

TROTSKY: THE "THIRD PERIOD"

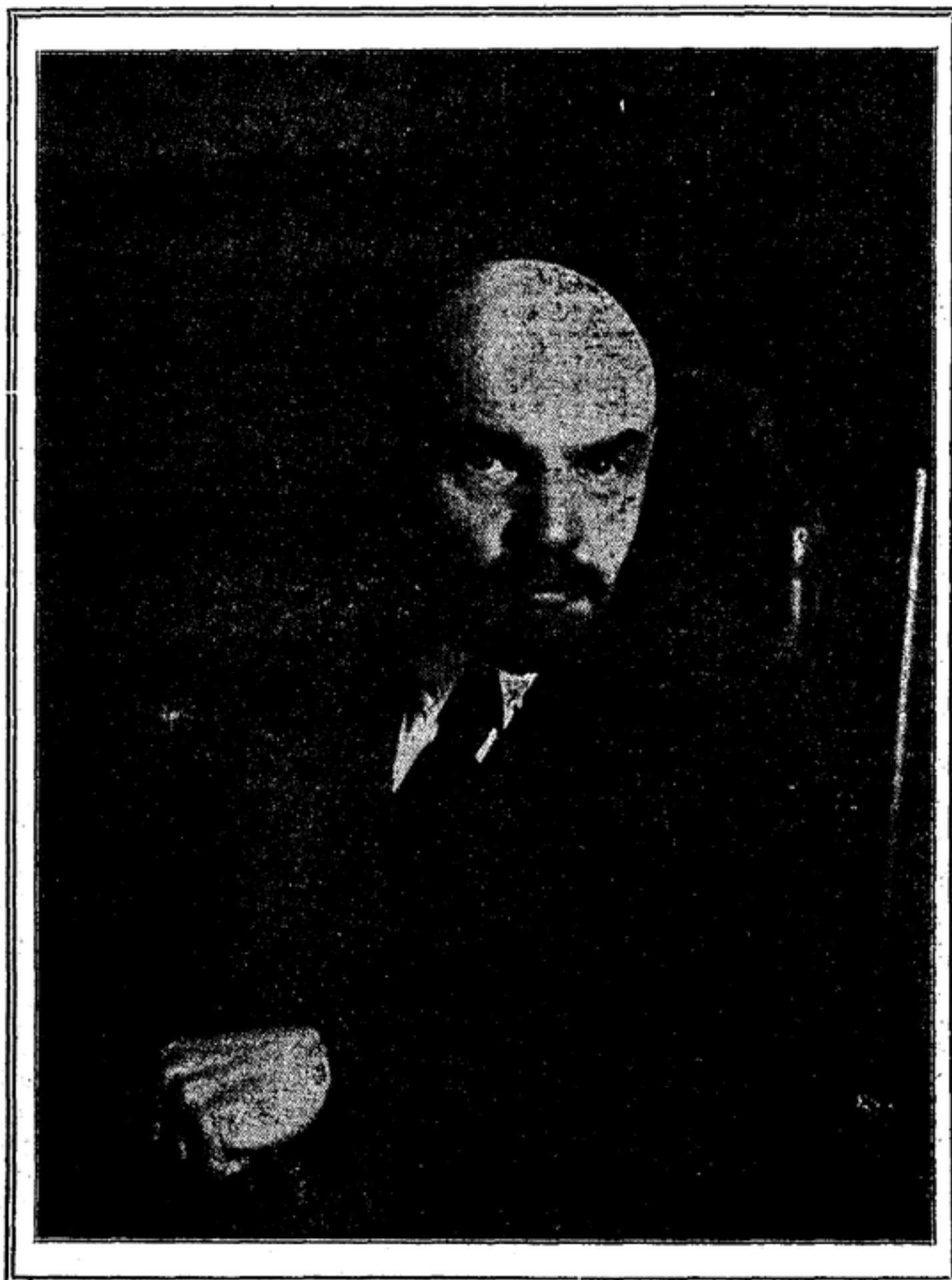
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Leninism Lives! The Opposition Carries It Forward

Every class society not only produced the movement working for its destruction but the directing genius with whose name the movement is associated. Luther, Napoleon, Cromwell, Lincoln, Bismarck, Robespierre—each of them marks a turning point in society. They are men who were at once the made and the makers of history. But these men, their contemporaries and predecessors, were limited by the very nature of the milieu. While their names are associated with the progress of society in one way or another, they were all the banner-bearers of classes which, in liberating themselves from the fetters of a ruling class, enslaved others in turn.

The Great Men of the Proletariat

The fundamental difference between the great men of bourgeois history and all preceding societies, and the great men of the proletarian revolution is that the latter, in the movement for working class freedom from capitalist class rule, finally liberate all of humanity from class society and open up an entirely new historical era. For this profound social reason, the leaders of the proletarian revolution already tower above all the doers of the past, and the niche they occupy in history still to be written will make them even more prominent. And of these leaders, one of the greatest—if not the outstanding man among them all—is Lenin.

Without capitalism and without the revolutionary proletariat, there could be no Lenin. He was the child of their present and the father of the future. The symbol of the final struggle, he presided over the dying writhings of the one and the painful birth of the other. The struggle between the new and the old therefore stamped his whole life and work.

No article can pretend to give even the briefest resume of his life. It can only mention its most prominent and characteristic features, those that raised Lenin far above the shoulders even of his fellow-fighters and made his name the shibboleth of a world movement.

Foremost in Lenin was his unswerving confidence in the victory of the proletariat, organized and led by its most conscious and determined section, the revolutionary party. For more than twenty years he devoted himself to the formation, clarification and strengthening of the principal arm of the Russian working class, the Bolshevik Party. He persistently pointed out that the working class as grouped together by capitalist production, without organization, or even with the elementary organization of trade unions, cooperative groups, etc. could carry on a defensive struggle against the daily encroachments of the capitalist class, but never the successful struggle for power. It was a cardinal point in his work, tested and proved in life in 1917, that only by possessing an organized political vanguard, a party embracing the most active, devoted and clearest elements of the class, embodying and crystallizing all the experiences of the struggle, serving as a guide and leader, could the working class rise to the position of the ruling class and free itself from exploitation. With Lenin, the revolutionary proletarian party was the only door through which the working class might enter the realm of power and maintain itself there.

The 1917 revolution in Russia—the greatest experience of the international working class—demonstrated the validity of Lenin's life work. The Bolshevik party was the instrument that brought order out of capitalist chaos and installed

the working class as master of one-sixth of the earth. The Bolshevik party successfully repulsed not only the attacks of the enemy in the country but also the armed intervention of the imperialist world from without. The Bolshevik party successfully organized production and set into motion the wheels of industry that had been jammed by the imperialist and civil wars. The Bolshevik party initiated the formation of the Communist International, the mightiest weapon with which the international working class could be equipped to fulfill its mission in the period of preparing the world revolution.

A Party—Not a Sect

It is necessary to emphasize, particularly in the present day, that Lenin's conception of the revolutionary party was not that of a sect separated from the working class as a whole, living a life of its own outside the domain of the living struggle, pursuing special interests of its own. A mass movement for the sake of numbers was no fetish with him, for he was pre-eminently a fighter who could swim against the current of prevailing opinion. What was essential for him was a party basing itself on the interests of the whole working class so that the strength necessary for victory could be mobilized. He always proceeded from the standpoint of the requirements of the main task: the dictatorship of the proletariat, to which all others must contribute.

Just as the proletarian party was considered by Lenin to be the principal arm of the working class, so the theories of Marxism were considered the granite formation and strength of the party. Revolutionary theory was his most powerful weapon, and in the struggle against those who endeavored to revise Marxism Lenin produced many of the fundamental works of the movement today. He contributed more than any other man to the fact that "Russia attained Marxism, the only revolutionary theory, by dint of fifty years' travail and sacrifice, through the greatest revolutionary heroism, the most incredible energy and devotion, in seeking, educating practical experience, disappointment, checking and comparison with European experience."

His regard for theory and unshakable belief that it is only by proceeding from it that the practices of the movement could be correct deserve special emphasis in the struggle today, when an entirely different spirit prevails in the official Communist parties. It is a characteristic of the departure from the teachings of Lenin that has taken place in the movement since his death, that the "leader" of the Communist International and the Russian Party today is one whose ignorance of Marxist-Leninist theory yields only to his contempt for it. It is characteristic of the alienation of the official movement from Leninism that it has allowed to prevail such anti-revolutionary "theories" as socialism in one country, joint workers' and peasants' parties, the subordination of the proletariat to the bourgeoisie in the colonial revolution and the "socialist development" of the rich peasantry to mention only a few of the "contributions" made to Marxist thought by Stalin since Lenin died.

Just as pernicious as ignorance, from Lenin's point of view, is the contemptuous light-mindedness with which new-fangled "theories" are formulated one day only to be substituted by equally "novel" conceptions the next day, a system that has dev-

Continued on Page 7

Mass Unemployment Continues

Unemployment is general throughout the United States, according to the December bulletin of the U. S. Employment Service, issued Jan. 20 by Director Jones. From Maine, where a "seasonal recession in production" was reported from all sections, to Washington State, where the "volume of employment" was reported as decreased as usual at this season, the employment agents have found excuses for the reduction of jobs, but they have admitted the fact that great numbers of men cannot find means of earning a livelihood.

Massachusetts reported that "curtailed schedules obtained in the shoe, textile, machinery, hosiery and celluloid industries in various sections of the state, with rather limited opportunities locally for the released workers in their individual communities." Building trades and unskilled labor were also hard hit.

New York noted that December showed decreased activity in manufactures, and that inventory taking and repairs to plants were under way in many of the larger establishments, throwing large numbers of workers out of employment. Holiday extra help in stores were let out at the end of the month, and the usual flow of unemployed unskilled labor from the country into the cities had begun.

New Jersey reported that some unemployment was "apparent in practically all cities". Pennsylvania found the same condition, with part-time operation in many of the iron and steel mills. Detroit, Pontiac and Flint, in the automotive production area of the Michigan, reported "surplus of

labor apparent" and part-time operation of many factories. Some automobile plants were closed down. Ohio's general view was that practically all trades were suffering from lack of jobs. Automobile, steel and miscellaneous plants were operating on part-time schedules. Rubber factories had let out a considerable part of their force. Thousands of bituminous miners were idle.

Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and Minnesota were among the states whose industries slowed down in December. Chicago had a surplus of railroad maintenance-of-way and shop workers, building tradesmen, and common labor, much of which came in from smaller cities.

PATERSON, N. J.—(FP)—Sixteen hundred men laid off by the Wright Aeronautical Corp. of this city recently waited anxiously for the return of their jobs. They had been told that an inventory was the reason for their lay off, and were led to believe that they would soon be put back to work. Most of them have experienced bitter disappointment as the plant gradually reopened to find themselves still unemployed, while the plant filled their places with women at \$14 a week. The men had been getting about 50 cents an hour.

DURHAM, N. C.—(FP)—Distress is becoming acute among unemployed workers who have been pouring into Durham from other stricken cities and from the farm-sides, seeking work.