

Book Review

"Lenin" by Prince D. S. Mirsky—Little Brown & Co.

In a booklet on the history of Russia, Prince Svyatopolk-Mirsky concludes with the thought that Soviet Russia represents a new type of civilization—a civilization in which Eastern (Asiatic) ideals predominate over Western (European) ideals.

That is the springboard of his acceptance of the present—Stalinist—regime in Russia. Soviet Russia does not represent to him the fulfillment of an idea—a social idea—the Marxian idea; but it represents to him rather a counterposing of cultural forces—the East vs. the West, Spengler vs. Marx.

Friends and enemies are not the choices of accident. Too, it is no accident that Lenin should have at one time chided Stalin for his nationalistic compulsions. And when the latest of the Trotsky killers, the professor and Prince, Mirsky, comes to make his peace, fourteen years after the event, with the Soviet Revolution, it is because—"the Communists—were better patriots than the National Russians."

Such belated courtesies to the Workers' State from all manner and shape of former aristocrats, intelligentsia and down right red baiters seems to be the mode now. All, however, under the guise of the National Socialistic (socialism in one country) principle.

The Prince's Hero Is—Stalin

As for the book itself, it is the most puerile attempt at biography since Emil Ludwig sat on a high chair. To attempt the life of a great man and leave out that period in his history which has been most instrumental in bringing out his greatness and importance is, at best, an effort at taxidermy and not biography.

There is nothing in the book that one with a fairly adequate acquaintance of revolutionary literature, especially that pertaining to Soviet Russia, does not already know.

Every chance our author has of belittling comrade Trotsky's role in the Bolshevik Revolution is well utilized.

But that should not be news to readers of The Militant, considering the source from which the vituperation flows.

BOOKS BY

Leon Trotsky

1. THE STRATEGY OF THE WORLD REVOLUTION

86 pages, two-colored paper cover, 25c

Introduction by Max Shachtman

2. THE DRAFT PROGRAM OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

A Criticism of Fundamentals

140 pages, hard paper cover, 35c

3. THE SPANISH REVOLUTION

30 pages, paper cover, 10c

4. THE SPANISH EVOLUTION IN DANGER

64 pages, paper cover, 15c

5. THE REAL SITUATION IN RUSSIA

364 page book, formerly \$2.00; now \$1.00

6. MY LIFE (Autobiography)

600 pages, \$5.00

7. COMMUNISM AND SYNDICALISM

The Trade Union Question

64 pages, paper cover, 15c

PROBLEMS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE U. S. S. R.

48 pages, paper cover, 15c

SINCE LENIN DIED

By Max Eastman

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The Defendants Before the Docks in Canada

The Government Aims to Attack All of the Communist Forces; An Evaluation of the Defence

♦♦♦

It was common ground that the trial at the Toronto assizes was not of the accused as individuals only but of the Communist Party of Canada. That circumstance placed a great responsibility on the comrades to conduct their defence in accord with revolutionary traditions and in a manner promoting the political education of the masses.

Following the testimony of Leopold, the Crown read an enormous number of exhibits, the booty of the police raids, into the evidence. The prosecution quoted profusely from the organ of the underground days of the party, The Communist, from the Worker, the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels, the Theses and Statutes of the Comintern, the 21 points of admission adopted at the Second Congress, the reports of proceedings of successive Congresses of the C. I. and conventions of the party, the program of the Sixth Congress, the minutes of the Political Bureau, cablegrams that passed between the Comintern and the party committee, etc.

But of course the crux of the Crown's case was that the whole program and strategy of the party were based on the advocacy and defence of "force and violence", or as the Judge charged, "I must instruct you that if you think force and violence a logical, natural result of their teachings, it is a matter of law that they are advocating, advising and defending force and violence for the overthrow of governmental and industrial institutions. It is not a question of time, but a question of the intent and meaning of their teachings and documents."

Party History

The first of the accused who went into the box was Tim Buck, the party secretary. He described the formation of the Communist Party of Canada from the various groups of the Communist and United Communist Parties of America, which had branches in this country, and from other elements of the former socialist and trade union movements.

Trade Union Policy

Dealing with the trade Union Policy of the Party, comrade Buck denied that the Workers Unity League was the "industrial department" of the party. In the first stage of the career of the party, the emphasis had been on an amalgamation campaign inside the old craft unions in favor of industrial unionism, a campaign which had received wide support until the A. F. of L. bureaucracy countered it with expulsion of the militants and closer collaboration with the employers.

had any "organic connection" with the party. There had been no language sections of the party since the re-organization in 1925, and the Finnish Society and Ukrainian Farmer Labor Temple were independent organizations. The minority active in these organizations naturally sought to influence and direct their policies by the same methods of persuasion open to others.

To the question if the purpose of the Communist Party was to bring about a change of government by force and violence the witness replied: "We teach the inevitability of the collapse of capitalism. The present system was essentially a system of government which had grown out of private property relationships and so could not be expected to function for socialism. When the workers obtained political power they would create their own state."

Tom Ewan, secretary of the Workers League, testified that this organization had a membership of 25,000 of which only 5 or 6% were Communists. He denied that the Communist Party advocated or taught the use of force or violence for industrial change. It was the capitalist class which resorted to violence in the class struggle. A clash in the distant future was inevitable. The Communist Party speaks against force and violence. The day to day struggle concerned wage reductions, unemployment, etc. There was no suggestion of a present overthrow of the system but an eventual overthrow is what the party was organized for.

There was no organic connection between the Comintern and the R. I. L. U. He suggested that there was little essential difference between the work and aims of the Workers Unity League and an ordinary trade union organization. Tom Hill was examined on the relations obtaining between the party and the Finnish society.

Bruce's Testimony

Malcolm Bruce denied knowledge of any workers self defence corps in Canada. Violence had come from the police.

"We don't create or foment strife or discontent or discord," declared comrade Bruce in the course of examination by defence counsel. "We merely recognize this discontent and discord and regard the consequent class conflict as ultimately inevitable. We do not seek to bring about an armed revolution in Canada. It is merely our hope that the workers' opportunity to seize power will come when the revolution breaks out . . . our ultimate aim is a farmer-labor government in Canada and a system of Soviets or councils but not necessarily by overthrow. We feel that the system will deny and collapse of its own accord . . . The present system of government will not be in existence by the time the inevitable struggle arrives . . . all we seek is the amelioration of the lot of the workers, under this or any other system . . . The tendency of capitalism is to supersede democracy by Fascism . . . armed revolution lies in the lap of history. We recognize an evolutionary process going with two currents in society leading towards a conflict. A revolutionary crisis would arise from gradual worsening of the conditions of the workers whether there was a Communist party or not . . . The program of the Communist International was a question not of application but of interpretation. Some parts applied in Canada and were carried out and some did not." He agreed however that the Comintern program contained the underlying principles of the party operations so far as they could be applied. In reply to questions of the Crown, Bruce denied knowledge of any Workers Defense Corps in Canada or that he had voted or advocated them. He agreed that he believed in the proletarian dictatorship.

Buck's Arguments

On the seventh day of the trial, Tim Buck, who conducted his own defence, delivered his address to the jury. The fact, he declared, that the party had been in existence and operated publicly for ten years went to the root of the situation. The Judge however refused him the privilege of referring to the activities of the party in the working class movement "outside the evidence". The Communist movement, he proceeded, was world-wide. The present general program was the historical continuance of the Communist Manifesto of 65 years ago, based on the principle that all history was the history of class struggle. The program of the Comintern was also an analysis of society and the present crisis.

"Revolutions don't come because parties make them, but because history proceeds forward from one epoch to another. In each system is the germ of the next one." Capitalism must eventually fall under the weight of its own contradictions. The world war was an expression due to the fact that the producing powers of the capitalist world had come into insoluble contradiction with state boundaries. Imperialism has developed the pre-requisites for socialism. Communism is the only alternative to fascism. The class struggle grows whether the Communist Party was in existence or not, for it came out of the struggle, not the reverse. But the Communist Party was increasing the resistance of the working class by organization in capitalist countries.

"We are placed on trial as having advocated something we haven't advocated or taught. "Force and violence was not something which grew up by being ad-

vocated. "I don't believe in violence nor does any Communist . . . While there has been violence in historical changes, it has been the result of the fight by the privileged classes to retain their privileged position." Violence is coming and is bound to increase but "if the people are to learn force and violence it is not from us." He concluded with an expression of the hope that the outcome of the trial would be an increased realization of the need for working class organization.

Prosecution and Judge in Joint Attack

The Crown Prosecutor addressed the Jury last. It was a savage recapitulation. He disclaimed that this trial was an attack on socialism or communism "if it could be advocated in a legitimate fashion" nor was it an attack on trade unionism which was "protected" by the institutions of the country. "Nowhere was there more freedom of speech than in Canada". The men in the box constituted the general staff for civil war. He again quoted from the Statutes of the Second Congress and alleged that the role of the Communist Party had been clearly set forth there. The time to put out a fire was before the conflagration. "To convict is to declare that revolution shall not prevail in Canada, that Moscow shall not dictate to Canada . . ." He wound up by invoking the "shadow of Remembrance Day" and the sacrifices in the war.

Aim To Attack All Communist Groups

After the Judge's charge to the Jury, the verdict was a foregone conclusion. "The documents and testimony at this trial," he said, "have drawn a distinction between two classes—the proletariat, covering all wage workers, and the bourgeoisie comprising all others with the petty bourgeoisie in between. In a democratic country like this, where the proletariat of today may be the bourgeoisie of tomorrow, is it just and proper to set one of these classes against the other . . . The law is the collective wisdom of our representatives in Parliament and must be obeyed. . . ."

The verdict is already known to the readers of The Militant. The Attorney-General of Ontario has graciously offered to make the mass of evidence available to any provincial attorney-general who may undertake prosecutions against other members of the Communist Party or against organizations with similar policies and principles. In a statement to the press, the Crown prosecutor, Mr. Somerville, thought it best to add his own pleasant note. Not only were the 4000 members of the party liable to prosecution, but any who have dropped membership or been expelled. "Under this last class," he believed, "would some such former leading members of the party as Jack MacDonald one time party secretary, and Maurice Spector, former editor of the Worker."

Since this statement, the party headquarters in Winnipeg have been raided and the District Organizer there, C. Marriot, has been placed under arrest.

Evaluation of the Defence

We have acknowledged the technical circumstances that embarrassed the defence. We add that we do not impugn the personal courage of the accused. That indispensable attribute is not, however, exclusively Bolshevik. Our criterion of the merits of the defence must be political. To the Communist, the courtroom is another forum for the program of class struggle. To dilute it before the jury is no more permissible than on the floor of the House of Commons. "Ideas have their own logic and explosive force". The principal defect of the defence was the lapse (at times amounting to a negation) from the Leninist conception of the vanguard role of the Communist Party in the struggle for the proletarian dictatorship. The defendants' keynote was that "parties do not make a revolution . . . we teach the inevitability of the collapse of capitalism, that is all . . ."

Though never guilty of the caricature of it sometimes drawn, it is for this very theory of "spontaneity" that Rosa Luxemburg has been subjected to countless post-mortems. In effect there was a retreat to Kautsky's apologetic theory of "the level of the forces of production".

To explain the material and objective pre-requisites of the revolution was entirely correct. What was wrong was to obscure and minimize the function of the revolutionary party. Our positions on this head have been incontrovertibly established by Marx and Lenin. Granted that no social order disappears which has not developed its maximum productive forces and that if there were the possibility of a fresh organic development of capitalism today, the proletarian revolution would be impossible. What has that in common with "economic determinism" or fatalism? It certainly does not mean that the old order collapses of its own weight when it becomes economically reactionary. Determined by the concrete situation, the will of the class and its crystallization in the party constitute an integral element of the historic process. The bourgeoisie will not abdicate; it must be conquered. Neither bourgeois decline nor proletarian dictatorship are automatic. The epoch of imperialism has created the world-wide conditions for the proletarian revolution. In this epoch it is assuredly not true that "parties don't make revolutions". Contemporary history alone affords a dozen examples in Germany, Bulgaria, China, Spain and elsewhere, of revolutionary crises which the ruling class "surmounted" in the absence of a competent revolutionary party.

Lenin's classic opposition to this theory of the "elemental development" of the workers' movement is well known. "Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement . . . the workers do not automatically develop a socialistic consciousness . . . without a party of our own, it is impossible to wage such a struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat . . . the revolutionary social-democrat is a Jacobin bound up with the organization of the class-conscious proletariat. . . ." He fought tooth and nail against the Menshevik proposals to liberalize the party by the admission of the pre-October counterparts of some "Friends of the Soviet Union". The Communist Party of Canada is yet a propaganda organization. Nobody pretends that there is an immediate struggle for power. For the final struggle the Communist party must count its supporters in the millions, not thousands. All the more necessary is it to emphasize the role of the revolutionary party. The workers have paid dearly for their illusory hopes of the Labor Party and the Social Democracy. The Comintern has paid for its entente cordiale with the British trade union bureaucracy and the Chinese Kuo Min Tang and its reliance on "workers and peasants' parties".

Other Shortcomings of the Defence

Another marked shortcoming in the defence was the obscure stand on the fundamental problem of the revolution—the conquest of power, in other words the dictatorship of the proletariat. In their natural desire to prove that "force and violence" were not the product of mere advocacy or propaganda but of existing property relations, the defendants leaned over backwards and involuntarily drew a picture of an increasingly violent capitalism and a social-pacifist communism. It was stated and repeated that no communist "believes" in force or violence. Of course no Communist believes in "force and violence" for its own sake. But we Marxists do something more than deplore the violence of the possessing classes. We give no direct or indirect aid or comfort to the constitutional illusions fostered by the reformists of a democratic transition to socialism. Capitalism, in the words of Marx, comes dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt. The capitalist state has never yet been guided by faith, hope and charity and it will not meet the revolutionary challenge of the working class with the Sermon on the Mount. It will avail itself of the fraud of parliamentary while it is still an effective opiate of the masses; it will resort to the unmasked terror of fascism when "democracy" fails it. Against this State, with its panoply of police, militarism, bureaucracy, judges and jailers, and its basis of finance-capital and monopoly, the Communists cannot advocate the policy of the struggle for power with folded arms. Lenin and Marx were in complete accord that the proletarian revolution could not be realized "without the forcible destruction of the ready-made bourgeois state machine and its replacement by a new machine".

The standpoint of the Crown was the continuity of the legal system before, during and after a revolutionary crisis. But law is the handmaiden of social forces. The common law crime of Seditious conspiracy failed to overawe the American Revolution; the Constitution failed to deflect the American Civil war. Codes and injunctions have notoriously failed to solve the fundamental contradictions of social systems in decay. The proscription of the Communist Party is the vindication of its necessity. The repeal of section 98 of the Criminal Code should be immediately inscribed in letters of fire in the program of demands of every working class organization in the country.

—MAURICE SPECTOR.

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By Leon Trotsky: "On the Tasks of the Left Opposition in England and India."

(Some Critical Remarks on an Unsuccessful Thesis).

2. A review of the labor and political situation in Greece.

3. Fenreor dispatches from Shanghai on developments in the Far East.

4. In Italy: "The Dictatorship of the Black Shirts on the Threshold of its Tenth Year and the Problems of Revolutionary Struggle" by Feroci.

5. Other significant articles on events in the international labor and communist movements.

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In the Far East

(Continued from Page 1)

sia for aid, nor has any offer ever been received, the reports that negotiations for resumption will begin are still circulating and are widely credited. A Peiping report on October 31 in the Chinese vernacular press announced the arrival of a Soviet representative in the old capital to discuss the matter with Marshal Chang.

So Kuo Min Tang China is again turning to Soviet Russia, just as it did in 1924. The government now seeking to resume "friendship" with the U. S. S. R. is nothing more than a band of militarists backed by bourgeois merchant-bankers who sold the revolution in 1927 for a mess of imperialist potage, who have been waging ceaseless war against revolutionary peasant and workers and students, who have washed the country red in the blood of its own people. For reasons of expediency, the Soviet Union may welcome resumption, if only because it might have a restraining effect on the White Terror, which still continues in all its ferocity.

CLASS BASIS OF THE ANTI-JAPANESE BOYCOTT

SHANGHAI—(Fenreor)—The boycott movement against Japan, though operating under anti-imperialist slogans, possesses no real anti-imperialist character. This is clearly evidenced in the class composition of the various anti-Japanese associations and the type of activity which they sponsor.

The leading group, with headquarters here is the Anti-Japanese and National Salvation Association. Its membership is composed of bankers, merchants, industrial operators, well-to-do students and professionals and it confines its measures to driving Japanese goods from the Chinese market. To give the movement a popular character, it draws behind it the docile membership of the yellow, Kuo Min Tang controlled trade unions.

Attempts by the class conscious workers to demonstrate their genuine anti-imperialist sentiments, to raise genuine anti-imperialist slogans and thus create a mass movement which would logically possess a revolutionary character, are ruthlessly suppressed by the authorities. Such a movement would be inevitably directed against the Kuo Min Tang government which for four years has acted as the conscious agent of imperialism on behalf of the foreign powers.

In the seizure and confiscation of Japanese goods in the large centers, in the penalization of Chinese merchants handling such goods and in all similar activities, the boycott movement has revealed itself as a new and rather violent phase of the inter-capitalist competitive process of which it is merely an unusual extension.

The Exploiters Band Together

A genuine anti-imperialist movement in China would have to direct its activities against all the violators of China's sovereignty without regard to nationality. But while proclaiming their opposition to Japanese aggression, the Chinese bourgeoisie and their governments in Nanking and Canton still maintain and thrive on friendly relationships with the other robber powers who for a century have been siphoning in China. And the sincerity of their anti-Japanese declamations can be measured by their strenuous efforts to "protect Japanese lives and property" from the threatened attacks of a real popular movement.

In Canton an anti-Japanese demonstration by students of the Sun-Yet Sen University was fired on by the police. Twelve students were killed and twenty seriously wounded. To allay popular feeling, Chief of Police Nin Wan ordered the arrest of the officers who gave the order to fire. He released them a few days later and resigned his position, being succeeded by General Neung Neung, commander of the Second Army.

Chinese Police Attack Demonstrating Workers

The government proclaimed martial law, machine guns were set up in the streets and Canton became an armed camp. Pedestrians were subjected to rigid police interrogation and searches at strategic points and approaches to government offices where armed police were reinforced by gendarmes and soldiers. 4,000 soldiers were concentrated in the centre of the city; motor cars and rickshaws were stopped and searched. Many arrests were made.

In Chapel, a working class district of Shanghai, Chinese police fired on a party of demonstrators, killing two and seriously wounding several others. There followed almost immediately a proclamation of martial law in Greater Shanghai and the institution of regime similar to that introduced in Canton.

The Anti-Japanese and National Salvation Association in Shanghai passed a resolution this week which states that "henceforth badges shall be worn by officers of the Association and in future persons found participating in patriotic movements who are not wearing such a badge will be branded as traitors and treated as such".

Meanwhile news begins to trickle down that the small Chinese shopkeeper is beginning to suffer from the stoppage of Japanese goods. From Tsingkiangpoo, Kiangsu, comes a report dated October 28th that all shops in the city closed down as retaliation for the Association's sealing up and detention of all Japanese goods.

Times have changed and historical roles have been reassigned. Up to 1927 Chinese workers and students were the victims of shots fired by foreigners in defense of imperialist privileges. Today the shots come from rifles handled by Chinese soldiers and policemen.