

# Industrialization and the Peasantry

By Martin Abern

In the unscrupulous falsification of the history of the Russian Revolution by the Stalin clique, the distortions and total misrepresentation of the views of comrade Trotsky and the Russian Opposition on the peasant question stand out in bold relief. On this question, the position of Trotsky coincided with that of Lenin.

Lenin, replying to rumors of differences between him and Trotsky, wrote:

"The rumors of disagreements between him and me are a monstrous lie, propagated by the landlords and capitalists or their conscious or unconscious servants. I, upon my part, fully confirm this statement of comrade Trotsky. There are no disagreements between him and me, and in regard to the middle peasants there are no disagreements not only between Trotsky and me, but in general in the Communist Party of which we are both members.

"...I subscribe with both hands to everything Trotsky wrote." (Lenin, Pravda No. 35, February, 1919.)

The falsification of the views of Trotsky is attempted both for the period when Trotsky was Lenin's closest co-worker, and also for the general historical position of Trotsky. Trotsky "underestimates the peasantry"; he "does not accord them the proper attention"; he "pays no attention to the peasant at all"—every conceivable idea is attributed to Trotsky on the peasant question. All the distorters of Trotsky's ideas have one thing in common. They never quote or state his actual views which differ in nowise from Lenin and the Bolshevik position. The procedure of Trotsky is completely Marxist, as even casual investigation would show.

From a revolutionary standpoint, in any relations with other social groups, the Marxist puts forward the unquestioned domination of the proletariat. To see the peasant in any other light fundamentally than as an ally of the proletariat under the leadership of the latter is to undermine the foundations of proletarian revolutionary rule; for example, such "defenders of the U.S.S.R." as Arthur Rhys Williams who strolls the peasant above all other groups. The peasant cannot be the leader, and driving force comes from the city. Hence, the theory of the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolution is accepted naturally by the Communist from historical, political and social reasons.

Trotsky wrote, "Once in power, the proletariat will appear before the peasantry as its liberator." From "Our Revolution", Henry Holt & Co., p. 98. (written in 1906).

While the proletariat maintains hegemony once it achieves political supremacy, nevertheless, "The proletariat will be able to hold this position under one condition; if it broadens the base of the revolution." (Ibid, p. 96, our emphasis).

But in what manner shall this base be broadened and for what groups and classes? Are the class differentiations, for instance, among the peasantry to be ignored? Is only volume of commodity production in agriculture to be the main guide in the attitude of the proletarian dictatorship and the U. S. S. R. toward the various peasant groupings: the hired worker, poor and middle peasants and the rich Kulak? The Right Wing, as an instance, led by Rykov, as Trotsky pointed out long ago and which the Stalin regime today repeats without understanding, bases its policies primarily upon increased productivity by the Kulak with his use of hired labor, perhaps some horses and other means of production which the poor peasants do not have. But the encouragement of Kulak production as against development of Soviet and collective farms hinders the socialist development of agriculture, as well as the productivity of the rest of the peasantry.

"The Kulaks and their ideological defenders, hide all their ambitions under a pretense of worrying about the development of their productive forces, about increasing the volume of commodity production in general, etc. As a matter of fact, Kulak development of the productive forces, a Kulak increase of commodity production, represses and checks the development of the productive forces of the entire remaining mass of the peasant industry." (From the Platform of the Opposition).

This means, further, the development along capitalist roads, as the Russian Opposition declared, along the direction of Thermidor, for saying which the Opposition are imprisoned, persecuted and exiled. But now, at a time when the Right Wing, nurturing for so long the Kulak, Nepmen and bourgeois ideologies, has grown rapidly and strong, the shocked and distressed Stalin regime, shouts the words of Trotsky but finds itself actually only

puttering around with a program it does not understand and feel sure about.

But in words, Molotov, Stalin henchman, can say, among other things, at the March 1929 Moscow Party Conference:

"The Right deviation, in the question of the mode of development of agriculture, takes a different, openly anti-Party position, ... the essence of the Right deviation culminates in the following: Less expenditure of money on collective economies and state economies, caution in the development of advance payment for harvests, in the organization of tractor colonies, in the development of an agricultural economy based on agricultural machinery and tractors. Hence, the Right deviation means, in the first place, a loosening of the fetters binding the Kulak economy, which would lead in the last analysis to a victory of the bourgeois elements and to the restoration of capitalism."

To develop agriculture along the line of soviet and collectivist farms, there must be an industrial development along socialist lines. Without a policy and plan which works toward electrification and the development of big scale production in industry, and a use of the resources of the country with this aim in view, agriculture will remain on the low basis of independent production by tens of millions of small peasants, producing virtually in a barbaric manner. Industry must produce the machinery which can transform agriculture into socialist agriculture production. "The sole material basis for socialism is a vast machine industry, capable of reorganizing agriculture," said Lenin. Today, this strikes root more strongly than ever. Only a high development of the means of production and electrification is able to overcome the technical backwardness of millions of small industries. However, this process of industrialization must be along socialist roads if the working masses in the city and country are to be the gainers thereby.

It would be incorrect to say that the Stalin regime has no policy on industrialization. It is in particular contrast with the policy of the Bukharin-Rykov group. The latter has no faith in the possibility of a swift industrialization development in the U.S.S.R., and hence bases its major policy on agricultural production, especially in the development of the productive forces of the Kulak. This situation, in their view, will continue for years, while the U. S. S. R. slowly, at a "snail's pace" develops industry. This policy dooms socialist construction in the U. S. S. R. and inevitably draws upon capitalist elements for sustenance. Bukharin's writings, "Notes of an Economist" contain the arguments for this line.

The Stalin regime now has, on the contrary, an industrialization policy. Unfortunately, it leads also to capitalist domination by another road. The Stalin regime says: Industrialize! and it calls upon foreign capitalists to enter and build industries along modern lines. True, the U.S.S.R. will become industrialized thereby, indeed, along Ford methods, if you please. But it will be capitalist industrialization and not socialist industrialization. The Stalin plan of industrialization may yet lead to a Dawes plan of development and "cure" for the U. S. S. R. These are the signs to be noted in the agreement with the International General Electrical Company of the United States, the plans of Colonel Cooper for electrification, etc., and the "freer" foreign relations that are being indicated in the present foreign policy of the U. S. S. R. (Kellogg pact, etc.). Both Stalin's and Bukharin's way lead away from the Revolution and the proletarian dictatorship.

The program of the Opposition is the way of industrial and agrarian socialization with an absolute assurance of the retention of the foundation of proletarian rule: the dictatorship of the proletariat. That policy has as its basis the absolute maintenance of the foreign trade monopoly, a redistribution of the national income by means of a correct use of the budget, credit and prices, and a correct use of the bonds with the world economy. There are sufficient resources for a socialist policy for agriculture and industry in the U. S. S. R., as against the Stalin "capitalist industrialization" policy on the one hand and the "Kulak" hope of Bukharin on the other. What is needed is the correct policy.

The Stalin-Bukharin regime jointly for these past years is responsible for the loosening of the control of the village by the Party and the proletariat. When Kulaks are told, as Bukharin told them, to "enrich themselves" and Stalin says, "Create non-party peasant active centers by revivifying

the soviets" without mentioning the matter of which "class" is to dominate in the soviets thus set up, the Kulaks enrich themselves not only in an economic sense but also take the opportunity to establish political rights, i.e., privilege of voting, etc.

"If the dominant party should be guilty of one mistake after another, in politics as well as in economics, if it should retard the growth of industry, ... if it should relinquish its grasp of the control over the political and economic processes in the village, of course, the cause of socialism would be lost in the country." (Leon Trotsky, "Whither Russia", International Publishers, p. 13-14.)

The persistent crisis and confusion of policy these past years in the C.P.S.U. under the Stalin-Bukharin regime attests eloquently to the warnings of Trotsky uttered already in 1925.

The Stalin-Bukharin regime, contrary protestations notwithstanding, saw the "Peasant problem" true enough, but they did not see it correctly, as Trotsky saw it, namely, that:

"In the class struggle now going on in the country, the party must stand, not in words but in deeds, at the head of the farm-hands, the poor peasants, and the basic mass of the middle peasants, and organize them against the exploitative aspirations of the Kulak." (From the Platform of the Opposition. Our emphasis.)

For those who wish to know the detailed program of the Russian Opposition on this and other questions, there should be read the Platform of the Opposition published in "The Real Situation in Russia", the article on the July Plenum and the Right Danger by L. D. Trotsky printed in The Militant, etc.

Meanwhile, the grain crisis in the C. P. S. U. is not solved, and the Stalinites, now "cleansing" the Party of the Bukharin wing, still zig-zags in all directions. The fight against the Right Wing is three-fourths a sham battle. The Russian Opposition is cut off in the Stalinist way, the way of ruin, division and disintegration of the Communist forces. But still the Opposition remains and points out the correct line of action for the C. P. S. U., the U. S. S. R. and the International Communist movement. Stalin falsifies history today. But history will correct Stalin. And that will yet bring the victory of the Opposition under the leadership of Leon D. Trotsky.

## Two Meetings in Chicago

Sunday evening, March 24, comrade Swaback spoke before the Plebian Forum on Madison Street to about 125 workers—Party members, ex-Party members, I. W. W., etc. It was an excellent meeting with a spirit of interest throughout, until the organized Party hoodlums, led by the Fosterites who have assumed a new responsibility in fighting the "Trotskyist danger", marched into the hall. Swaback had finished speaking, questions were answered and discussion had finished. The speaker was summing up when a group of Y. W. L. members, acting as scouts for the Party "bruisers" began to howl. They did not want to listen to any counter-revolutionary discussion, and when asked to take the floor, they wouldn't, because a Stalinite must not discuss with renegades.

The workers at the meeting became impatient with the hoodlums and began to eject them from the hall for their disturbance and their refusal to pay admission. George Maurer yelled: "Why don't you speak on Leninism?" But when he was asked to speak on it, he was ejected. The Stalinites then began their customary antics until the workers would stand for it no longer. The heroes suddenly became advocates of non-violence and set up a demand for peace! The meeting having been concluded, it was adjourned properly. The whole audience was thoroughly disgusted with the actions of the Party.

Plans are under way to hold another meeting in the near future. The first attempt to hold a meeting under the auspices of the Scandinavian Workers Club of Chicago to be addressed by Arne Swaback, of the Communist Opposition, on the subject of the controversy in the Communist movement, did not succeed. What was responsible for the failure was the threat of the Party bureaucrats to smash the meeting violently. Letters were sent out by the District Office calling upon the membership to meet in front of the hall to break up the meeting. This was done despite the fact that the Club had invited comrade Swaback to come and address the workers. Swaback had offered to debate a representative of the Stalinites but the latter had refused.

About a hundred Party members were present, mostly of the top layer of paid functionaries and faction leaders. Holm, the caretaker of the hall was informed prior to the meeting by Nels Kjar that if the meeting would take place the Party would break it up. The Party then used the feeble pretense that Swaback had advertised the meeting with leaflets, in order to force through a motion in the Club calling off the meeting. The vote stood 12 to 12, with the chairman Hans Peterson, a Party member, voting with the Stalinites. Needless to say, this act of political cowardice did not strengthen the prestige of the Party among the workers in the Club. Naive workers that they are! They could not understand how the Party could assume the responsibility for breaking up their Club meeting....

# After the Dress Strike

THE results and lessons of the dressmakers' strike begun in New York on February 6, 1929 under the leadership of the Needle Trades Workers Industrial Union have not yet been adequately analyzed in the Communist press. The central English organ of the Party has entirely neglected this task and has, instead, fed its readers with typical philistine optimism about the great victory for the strikers. An article in the current number of Labor Unity ("Some Progress and a Few Mistakes," by Philip Aronberg), however, while not complete, comes closest to a clear and honest review of the outcome of the struggle.

The importance of such an appraisal is especially necessary because the strike was the first struggle led directly by the new left wing industrial union. Without a critical examination of its results, the mistakes made will form a millstone around the neck of the new unions now being formed and seriously hamper their future work and development.

Instead of the official bally-hoo of the Daily Worker, Aronberg bluntly indicates the following errors of the union's leadership:

"The first point was in the inadequate preparations for the strike of 50,000 and more workers involved in this industry. This can best be illustrated by the failure to develop and put forward any demand which would deal with the generally prevailing piece-work system in the industry (a method of speed-up generally used by the bosses to intensify their exploitation). The demand for week-work is part of the economic program of the new union established only a few weeks previous, yet it was not put forth before or during the strike.

"But the crassest example of the inadequate preparations for the strike was the failure to bring forward the most basic demand (which was also incorporated in the program of the new union) that the jobbers assume the responsibility for conditions and wages of the workers that employ through contractors and for the limitation of the contractors employed by them. This failure is beyond comprehension if we consider the needs of the workers in the industry and that this demand was developed in the course of long struggles against the social reformism and the employment of the demands put forward in the strike—four hour five-day week; increase in the piece rates; minimum scales; and guarantee of the job without the right of the boss to discharge—cannot be very effectively enforced if the jobber can discharge at will any number of workers and hire any other number he wishes by discharging and hiring his contractors.

"This conception that the strike must be of short duration led to further errors in strategy. Instead of mobilizing the 8,000 workers who answered the strike call to spread the strike to the other 50,000 workers employed in the dress industry, the leadership of the new union proceeded against the advice of the T. U. E. L., to make settlements with the contractors: This made impossible the development of the strike so that the mass of the workers in the industry did not participate and were not drawn into the struggle, and the new union has still the task of organizing the mass of the workers in the industry.

"But the agreements arrived at between the contractors and the union and the settlements proposed by the union should be the most glaring signal of the extent to which the policies and practices of the social reformist officials of the old union are taken over bag and baggage by the new union leadership. Agreements which call for 'partial arbitration' as proposed and signed by the leadership of this union which was built in the struggle against class-collaboration schemes of the Schlesingers and the Sigmans." (Our emphasis).

What Aronberg writes is entirely correct, but he is naturally backward in establishing the forces behind these crude opportunist craft union blunders. He is not so naive as to think that the "failure is beyond comprehension". On the contrary, it is but too clear.

Back of these reformist conceptions and actions are the long years of craft union opportunism brought into the new union—not by the rank and file fighters who developed in the struggle against it—but by the group of leaders that dominate the union today, Zimmerman, Wortis, Gold and their colleagues. Aronberg knows this to be at the root of the trouble, just as everyone else in the Party knows it. But he dare not say so. Were Aronberg a "free agent" he would point out that Zimmerman, Wortis and Co., all of whom are Party members, as are the majority of the leaders of the new union, can flaunt the formal decisions of the Party and the T. U. E. L., as they have done repeatedly, because they are guaranteed factional protection from the ruling Lovestone group whose trade union "specialists" they are. Any other explanation of the cynical refusal by these opportunists to accept the proper proposals of the T. U. E. L. are entirely invalid.

On our part, we have nothing in common with the dilletante factional division of labor in which

the Daily Worker signs paeans of uncritical praise for Zimmerman, Wortis and Co.—because they are all members of one faction in the Party, while Labor Unity cautiously makes a critical analysis of the same group—because they are on different sides of the factional fence. This method is repulsively alien to the Communist movement. It reflects the transference of "the corrupt practices of the bourgeois parties" into our movement. It accomplishes anything but the clarification of the movement and the training of the masses in the class struggle.

At the outset of the strike we said in the Militant (February 15, 1929) that one of the causes of the setbacks for the left wing in the needle trades was a stratum of its leadership.

"Gold, Zimmerman, Wortis, etc., whose practices have been a constant obstacle to the development and execution of a fighting Communist policy which alone is able to mobilize the full resources of the masses for their struggle. Almost every opportunist prejudice from craft union conceptions to the theory that a struggle cannot be carried on against the bosses and the right wing leaders at the

## How Will Hoover Recognize Russia?

WE are reliably informed that the Hoover government is on the eve of undertaking negotiations leading to the recognition by the United States of the Soviet Government. Our information is as follows:

A. L. Scheinman, chairman of the board of directors of the State Bank of the U.S.S.R., who has been in the United States for the last few months at the head of a social mission, has been spending a great deal of his time in Washington conducting unofficial negotiations with American government representatives. A basis of agreement has been tentatively reached for the coming recognition of the Soviet Union. The process of accomplishing this is to be somewhat as follows: The Soviets are to ask formally for the opening of negotiations which is to be followed by the appointment of a commission by Hoover. Formal recognition is to follow on the basis that the Soviet government will recognize the debt incurred by Bakhmeteff, former ambassador of the Kerensky government to the United States! The debt, amounting to the tidy sum of \$180,000,000, was always repudiated—in the old days at least—by the Soviet government, since the money was used to furnish munitions to the counter-revolution to shoot down the Russian workers and peasants.

Scheinman has been assuring the American bourgeoisie that they have nothing to fear from the Soviet Government, that Communism and capitalism can live blissfully side by side. In his speech before the American-Russian Chamber of Commerce, on February 7, 1929, he said: "The United States and the U.S.S.R. are two countries which, through fortunate historical circumstances, have no political or economic antagonisms at this present stage of development, nor can such antagonisms be foreseen in the future. On the contrary, it would seem that their interests are naturally complementary." (Economic Review of the Soviet Union, February 15, 1929, page 68. Our emphasis).

This reactionary drivell is "naturally complementary" to the Stalinite theory of socialism in one country. The touching picture of revolutionary Russia and counter-revolutionary capitalist America, "which have no political or economic antagonisms at this present stage of development," working side by side to build a "national socialism" in the Soviet Union, is enough to make Lenin turn in his grave.

Those who imagine that Scheinman speaks this way because of some special dispensation granted to revolutionary "diplomatic representatives" should read the leading editorial in the Daily Worker of March 28, 1929:

"The interests of 'American nationals' in the Soviet Union are continually growing. This is easily seen in the contracts reached, for instance, by the Standard Oil Company of New York and the International Electric Company with the Soviet government. The United States government claims to be jealous of the rights of its 'nationals.' It has declared a war in permanency against Latin America to protect their interests, maintains a hard-boiled machine gun diplomacy ready for duty at a moment's notice, and sends thousands of marines and fleets of battleship to danger sectors in the

same time, from a complete misapprehension of the class role of the police to illusions regarding deals with this or that group of fakery, has found expression in the course of this faction of leaders. To this can be added the survivals of odious trade union bureaucratic and 'business agent' relations with the rank and file. The struggle for a true Communist policy—the only fighting policy—was and is a struggle against the tactics and policies of this group."

This estimate is still fully correct. The revolutionary needle trades workers, whose courageous battle against reformism and corruption in their unions led to the defeat of the Sigmans, Schlesingers and Kaufmans and the founding of the industrial union, have a proud record that insures their triumphant future. The struggle against the socialist fakery and A. F. of L. lieutenants of capitalism who repeatedly betray the workers' interests, against the machinery of the government which works hand in hand with the bosses, must be carried on with even greater vigor than before. The fight for a revolutionary, class course in the new union itself must, at the same time, still be won. It can be won only in a struggle of clarification against the opportunists who have been factually protected in the leadership of the union by the corrupt clique of Lovestone and Co.

orient, especially against China." (Our emphasis).

In effect, the Daily Worker is saying to the Hoover government: Why don't you protect the interests of American nationals in Russia? You claim to be jealous of the rights of American business everywhere. You protect them in Latin America and China even to the point of armed intervention. Why don't you make good your claim? The least you can do to protect the interests of American business men in Russia is to recognize the country.

That such revolting anti-revolutionary writing can appear in the official organ of the Communist Party is a bitter comment on the situation in the movement. Three or four years ago, Bombacci, one of the leaders of the Italian Communist Party, spoke in the Chamber of Deputies and urged the government to trade with Russia because of the economic advantages it would bring to the Italian bourgeoisie. In those days Stalinism had not yet corrupted the Communist movement, and Bombacci was expelled. Today, when the Daily Worker outstrips Bombacci, it is in perfect accord with the official theory of the Comintern, with Stalinism, and no action is taken against it.

Recognition of Kerensky's debt and rejection of revolutionary principle by the Daily Worker! Are these the price that will be paid for American recognition?

## Il Duce Speaks up for Stalin

The New York Times of March 28, 1929, carries a copyrighted Associated Press dispatch from Rome in which the maniac of the Palazzo Chigi, Mussolini, airs his views on the world situation. He expresses himself on the present situation in the Communist movement as follows:

"The Premier then indicated that he thought communism was in full retreat while the danger was quite past in Germany. In some other parts of Europe he thought there might be a good deal of vitality left in the Communist movement. Returning to the question of Russia, the Premier said that the struggle between Joseph Stalin and Leon Trotsky was most important because M. Trotsky represented the Left."

Mussolini is keen enough to detect the characteristics of the struggle between the Leninist Opposition and the dominant opportunists. The struggle is important for him because "M. Trotsky represented the Left" and Trotsky has now been "put out of the way" by Stalin, for which Mussolini, like the reaction everywhere in the world, is duly thankful. But then, it is only fair exchange when Litvinov finishes praising Mussolini for the latter to return the compliment by praising Stalin for persecuting the Left. One good turn deserves another.

### NOTICE TO BUNDLE AGENTS

Bundle Agents failing to receive their bundles within two or three days after the date of issue should notify us at once. Hereafter each number will go to press before the date of issue.