

# Who Is Leading the Comintern To-day?

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE

By L. D. Trotsky

In his unpublished work "Lenin and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Peasantry" (at the present moment, serious and conscientious works generally in the form of manuscripts; on ticklish questions only the shabby products of the apparatus are printed), comrade B. Lifschitz gives an instructive political characterization of Martinov in a short note:

"It seems to me," he says, "that the political biography of this man invites special attention. He came to the Narodniki when their epigonic degeneration began (towards the middle of the '80s). He came to Marxism and the social democracy in order to preside over the down-sliding of a part of the social democrats from the platform of the 'Emancipation of Labor' group and Lenin's 'Petersburg Union of Struggle, to the platform of opportunist Economism. Then this old opponent of the supporters of *Iskra* came to *Iskra* (rather to the new elements of *Iskra*) at the moment when the directors who had remained were slipping from their old political positions. Remaining there in some way to play secondary roles (outside the editorial board of *Iskra*), he practically gave, in his 'Two Dictatorships', a platform of the opportunist-conciliatory tactic of the Mensheviks in the 1905 revolution. This Menshevik of yesterday, the most venomous anti-Bolshevik, then came to the Bolsheviks again, (1923) just at the moment when their epigonic leaders were already slipping away from the Bolshevik positions. Remaining here also in secondary roles (outside of the Political Bureau and the Presidium of the International), he practically inspired the struggle against the Bolshevik faction of the Party and, in his articles and speeches, gave a platform of the opportunist-conciliatory tactic of the Stalinists in the Chinese revolution... A sort of fatality really seems to accompany this figure."

The "fatality" of the figure of Martinov lives together excellently with its involuntarily comic side. Slow of pace and heavy of wit, created by nature for the baggage-wagon of the revolution, Martinov is aglow with a noble passion: to combine the extremities in theory. Since he enters only into declining ideological currents or into declining branches of healthy currents, he manages, in his efforts to combine the extremities, to bring every error to the height of absurdity. In 1926-27, the author of "Two Dictatorships" gave the theoretical definition of the "bloc of the four classes", understanding by this that the Chinese bourgeoisie, with the help of the International, was installed astraddle three classes: the workers, the peasants and the petty-bourgeoisie of the city. In March 1927, Martinov issued the slogan of the "transfusion of workers' blood into Kuo Min Tang"—just at the moment when Chiang Kai-Shek began with the shedding of workers' blood. When the "Anglo-Russian" and the "Chinese" discussions opened up in the Party, Martinov revived his youth by serving up the old Menshevism, without modifications or additions, in its most intact and most stupid form. While the others made haste to hunt up and invent a theory to justify the political back-sliding, Martinov brought one out of his pocket, thought out long ago, all finished, only lightly forgotten. That conferred a manifest superiority upon him.

Now, this "fatal" man is one of the principal inspirers of the Communist International. He teaches how to orientate oneself, to foresee the further course of revolutionary development, to select the cadres for it, to discern a revolutionary situation at the proper time and to mobilize the masses for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. A more malicious caricature cannot be imagined.

## LENZNER

In the propaganda department of the International, there works, and so to speak, directs a certain Lenzner. However insignificant this figure may be it is well to say a few words about it, as a by no means accidental fraction of the whole. For a certain time, Lenzner worked at the publication of my *Works*. I made his acquaintance there for the first time, as a representative of the "Red Professoriate". He had no revolutionary past. After all, one could not complain about that: he was young. He entered politics as soon as the revolution was made. The worst of it was that the chaotic havoc wrought in every field made it possible for him to make his way as a "Red Professor" with a minimum of theoretical resources. In other words, the revolution for him signified above all a career. His ignorance particularly astonished me. In the annotations that he wrote, not only the thought but also the etymology and the syntax of Sir "Professor" had to be revised. Above all, attention had to be paid to his excessive zeal: Lenzner resembled less an adept than a courtesan. In this period of 1923 many impatient careerist and aspirants not provided for in the apparatus still tried their luck here and there. Indulgence had to be shown, however, for the superficial knowledge of Lenzner; the more capable workers were overwhelmed with work; at that time the Oppositionists had not yet been removed from their posts.

Lenzner prepared for me the material for *The Lessons of October*, verified texts, collected quotations under my directions, etc. When the anti-Trotskyist campaign, a long time in preparation, was launched and was formally connected with *The Lessons of October*, Lenzner did not know where to stand and within 24 hours he switched rifle position. To secure himself more safely, he used the material he had prepared in a diametrically contrary sense, that is to say, against Trotskyism. He wrote a pamphlet, it goes without saying, on the permanent revolution; this pamphlet was

already on the press but at the very last moment the type was destroyed by the order of the Political Bureau: it was decided that it would really be too embarrassing to make arrangements with this personage. Nevertheless Zinoviev provided for him and wheeled him into the International. By the side of the Kuusinen and the Martinovs, Lenzner became one of the leaders of the daily work of the International. This Red Professor writes leading articles in the official review of the International. The few lines that I have read sufficed to convince me that Lenzner does not know to this day how to write two consecutive words correctly. But apparently there is no one among the editors of *Die Kommunistische Internationale* to look after not only the Marxism, but even the grammar of the writers. These Lenzners give the apparatus of the International its physiognomy.

## LOZOVSKY

Lozovsky occupies a leading place in the Red International of Labor Unions and an influential one in the Communist International. If in the beginning, under the old leadership of the Party, his role was purely technical, and, even in this capacity was held in serious doubt and regarded as temporary, it is no less true that in this last period Lozovsky has reached the very front ranks.

Lozovsky cannot be denied certain aptitudes, a facility of orientation, a certain flair. But all these facilities have an extremely fleeting and superficial character with him. He commenced, I believe, with Bolshevism but withdrew from it for many years, became a conciliator. Internationalist during the war, he worked with me in Paris on *Nashe Slovo* (*Our Word*) where he always represented the extreme Right wing tendency. In the internal questions of the French labor movement, as in the questions of the International and of the Russian revolution, he inclined invariably to the Right—towards pacifist Centrism. In 1917, he was the only one of the *Nashe Slovo* group that did not join the Bolsheviks. He was a fierce enemy of the October revolution. He remained an enemy until 1920, I believe, mobilizing a part of the railwaymen and the trad unionists in general against the Party. He rallied to the October revolution before Martinov; in any case after it had not only been accomplished but also defended against the most menacing dangers. His knowledge of languages and of life in the Western countries led him, in those years when the distribution of workers was still very chaotic, to the Red International of Labor Unions. In the Political Bureau, when we found ourselves faced with this fact, we all—Lenin first of all—shook our heads; we consoled ourselves by saying that he would have to be replaced at the first opportunity. But the situation changed. Lenin fell ill and died. The displacements began, carefully prepared behind the scenes of the apparatus. Lozovsky floated on the surface. He went with the current. Had he not polemicized against me during the war in defense of Longuetism and petty bourgeois democracy in Russia? Had he not polemicized against the October revolution, the Red terror, the civil war? After a brief pause, he resumed the struggle against "Trotskyism". That assured his position in the Red International of Labor Unions and immediately created one for him in the Communist International. At the height of the Martinovist course, Lozovsky even stood at the Left wing to a certain extent. But that is dangerous neither for Lozovsky nor for the International, for, despite all his apparent rashness, Lozovsky is perfectly aware of the limits beyond which Leftism ceases to be encouraged. As frequently happens, an impulsive spirit mingles in Lozovsky with a conservatism in ideas. In a stirring article he can call upon the workers of South Africa or the natives of the Phillipine Islands to overthrow their bourgeoisie, and forget his counsel an hour later. But in every serious instance where decisions involving his responsibility must be made, Lozovsky invariably makes for the Right. He is not a man of revolutionary action; he is an organic pacifist. The future will demonstrate this more than once.

## RASKOLNIKOV

The direction of the young Parties of the East, which have imposing tasks before them, forms the darkest page of the International after the death of Lenin.

It is enough to say that there a leading rôle is given to Raskolnikov. Contrary to those whom I have named before, he is incontestably a fighting revolutionary, a Bolshevik with a certain revolutionary past. But only the frightful devastation of the leading ranks could bring things to the point where Raskolnikov is placed at the leadership... of proletarian literature and the Asiatic revolutions. He is just as inept for the one as for the other. His deeds were always better than his speeches and articles. He expresses himself before thinking. It is certainly not bad to have him close to one in the period of civil war. But it is very bad to have him there in the period of ideological war. When he returned from Afghanistan in 1923, Raskolnikov threw himself into the battle on the side of the Opposition. I had to hold him back very insistently, for fear that he would do more harm than good. For this reason or for another, he became an active fighter a few days later—in the other camp. I do not know if he studied the East very much during his sojourn in Afghanistan. But, then he did write many memoirs of the first years of the revolution, in which he thought it necessary to devote not a little space to

the author of these lines. In 1924, he did his memoirs—already published—over again and where he had a plus sign he put a minus sign and conversely. This revision has such a primitive and puerile character that it cannot even be taken seriously as a falsification. At bottom, there is an essentially primitive manner of thought. The activity of Raskolnikov in the domain of proletarian literature will constitute one of the most amusing anecdotes in the history of the revolution. But right here this subject does not interest us. The work of Raskolnikov as the director of the Eastern department of the International has a much more tragic character. It is enough to read Raskolnikov's foreword to the report of Tang Pin-san to be convinced once more of the facility with which certain persons relapse into political ignorance when conditions are favorable. To the Menshevik report of Tang Pin-san, Raskolnikov wrote a eulogistic Menshevik foreword. It must of course be added that the report of Tang Pin-san was approved by the VII Plenum of the Executive Committee of the International. Just think of what pains and resources are wasted to lead people off the right road. Raskolnikov is not so much the responsible inspirer as he is the victim of this whole mechanism. But his unfortunate direction is in turn a source of the greatest mishaps and victims.

## ROY

The Indian movement is represented in the International by Roy. It is doubtful if greater harm could be done to the Indian proletariat than was done by Zinoviev, Stalin and Bucharin through the medium of Roy. In India, as in China, the work has been and is conducted almost always on the basis of bourgeois nationalism. In the whole period after Lenin, Roy has conducted a propaganda in favor of a "people's Party" which, as he himself has said, should be "neither in name nor in essence" the Party of the proletarian vanguard. It is an adaption of Kuo Min Tangism, of Stalinism and of LaFolletteism to the conditions of the national movement in India. Politically this means: through the medium of Roy, the leadership of the International is holding the stirrup for the future Indian Chiang Kai-Sheks. As for Roy's conceptions, they are a hodge-podge of Social Revolutionary ideas and liberalism flavored with the sauce of the struggle against imperialism. While the "Communists" organize "workers' and peasants' Parties", the Indian nationalists are seizing hold of the trade unions. In India the catastrophe is being prepared just as methodically as it was in China. Roy has taken the Chinese examples as a model, and he appears at the Chinese congresses as a teacher. It is needless to say that this national democrat, poisoned by an adulterated "Marxism", is an implacable foe of "Trotskyism", just like his spiritual brother Tang Pin-san.

## KATAYAMA

Things are no better in Japan. The Japanese Communist Party is unalterably represented in the International by Katayama. As fast as the leadership of the International was drained, Katayama became one of its bolshevik pillars. To tell the truth, Katayama is by nature a complete mistake. Contrary to Klara Zetkin, he cannot even be called a decorative figure, for he is totally devoid of any adornment. His conceptions form a progressivism very lightly colored by Marxism. By his whole make-up, Katayama is incomparably closer to the world of ideas of Sun Yat Sen than of Lenin. This does not prevent Katayama from expelling the Bolshevik-Leninists from the International, and in general, from deciding the destinies of the proletarian revolution by his vote. In recompense for his services in the struggle against the Opposition, the International supports the fictitious authority of Katayama in Japan. The young Japanese Communists look upon him with deference and follow his teachings. Which? It is not for nothing that there is a Japanese proverb: "Even the head of a sardine can be worshipped, the main thing is to have faith."

In the meantime, endless attempts are being made in Japan to unite the various "workers' and peasants' Parties", of the Right, the Center and the Left, which constitute, all of them to the same degree, an organized assault upon the political independence of the proletarian vanguard. The diplomatic notes and counter-notes, the unity conferences and counter-conferences increase and multiply, absorbing and corrupting the very few Communists, diverting them from the real work of rallying and educating the worker-revolutionaries. The press of the International gives hardly any news of the real revolutionary work of the Japanese Communists, of the illegal work, of the organization, of the proclamations, etc. But for that, we learn almost every week of new steps by a new committee for the reorganization of the Left workers' and peasants' Party in the sense of a union with the Left wing of the Centrists workers' and peasants' Party, which, in turn, approaches the Left wing of the Right Party, and so on without end. What has Bolshevism to do with this? What can Marx and Lenin have in common with this obscene trafficking?

But we will have to return more basically to the burning questions of the East from another point of view.

TO BE CONTINUED

One of the most constant sub-getters for the *Militant* is comrade C. R. Hedlund of Minneapolis. His last letter contains ten new subs chiefly from railroad workers, from whom comrade Hedlund also obtained donations to the *Militant*.