

https://groups.io/g/marxmail/topic/grover_furr_the_inquisitor_s/115788803?page=2[Home](#) Marxmail / [Topics](#)

Date ▼

[Grover Furr, the inquisitor's apprentice](#)[Marv Gandall](#) ▼

Oct 22



Hi Hari,

I don't want to pre-empt Paul to whom you addressed your comments but since they are of interest to to all of us and I value your contributions, allow me to offer a reply:

1. You say that you "have some very serious differences with Furr. But much of his analysis certainly holds water." Specifically, which allegations? The Soviets swept into East Germany and fell into possession of Gestapo, SS, Abwehr, and other secret Nazi files. They also interrogated the regime's officials and collaborators at every level and effectively exposed evidence of the vast range of Nazi war crimes. Surely if there were also credible evidence of any Opposition collusion with Hitler - the justification for the sweeping prewar purges - Stalin and the Soviets would have had every incentive to widely publicize such information, no?
2. You say "Johnny Campbell fought for continuing to try and build (socialism in in one country) and ask "would you have thrown in the towel?" But Trotsky. Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Bukharin wanted to retain the state power and gains of the revolution won in 1917 and encouraged their supporters and working people everywhere to **defend** the Soviet Union rather than call for its overthrow. Do you not agree the differences between the rival tendencies following Lenin's death were tactical, revolving around what domestic and foreign policies were necessary in order to **secure** Soviet power?

If one takes the confessions of guilt extracted by prosecutors in the absence of corroborating evidence at face value, as Furr and his small circle do, then the above and other considerations are irrelevancies.



hari kumar ▾

Oct 22



Avram: You accept that "Stalin murdered these people".

Leave aside the question of an inflated number of victims - the premise is that "Stalin controlled the state".

I believe this a false premise, and data from such as Arch Getty, Kotkin and others indicates this to be so.

But - a reductionist answer that "S murdered these people" is apparently - enough to stop further questioning.



Charles ▾

Oct 22



On Wed, Oct 22, 2025 at 05:29 PM, Marv Gandall wrote:

Surely if there were also credible evidence of any Opposition collusion with Hitler - the justification for the sweeping prewar purges - Stalin and the Soviets would have had every incentive to widely publicize such information, no?

Notice that Gandall argues there should be evidence of the conspiracies written down in those materials. As it happens, Grover Furr has addressed just this argument. But of course, the (ex)-Trotskyist does not read Furr to either acknowledge or rebut.

Meanwhile, Furr produced evidence *in addition to* statements given to Soviet police and prosecutors showing that the Trotsky ring did spy for Japan.



hari kumar ▾

Oct 22



Dear Marv:

1. As always your notes require detailed work to reply. Appropriately you ask for details. I am myself handicapped right now in doing that as I am travelling on work matters. So please allow me time to respond. However two simple points.

2. The canard keeps coming up, for obvious reasons - that the court trials were a sham. The spirited defence and evasions of Bukharin on the stand, are always discounted.

3. The archives have been systematically cleaned by the Khrushchevites. But some data remains. You will no doubt accept that William J Chase, a respected investigator is *not* a "Furrite". . . Indeed he is not even a MList - as far as I can judge. Regrettably I have never met him.

But - This is from his work. He produces work slowly, but is invariably worth watching.

"Smirnov regularly organized clandestine meetings of Trotskyists, at times in his apartment, where they debated and decided upon political activities and tactics and organized a small operational center. In 1931, he was allowed to travel to Berlin, which suggests that party leaders believed that he had broken with the Trotskyists. He had not. There he met with Sedov, Trotsky's son, with whom he discussed the Opposition's activities and his views on Soviet state policies and rising popular dissatisfaction. Smirnov's comrade, Goltsman, also visited Sedov, from whom he received Trotsky's approval to form a "bloc" with other oppositionists, including the Zinovievites, and to use various methods, including terrorist methods, to remove Stalin. Sedov served as Trotsky's proxy; doing so provided his father with plausible deniability against any charges. Trotsky always denied approving the bloc, but evidence from his own archive makes clear that he did so (Broué 1980; Getty 1986). Not until early 1936 did the NKVD and Stalin learn of the bloc and its intentions. . . For their part, Trotsky and Sedov W restling with Aspects of Interwar Stalinism 105 denied the accusations against the key defendants (Smirnov, Goltsman, and Valentin Olberg). Many Western writers have taken their denial at face value. . .

From January 30 until April 27, 1930, Trotsky wrote at least fourteen letters to Olberg, each in response to letters from Olberg. Those letters make clear that Trotsky treated him as a trusted supporter (Trotsky 1975, 210–15; RGASPI, 495/205/8318, 243–46). The confiscated correspondence, which is now available, includes forty-three letters and postcards from Sedov to Olberg. The correspondence between them leaves no doubt that they had a close working relationship and were friends. Yet after the KPD sent those materials to Moscow, Olberg entered the USSR on three occasions. In 1935, he carried a Honduran passport and went to Gorky where he secured work. Olberg's arrest on January 1, 1936 was not due to NKVD diligence. He was only arrested after an investigation in Ukraine led

to information about a Trotskyist network in Gorky, where Sedov had recommended that he contact Trotskyists there. From the time Olberg arrived in Gorky, he called himself Trotsky's "emissary," who had come to the USSR to help revitalize the Trotskyist movement.

..

These and other revelations shocked me and my collaborator Olga Novikova-Monterde. We have found ample evidence that Trotsky, Sedov, and their supporters lied about Olberg and invented the allegation that he was an NKVD agent. His NKVD record makes clear that he was not."

End citation; from: William Chase; chapter 6; "Wrestling with Aspects of Interwar Stalinism"; In "Reflections on Stalinism

Edited by: J. Arch Getty and Lewis H. Siegelbaum; Cornell U Press; 2024

For now Marv, you will have to wait as I am in no position now to write more. I have some amends to make to my wife for my recent rather heavy periods of lecturing and teaching work, and so I am limited for time in next week! I will try to respond more fully then.

Be well, H



Marv Gandall ▾

Oct 23

Thanks, Hari. Not an urgent question and I'll await your more considered reply.

To be clear, as I noted above, there is no dispute that Trotsky and other opponents of the regime from differing perspectives were aiming at a **political** revolution to remove Stalin.

It's understandable that Trotsky contemplated a bloc with other Old Bolsheviks like Zinoviev and Bukharin to this end. However, I've never seen any evidence that either the Left or Right Opposition were working independently or together towards a **social** revolution which would destroy the Soviet Union and restore the old order, much less in league with fascism and imperialism, which is what is at issue here.

The long passage you quote from William Chase makes no mention of Nazi or imperial Japanese involvement. Trotsky, Sedov, and Smirnov belonged to the Left Opposition as presumably did Smirnov's friend, Goltsman. I believe Bukharin under duress confessed on the stand to conspiring against the Soviet leadership but disavowed any connection to the Axis powers and reaffirmed his commitment to the Soviet Union and the Communist cause. Certainly, I've never read anything in Deutscher, Hobsbawm, or Stephen Cohen which suggested otherwise.



Charles ▾

Oct 23



Gandall scrambles well. He says Trotsky et al

were aiming at a political revolution to remove Stalin... I've never seen any evidence that either the Left or Right Opposition were working independently or together towards a social revolution which would destroy the Soviet Union and restore the old order, much less in league with fascism and imperialism, which is what is at issue here.

Since the overwhelming majority of the CPSU and the Soviet people supported Stalin's modernization policies and leadership, there is no misnamed "political" revolution simply to remove him. At the other extreme, the Trotsky conspiracists aimed to put him at the head of the government. Trotskyists deny that he wanted to restore the old order, so playing with the label "social revolution" is an irrelevant hypothetical which thankfully did not come to pass.

As for being in league with fascism to restore the old order, the fact is simply that the Trotskyist conspiracy made deals with Nazi Germany and fascist Japan. Of course Trotsky told his crew that these were no more than deals. Gandall's "in league with" is lurid misdirection.

To take Deutscher and Cohen at their word betrays Gandall's refusal to evaluate evidence. Deutscher was a basically sympathetic biographer of Trotsky and Cohen was an open champion of Bukharin. That Gandall has "never read anything" by them that upsets his (ex)Trotskyist outlook has no material bearing on what actually happened.



David Walters ▾

Oct 23

A MODERATORS *POV*: As we know, Louis proscribed any discussion on "Trotskyism" vs "Stalinism". You'all have broken this decades long rule, it seems. I haven't personal problem in getting rid of this ban but I want to point out a few things.

If the discussion was like Marv and Hari's discussion, I would actually *encourage* this. Why? Because both of them are talking about the issues and not *personalizing* such polemics by trying to note where the other is wrong. Rather it is *strictly* around the issues at hand.

Charles comments are the *negative* example, calling out Marv *personally* and trying to prove him wrong instead of dealing with the issues alone. Charles style is not appropriate, trying to score points instead of only elucidating the issues. This won't be tolerated. We can continue this discussion for now but only if participants reject Charles' "style" and adopt as an example, Hari and Marv's. Otherwise I will shut down this discussion?

David

1 Person liked this



Charles ▾

Oct 23

On Thu, Oct 23, 2025 at 10:37 AM, David Walters wrote:

talking about the issues and not *personalizing* such polemics

It seems the white-glove rules of the game are not general rules that gentlemen practice. Notice that it is perfectly acceptable on Marxmail to personalize the topic and reply to Grover Furr's work with name-calling, but it is not okay to reply to Gandall's unsupported declarations with blunt analysis of his rhetoric.



Marv Gandall ▼

Oct 23



For those interested in pursuing the subject, I'm attaching a Pdf of Arch Getty's Origins of the Great Purges which I found online. Getty was a close collaborator of William Chase, the other historian of the period prominently mentioned in defence of Grover Furr. Getty opposed Stalin's demonization by Khrushchev but, unless I missed it, he attached no credibility whatever to the charges levelled against Trotsky and other leading figures in the CPSU that they were colluding against Stalin together with the Germans and Japanese. His book was written in 1986, prior the collapse of the USSR and the further opening of the Soviet archives. He and Chase continued publishing after that but AFAIK neither they nor anyone else who had access to the archives and further material from Western sources has since found support for Furr's assertions of a conspiracy linked to fascism.



origins_of_the_great_pur...



Mark Baugher ▼

Oct 23



On Oct 23, 2025, at 08:32, Charles via groups.io <charles1848@...> wrote:

Notice that it is perfectly acceptable on Marxmail to personalize the topic and reply to Grover Furr's work with name-calling,

Do you think we should enforce Louis Proyect's ban on the "Trotskyism" v. "Stalinism" debate? I do.

Mark

👍 1 Person liked this



Mike Sola ▾

Oct 23



In my opinion, we should ban it. I think we should be using the terms Troskyist/Stalinist only as descriptors of people or organizations who describe themselves that way. And I think it is fair to ask them what the mean by it.

Mike

On 10/23/2025 2:39 PM, Mark Baugher via groups.io wrote:

On Oct 23, 2025, at 08:32, Charles via groups.io <charles1848@...> wrote:

Notice that it is perfectly acceptable on Marxmail to personalize the topic and reply to Grover Furr's work with name-calling,

Do you think we should enforce Louis Proyect's ban on the "Trotskyism" v. "Stalinism" debate? I do.

Mark



Virus-free.www.avast.com



Charles ▾

Oct 23



One-sided rules claim to enforce civility but do not object to the basest remarks about one scholar, Grover Furr. Forget the bans. We all have thick skins. And we can all see who provides evidence and untangles illogic and who does not. We can all see those who rely on abusive language because they have nothing else.

With such rules we are apparently we are not allowed to unpack a sentence like this one from Gandall:

Getty opposed Stalin's demonization by Khrushchev but, unless I missed it, he attached no credibility whatever to the charges levelled against Trotsky and other leading figures in the CPSU that they were colluding against Stalin together with the Germans and Japanese. His book was written in 1986

Getty did *not* take up the relationship between Trotsky and Japanese officials. (Search the provided PDF for "Japan".) But the sentence concludes that Getty *found* charges of this relationship to be not credible. That is distortion.



Tom Walker ▾

Oct 23



On Thu, Oct 23, 2025 at 11:39 AM, Mark Baugher wrote:

Do you think we should enforce Louis Proyect's ban on the "Trotskyism" v. "Stalinism" debate?

Indeed, along with following Jesus's prescription of letting the dead bury the dead.



Mark Baugher ▼

Oct 23



On Oct 23, 2025, at 12:33, Charles via groups.io <charles1848@...> wrote:

We all have thick skins.

I think it's more than that. There is often a "piling on" thing that occurs that's sometimes intended to silence minority voices. Minority voices, of course, need to be thick-skinned, but there's a lot more noise than signal during the pile on - a LOT of noise.

More importantly, there's no point to these discussions. There's no new information emerging that would further enlighten the debate. No one is going to change their position on this 20th Century fight, which today only stirs the hearts of very old people who fought it decades ago.

We currently have two votes in favor of adhering to Louis Proyect's ban. Judging by how votes often go on this list, that might be a landslide.

Mark



Mark Baugher ▼

Oct 23



On Oct 23, 2025, at 13:41, Tom Walker via groups.io <lumpoflabor@...> wrote:

On Thu, Oct 23, 2025 at 11:39 AM, Mark Baugher wrote:

Do you think we should enforce Louis Proyect's ban on the "Trotskyism" v. "Stalinism" debate?

Indeed, along with following Jesus's prescription of letting the dead bury the dead.

That's three votes in favor of the ban.



Glenn Kissack ▼

Oct 23



My vote: No adhering to Louis Proyect's ban. Posters should stick to the issues and avoid personal attacks. What David Walters wrote.

Glenn

Show quoted text

👍 1 Person liked this



Charles ▾

Oct 23



On Thu, Oct 23, 2025 at 08:15 PM, Mark Baugher wrote:

here's no new information emerging

No, I summarized new information by posting a book note about Furr's just-published *Khristian Rakovsky - Trotsky's Japanese Spy*, <https://groups.io/g/marxmail/message/38804>. Copying the method of Duan Filan, S. Rodriguez used the tactic of quickly starting a new thread to get away from the note and to denounce Furr – this thread. It is clear that most of the people posting on this thread *do not want* new information brought forward.



ioannis aposperites ▾

Oct 24



It is evident to me that the problem in this list is not the Stalin - Trotsky exchanges. To put it meadly, it is the Furr controversy. Avoiding any characterization of them, it is rather Furr's intellectual products that should be banned from the list, than discussions about the bureaucratized USSR and the FI. All the more because, as a matter of ethics, attributing any credibility to confessions obtained under middle-aged torture is next to omitting and vindicating those methods.

JA



Marv Gandall ▾

Oct 24



On Thu, Oct 23, 2025 at 11:39 AM, Mark Baugher wrote:

Do you think we should enforce Louis Proyect's ban on the "Trotskyism" v. "Stalinism" debate? I do.

I respected Louis' intellect but he acted the petty martinet in policing the list. Protection to shield our fragile psyches from political contamination wasn't necessary then, and isn't now. People can post a comment expressing their impatience about a discussion or preferably just roll their eyes and move on. Ironic, isn't it, to be discussing a ban on discussion of Grover Furr in the context of a discussion of the 30's Great Purge?



abraham Weizfeld PhD ▾

Oct 24



I am voting No WRT:

Mark Baugher wrote:

Do you think we should enforce Louis Proyect's ban on the "Trotskyism" v. "Stalinism" debate?

Indeed, along with following Jesus's prescription of letting the dead bury the dead.

Since;

I don't follow Jesus in any case, and:

the principle of protecting debate is violated here and I doubt that Louis Proyect was opposed to featuring such debates, since he invited me to join in.

Other debaes or discussions that are looked down upon extend to crucial matters such as:

1. Trotskyism and Maoism - compatabilities and contradictions
2. Bundism and Marxism - the national struggle ie US Black Nation, Palestine, Québec, Mechicas.
3. the Working Class dynamic in the age of AI robots,
4. etcetera.

Dr. abraham Weizfeld
PhD UQAM, M.A. York U., B.Sc. UdeW
saalaha@...
514 284 66 42
Montréal



21 - 40 of 50

