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[Grover Furr, the inquisitor's apprentice](#)[Simón Rodríguez](#) ▼

Oct 16



Grover Furr's only academic credentials are as a teacher of medieval history. He is therefore well acquainted with the torture methods and the rituals of the Inquisition, of which Stalinism developed its own version, for similar purposes. Like an inquisitor, Furr is devoted to proving witches do exist.

Furr's argument is that "there is not now nor has there ever been any evidence that the Moscow Trials defendants were in reality innocent, compelled or persuaded by some means (threats to them or against their families, loyalty to the Party, etc.) to testify falsely". He doesn't explicitly say they weren't coerced, but rather that coercion itself doesn't prove their confessions are false. People can be tortured into saying the truth in some cases, is Furr's thesis. Also, the absence of any further evidence, apart from confessions obtained through coercion, does not mean someone is not guilty, because sometimes people commit crimes and no evidence is gathered. This is always the type of argument put forth by Furr, recurring to elementary logic to prove nothing, to talk about mere abstract possibilities, disregarding history itself. Obviously the burden of proof lies with the accusing party, if there is no evidence that the old bolsheviks were fascist collaborators, the Stalinists have to find it and prove their case, and this they have never been able to do. Furr's way of thinking resembles very well that of an inquisitor, a mediocre fanatic of a counterrevolutionary cult.

1 Person liked this



Charles ▾

Oct 16 

On Thu, Oct 16, 2025 at 09:32 AM, Simón Rodríguez wrote:

Grover Furr's only academic credentials are as a teacher of medieval history.

Wrong. He teaches medieval literature. But yes, he is not in the academic field of Soviet studies. In Soviet studies, you must not present evidence that Bukharin, Trotsky, and various Trotskyites descended to trying to overthrow the Soviet government. If you do, your ability to publish in journals and your academic career in the field will suffer grievously. Grover Furr was fortunate not to be in the field of Soviet studies. But he knows what happens to an article that does not condemn Stalin:

I met [J. Arch] Getty, and he suggested that I draft an article for a journal, Russian History / Histoire Russe, for which he was one of the editors. I did this, and after many rewrites, Getty recommended it for publication. But the publisher of the journal, Charles Schlacks, rejected my article on the grounds that "it made Stalin look good." Of course, my article did not do that at all. But it did conclude that the accepted version of Tukhachevsky's innocence was not supported by any evidence, and that in fact we did not know whether Tukhachevsky was innocent or not. The publisher found such responsible, scholarly caution to be unacceptable.

But Getty stood up for my article. He told the publisher that it must be published, because it had gone through a very careful vetting by himself and some colleagues. The publisher backed down. But when the article was published, in 1988 (the issue is dated 1986), the prefatory essay to the issue contained an introductory paragraph discussing every article – except mine! This was my first exposure to what I now call the Anti-Stalin Paradigm.

https://en.prolewiki.org/wiki/Library:Trotsky_and_the_Military_Conspiracy

The Rakovsky case is especially enlightening because it refutes the dogma there is an "absence of any further evidence, apart from confessions obtained through coercion." Wrong. There *is* further evidence, namely published statements by Trotsky, that align with the accused's statements to the police investigators and that confirm the espionage for fascist Japan. But you'd have to read the book, and it seems that no Trotskyite will do that.



Avram Rips ▾

Oct 16



There's no evidence that they planned to overthrow the Soviet Union only Furr's conjecture from his Stalinist ideology. Who by the way was a mass murderer.

Show quoted text



David Walters ▾

Oct 17



A few things. First, use the term "Trotskyite" again and you will be moderated. It is a *derogatory* term whose only purposes to make a cult like description of Trotskyists. It ends now. We should use the terms "Trotskyist" in the same way we use "Stalinist" or "Maoist".

I have not read the books. All the sources of "evidence" by Furr is open to question. He uses *all confessions* during the Moscow Trials as good coin because he removes the material reality of the bureaucratic police-state and assumes no "threats" were ever made against the confessors. It is a piss poor methodology that allows any authoritarian state to make up anything they want, including written evidence. Threaten the family of a confessor and there you have it. Bullet to back of the head to end any more discussion. We also know, no, that Rakovsky, one the greatest defenders of the Ukrainian working class and nation, *retracted* his "confession" shortly because being executed after Operation Barbarossa.

On the great Field Marshal of the Red Army, Mikhail Tukhachevsky, who was never a Left Oppositionist I might add, doesn't have to prove his innocence whatsoever. Evidence that he somehow was a Nazi is entirely in the camp of those making the accusation, not that of the accused. Extraordinary assertions require extraordinary evidence. There was none. Has the Red Army continued to use Tukhachevsky's *Provisional Field Regulations of 1936* the Nazi Wehrmacht would or, or could of, been halted at the start of *Operation Barbarossa*. Oh well.

David



Charles ▾

Oct 17 

On Fri, Oct 17, 2025 at 11:11 AM, David Walters wrote:

"Trotskyite" ... is a derogatory term... We should use the terms "Trotskyist" in the same way we use "Stalinist" or "Maoist".

Half right but basically wrong. Non-Trotskyist communists take "Stalinist" to be a derogatory term. It is rather arrogant that *you* get to reject a label applied to you but deny that right to others.

And is "ignorant" a derogatory term? What else do you call it when someone announces, "I have not read the books" and proceeds to mis-state what is in them?



Mark Baugher ▾

Oct 17 

On Oct 17, 2025, at 12:03, Charles via groups.io <charles1848@...> wrote:

Non-Trotskyist communists take "Stalinist" to be a derogatory term.

The name-calling prohibition on name calling on marxmail goes back to Louis Proyect. "Trotskyite" was prohibited as was "Stalinist." We should just use Trotskyist and Marxist-Leninist rather than waste people's time on the list with name calling.

This guidance goes back to when Louis proclaimed list policy. I think it's a good one.

Mark



Charles ▾

Oct 17 

Instead of double "prohibition on name-calling," neither one is necessary. Nor are the stances mirror images. Communists do not espouse theory and politics specifically from Stalin; they recognize the monumental achievements of the Soviet Union (industrialization by plan instead of by capitalist profit-making; defeat of the Nazi regime) and they try to learn more about the socialist-communist path from problems in the Soviet period. Trotskyists do espouse theory and politics specifically from Trotsky.



Michael Kowalski ▾

Oct 17 

Well said David. Grover is a scoundrel who pedals one falsehood after another.

Sent from the all new AOL app for iOS

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David Walters ▾

Oct 17 

Alright. The idea is that all comments should enhance and encourage retort, response, and discussion, not clamping down it but using insults. I have been guilty of that as well.

I didn't know about "Stalinist" but that is fine to not use this term as well.

David



greene.douglas1982@gmail.com

Oct 17



If you're interested in a scholarly expose of Furr's apologetics and conspiracist methodology, then I have a book coming out next month on the subject.

-DG

<https://resistancebooks.org/product/in-stalins-shadow-leon-trotsky-and-the-legacy-of-the-moscow-trials/>

1 Person liked this



Charles ▾

Oct 17



On Fri, Oct 17, 2025 at 05:15 PM, <greene.douglas1982@...> wrote:

I have a book coming out

... that presumably expands upon your non-scholarly distortions that are refuted at <https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furr/r/research/gfgreenecrit0125.html>



David Walters ▾

Oct 17



DG, please announce here and the usual places when this occurs.



Marv Gandall ▼

Oct 17



On Fri, Oct 17, 2025 at 12:42 PM, Mark Baugher wrote:

We should just use Trotskyist and Marxist-Leninist rather than waste people's time on the list with name calling

IMO better to ignore rather than make an issue of name-calling. As we used to say as kids, "sticks and stones...etc.". It wastes no time at all to quickly skim past insulting posts with little substance which are generally self-defeating and discredit the sender.

Also, as you know, many others beyond Stalin's admirers have been influenced by Marxism and Leninism, including self-described Trotskyists and those outside that tradition. Moreover, these are contested labels, and it's debatable how much relevance the quarrels between rival tendencies laying claim to them has to our understanding of contemporary issues.



Mark Baugher ▼

Oct 18



On Oct 17, 2025, at 16:04, Marv Gandall via groups.io <marvgand2@...> wrote:

IMO better to ignore rather than make an issue of name-calling. As we used to say as kids, "sticks and stones...etc.". It wastes no time at all to quickly skim past insulting posts with little substance which are generally self-defeating and discredit the sender.

Correct me if I'm wrong, but Trotskyists and former Trotskyist form a majority of this list. So it's not simply a matter of calling names but of a majority isolating other factions. I know you don't mind name calling towards you, Marv, but I have others tell me that it reminds them that they are a small minority. Worse than that, it discourages contributions from people with minority views on the list.

Also, as you know, many others beyond Stalin's admirers have been influenced by Marxism and Leninism, including self-described Trotskyists and those outside that tradition. Moreover, these are contested labels, and it's debatable how much relevance the quarrels between rival tendencies laying claim to them has to our understanding of contemporary issues.

I am not saying that MList are the only people influenced by Marxism and Leninism, but they are a group of people who have adopted that moniker.

Mark



Mark Baugher ▼

Oct 18



On Oct 17, 2025, at 13:38, Charles via groups.io <charles1848@...> wrote:

Communists do not espouse theory and politics specifically from Stalin; they recognize the monumental achievements of the Soviet Union (industrialization by plan instead of by capitalist profit-making; defeat of the Nazi regime) and they try to learn more about the socialist-communist path from problems in the Soviet period. Trotskyists do espouse theory and politics specifically from Trotsky.

People who call themselves "communist" believe all sorts of things that you don't. Like this guy, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Barnes_\(politician\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_Barnes_(politician)). CPs have fragmented almost as much as those who espouse the theory of politics specifically from the dreaded Trotsky. How many CPs are does India have?

Communists, both little "c" and big "C," hold all sorts of views on the former Soviet Union.

Mark



Anthony Boynton ▼

Oct 18



I think Trotskyism/Trotskyist and Stalinism/Stalinist are terms that are useful in two senses: historically and when used as labels for people who themselves claim to be Trotskyists and Stalinists. Their use as derogatory labels on this list has always been a reason for moderation and should continue to be. In that regard, Louis Proyect banned Grover Furr and all mention of his writing from this list.

Anthony

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David Walters ▼

Oct 18

I'm not for banning mention of Furr. That is silly and it was silly when Louis did it. But I believe he did so to avoid the obvious "stalin vs trotsky" polemics that ARE banned. "Rivers of blood" discussions are not helpful.

Obviously, the use of the terms as Ted noted in his comments are useful. My only real issue is with *obviously* derogatory forms of the terms.

David



Paul F ▼

Oct 18

On Fri, Oct 17, 2025 at 03:03 PM, Charles wrote:

Non-Trotskyist communists take "Stalinist" to be a derogatory term.

'Stalinists — a name we are proud to bear.' — Johnny Campbell, Central Committee member, Communist Party of Great Britain, *For Peace and Plenty* (London, 1938).



hari kumar ▼

Oct 22

Dear Paul:

As a preface - this kerfuffle about Grover Furr is quite besides any point in my mind. I have some very serious differences with Furr. But much of his analysis certainly holds water; and I look forward to the refutations as in this book by a Trotskyist in Boston that is being promoted here.

But - here - I react to your note.

You may have noted that I defend Stalin. So I follow his distaste at the term S-ist. More especially as so many (perhaps you - I am not sure if you descend to that). More especially do I follow it since it becomes a mask to: (i) follow a reductionist line of thinking; (ii) simply attack those that agree with the strategy of building socialism in one country when much else was lost.

BTW - What would you have done? At least Johnny Campbell fought for continuing to try and build in in an isolated country. Would you have thrown in the towel Paul?

H



Avram Rips ▾

Oct 22



Maybe not murdered and put people in Prison a Gulag slave labor economy Stalin. "building socialism."

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