporovich was a Russian revolutionary, Menshevik Internationalist who was arrested multiple times for revolutionary work during the Tsarist period. He took an active role in the October Revolution, preparing the insurrection of workers, and in 1918 was named to the Presidium of the Soviet of Trade Unions, joining the Bolshevik Party in 1919.

[15] The journal *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'* [International Life] of which *Pavlovich was a founder in 1901 and he joined in 1903* relying on the Soviet scholar of the 1960s Kuznetsova, claims 1903. *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn'* also claims he briefly joined the Bolsheviks after the 1903 split.

[16] <https://Pavlovich/pavlovichin/autobiographyin1926phiutobisgrafia.1926.html> URL:

[17] Michael Kemper, "Red Orientalism: Mikhail Pavlovich and Marxist Oriental Studies in Early Soviet Russia," *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol. 50, Nos. 3-4 (2010): 435-76. Kemper claims that Kulagina remarks that Pavlovich clashed with the Menshevik leader Martov over his (Pavlovich's) open support for organizing an insurrection in St Petersburg.

[18] <https://Pavlovich/pavlovichin/autobiographyin1926phiutobisgrafia.1926.html> URL:

[19] Pavlovich, *V tuiur'makh tsarskoi Rossii, iz vospominanii zakliuchonego*, [In the Prisons of Tsarist Russia (Reminiscences of a Prisoner)]. *Katorga i ssyl'ka. Istorichno-revolutsionnyi vestnik. Vsesoiuznoe obshchestvo politicheskikh katorzhan I ssyl'no posealentsev*, Moscow, 1926. [Katorga and Exile, Historical Revolutionary Herald. All-Union Society of Political Convicts and Exiles, Moscow, 1926. Katorga and Exile, Historical Revolutionary Herald. All-Union Society of Political

Convicts and Exiles, Moscow, 1926.

[20] <https://Onlyfreecareydetails/mkfa1901202012806679196.html> The offi netask of examining Pavlovich's contribution to *Iskra* requires additional research.

[21] <https://Pavlovich/pavlovichin/autobiographyin1926phiutobisgrafia.1926.html> URL:

[22] Pavlovich, *Vokrug voiny*, [War all around], in *Sovremennik*, [Contemporary] Vol #11, 1912, St. Petersburg: *Ulei* printing house, 333.

[23] This book was published by Gosizdat, the state publishing house of the RSFSR in 1922.

[24] Leon Trotsky, "Publication of the Secret Treaties", November 23,

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<https://soviethistory.msu.edu/1917-2/treaty-of-brest-litovsk/treaty-of-brest-litovsk-texts/publication-of-the-secret-treaties/>

[25] Adolf Joffe, *Nemnogo vospominanii*, [A few recollections] *Novyi vostok*, No. 18 (1927), 8. This article was published the occasion of Pavlovich's death.

[26] Kemper, "Red Orientalism", 443.

[27] Op. cit., 444.

[28] This story appears in Pavlovich's 1926 autobiography, unattributed to Joffe. Joffe's tribute to Pavlovich after his death in the 1927 No. 18 issue of *Novyi vostok* contains the anecdote.

[29] Leon Trotsky, "Eulogy for the victims of the Leontevsky Lane bombing", as quoted by Pavlovich in *Vzryv v Leont'evskom pereulke, 25 sentiabria, 1919 goda*. [Explosion in Leontevsky Lane, 25 September 1919], Moscow: Cooperative Press of the Moscow Workers: 1922, 23.

[30] V.I Lenin i stanovlenie sovetskogo vstokovenenija, [V. I Lenin and the Establishment of Soviet Oriental Studies] A.N. Haifetz and P. M. Shastiko, in *Stanovlenie sovetskogo vstokovenenija, Sbornik stat'ej*, [The Establishment of Soviet Oriental Studies, a Collection of Essays], Moscow: Science Publishing, Chief Editorship of Eastern Literature, Academy of Sciences of the USSR: 1983, 22.

[31] Mikhail Pavlovich, *Lenin i vostok* [Lenin and the East]. *Novy vostok*, No. 5 (1924).

[32] Mikhail Pavlovich, *Poslednie sobytia na vostoke*. [The recent events in the East], 'Novyi vostok', No. 10 (1925), xxii.



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