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INTERPLANETARY MARXISM AND THE 4TH INTERNATIONAL – POSADIST

Abstract

When in 1967, J. Posadas declared to his audience at the Fourth International's Eighth World Congress that life could exist on other planets, a distracted spectator might have thought that one of the prominent leftist leaders in Latin American had gone crazy. Why was the leader, known for being behind a series of armed insurrections throughout the continent, suddenly talking about extraterrestrials at the most important congress in the region?

Posadas's interest in intelligent life throughout the universe was part of a larger current within the left, for which the promise of a better future embodied in Communism also included the stars. In Aleksander Bogdanov's novel Red Star, the failed 1905 revolution became real on Mars. Many intellectuals and scientists active in the early years of the USSR had been influenced by Cosmism, a philosophical current founded by Nikolai Fyodorovich Fyodorov that advocated for the colonisation of other planets as part of the execution of the Common Task.

Space and its imagined inhabitants have been a mirror onto which human societies have projected their Earthbound fears and hopes, their ideas of themselves and others. Space exploration and research takes place against this social imaginary backdrop. Illuminating it allows us to understand better the search, scientific or not, for our place in the Universe.

In this paper, I analyse the influence that space has had on leftist and Posadist thought and how it has shaped their discourses. I consider arguments about space travel and the presence of intelligent life on other planets both from their Cosmist and Trotskyist lineages and concentrate on how the Other appears in their discourse both as an extraterrestrial and as Trotskyist sent to enlighten the workers.