

Lenin and Trotsky in 1905

On Some Stalinist Distortions of History

The Russian Revolution of October 1917 can only be written adequately when the role of Lenin and Trotsky are properly placed. Written history at the time of this event elevated the role of Lenin and Trotsky to its proper height in relation to the 1917 prelude of the world revolution. The attempts of Stalinism to revamp this part of history, and to delete Trotsky's role from the pages and replace instead—Stalin, is of no avail. The source of material within our party and throughout the world proletarian camp is so voluminous for this research that Stalin's attempt to erase Trotsky's role only complicates matters for Centrism.

But the 1905 Revolution leaves us no such source of material, as to the position of Lenin and Trotsky. Therefore, the haters of Marxism and Internationalism fall back to this period and slur the position of Trotsky. Fortunately though, we have the material and writings of Lenin and Trotsky of this period, and since the party leadership only lies about Trotsky's position it is necessary to constantly bring this material forward, so that the revisionist and Marxist can decide the facts for himself, as to the position of Lenin and Trotsky.

ON THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

Stalinism not only endeavors to misrepresent Trotsky's position in 1905 but also attempts to falsify the role of Lenin, for the purpose of covering up the blunders of the present epigones in the 1917 period. After Stalin "corrected" history, one of the lesser lights followed up in the *Daily Worker* with an article on "The Historical Experiences of Bolshevism and the International Proletariat". One of the many blunders of the article reads as follows: "The Lessons of the year of 1905 enabled Lenin to draw up that strategic general plan which led the proletariat to victory first in February and afterwards in October 1917." This thought conveys the idea that long before the arrival of Lenin in Russia and long before his famous April thesis, which amounts to the rearming of the party, Stalin and his like, who were in Russia, were carrying out a correct Bolshevik line. In other words, Lenin's arrival and Lenin's April thesis did not correct anything, "the proletariat" were led "to victory first in February" (?). In trying to bury Lenin's April thesis to cover their blunders the February period the Stalinists create the source of additional blunders.

In the introduction to Lenin's pamphlet of articles on the "Revolution of 1905" the epigones rehash history again. In one place this introduction says, "On the other hand, Trotsky, who had never had a definite conception of the nature of the bourgeois revolution of 1905, for this reason reached a point, in his theory of 'permanent revolution' when he denied the possibility of the revolutionary alliance between proletariat and peasantry and proclaimed a 'workers' government' to be the immediate aim of the revolutionary uprising. And to this he 'logically' attached the conception that 'without direct and governmental aid from the European proletariat the working class of Russia could not maintain itself in power' (Our Revolution, page 278 Russia)."

TROTSKY AND THE PEASANTRY

Can you say these "Communists" misquote Trotsky's position in 1905 because they do not know of his position? No. They quote the above from his book, *Our Revolution* and in that book is sufficient evidence for any class-conscious worker to prove the correct position of Trotsky in 1905. These epigones are quoting Trotsky as the social democrats quoted Marx and Engels.

Trotsky in 1905 said the workers of Russia needed aid from Europe, otherwise they could not maintain themselves—and according to Stalinism this was wrong in 1905. But Lenin, not in 1905 but even in 1918, said the following: "This is a lesson because the absolute truth is that without a revolution in Germany we will perish." (Vol. 15, page 132, Russian edition). And, Lenin again, "Our backwardness has thrust us forward and we will perish if we will not be able to hold out until we meet with the mighty support of the insurrectionary workers of the other countries" (Vol. 15, page 187). What Lenin laid down on this subject in 1918 was equally, if not more so, true in 1905.

Did Trotsky "deny the possibility of the revolutionary alliance between the proletariat and peasantry", in the 1905 period, as is claimed? Trotsky, in 1905 said, "It is self-understood that the proletariat, as in its time the bourgeoisie, fulfills its mission, supported upon the peasantry and petit-bourgeoisie. The proletariat leads the village, draws it into the movement, interests it in the success of its plans. The proletariat, however, absolutely remains the leader. This is not the dictatorship of the peasantry and proletariat, but the dictatorship of the proletariat supported by the peasantry." (1905, page 281). Many more equally important passages can be quoted to prove that Trotsky's understanding of the peasant problem in 1905 was equal to any and far superior to the epigones of today who lived at that time. Many such quotations can be had in *Our Revolution*, translated by Olgin, or in Trotsky's pamphlet on the *Permanent Revolution* in which he quotes from his works of 1905.

The rank and file Communist members repeat these slanders against Trotsky because they do not know the truth and repeat what they are told. But for the

bureaucrats, it is not a matter of ignorance—it is a matter of plain lies, of revisionism; just as the social democrats skillfully quoted Marx and Engels on the state, giving the rank and file a wrong picture. Let me quote just once more from 1905, page 267-68: "Our revolution, which is a bourgeois revolution according to the immediate tasks it grew out of, knows, as a consequence of the extreme class differences of the industrial population of no bourgeois class which could place itself at the head of the popular masses by combining its social weight and political experience with revolutionary energy. The suppressed worker and peasant masses, left to their own resources, must take it upon themselves to create, in the hard school of implacable conflict and cruel defeat, the necessary political and organizational preconditions for their triumph. No other road is open to them."

Does this look as if Trotsky did not understand the relation of the proletariat and peasantry in 1905? Does this look as if Trotsky did not understand the nature of the bourgeois revolution of 1905? Let the revisionists talk. They have their day as the leaders of the second international had theirs. We, the Marxists, are sure of victory. Material facts and Marxian truths are greater than all the lies of the epigones.

LENIN ON COLONIAL REVOLUTION

In the *Daily Worker* article, quoted above, they say, "The task of organizing the united front of all the exploited and oppressed under the leadership of the proletariat was raised by Lenin to the level of the world problem of the revolutionary alliance of proletariat of the advanced countries with the enslaved peoples of the colonies and semi-colonial countries." This is a jumble and is not the position of Lenin. As Trotsky says, "Lenin thus raised the national liberation movement, the colonial insurrection and wars of the oppressed nations to the level of the bourgeois democratic revolutions, particularly in the period prior to the Russian revolution of 1905. But Lenin did not at all rank the national liberation wars above the bourgeois rev-

olution as this is now done by Bukharin who has turned an angle of 180 degree." (Criticism of the Draft Program). And to this day the revisionist rank this movement above the bourgeois democratic revolution.

All of this revamping of history in relation to the 1905 revolution is necessary on the revisionist part, first to smash the Marxian position of Trotsky and second, to enable them to build a case for the use of the slogan of the democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, as it appears in the Sixth World Congress Program. In order to do this, they must not only throw overboard all the facts of Trotsky's position but with it the position of Lenin on this subject. This hypothetical slogan raised in 1905 was discarded events concretized the perspective through the 1917 revolution. It was discarded by Lenin, but not by the epigones although he criticized them on this very point in April 1917.

THE "DEMOCRATIC DICTATORSHIP"

The introduction to Lenin's valuable book on 1905 also says, "Because of this circumstance, the 1905 revolution may be called the dress rehearsal not only of October 1917, but of the World October." Because of the colonial conditions of China and India, etc. In other words, 1905 is the dress rehearsal for the backward countries in revolutions and 1917 is the dress rehearsal for the industrially developed countries.

In answer to this, we can show that 1917 has been the dress rehearsal not only for the revolutions of industrial Europe, but also for the Chinese revolution of 1925-27. But to this day the Stalinists and Right wingers have not recognized this historic fact. There can be no other than a dictatorship of the proletariat or a dictatorship of the capitalist in content. The form will vary but the form of the proletarian dictatorship in backward countries will not be a "democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasants." On the contrary, the more backward the country, the weaker the country is economically, the more open will our dictatorship with the peasant alliance have to be in order to hold power with a minority of the proletariat and here we have the revolution in countries with the majority of the proletariat, the more proletarian democracy can we have in the early years of our role.

—HUGO OEHLER.

The R.R. Workers and the Wage Cut

A Militant Looks at Conditions in his Industry and Reviews the Past

The article printed below is a discussion article we have received from a worker long active in the Railroad industry. It raises important questions with regard to the Communist approach to the problems of the transport workers, which cannot be overlooked and which deserve the attention of all Communist trade unionists. The columns of *The Militant* remain, as always, open to all points of view among its class-conscious, working class readers, on this as well as on all matters of import to the revolutionary movement.—Ed.

The recent wage cut of the R. R. workers has once again brought the R. R. unions to the foreground of the American labor movement. The several articles in the *Militant* dealing with this event have brought out most of the basic factors of the immediate developments. However, to a certain extent they have one common fault. They are uniform in playing up the betrayal of the officials with very little criticism of the rank and file for their past activities or inactivity.

It is true enough that, in so far as the immediate aspects of the situation are concerned, the betrayal of the R. R. workers by the labor skates stands out in bold relief. It is also true that the R. R. workers (the great majority of those involved at the present time have been in the industry since the war) over the period of the past twelve years have been guilty of inactivity, self-centeredness, narrow craft psychology, passivity, white chauvinism, bourgeois prejudices, etc. While the latter facts do not excuse the labor skates for their betrayal neither does the betrayal absolve the rank and file from their sins of omission and commission.

American Stalinism constantly demonstrates to us that the only method known to the bureaucrats for winning both black and white workers for militant struggle is by a system of patronization. But the history of the American labor movement teaches that workers in such situations are prone to seize upon ex-

cuses of this kind of deserting the unions in the most critical moment, thus making the further onslaught of the capitalist class less difficult.

Every militant worker knows or should know, as was pointed out in a recent leading article on the R. R. wage cuts, in *The Militant*, that the acceptance of one wage cut does not arrest the wage-cutting drive. On the contrary it only wets the appetite of the master class. This was the lesson of the events leading up to the shopmen's strike of 1912. Preservation of the R. R. unions, as weak as they are, is of paramount importance to the R. R. workers at the present moment.

MUST ACKNOWLEDGE MISTAKES

In the struggle to develop the class consciousness of the working class it is as essential to point out to the workers their weak sides as well as their strong points and the role of the bureaucrats must not be allowed to serve as an excuse for the short comings of the rank and file. The novice fears to criticize the workers because he is afraid of offending them. He is likely to rely upon the condemnation of the officials instead. But every experienced agitator knows that the first step toward any militant action is to get the workers to see and acknowledge their own failings. This is less difficult to accomplish than it may seem, for the working class is not easily offended by sincere criticism and they instinctively know that they have been guilty of many offenses against their own best interests.

It is handling the question superficially to lay too much stress upon the lack of activity and preparation on the part of the officials when it became evident that the present wage cuts were the immediate goal of the R. R. Companies. To accept such a viewpoint is to aid the official in erecting a plausible excuse for their capitulation. The labor skates betrayals go back much further and much deeper than that. Likewise the behavior of the rank and file. The history of the struggle in the R. R. industry over the period of the last twelve or fourteen years is full of events. If the rebel worker is to be of value to the R. R. workers in the present situation he must be able to skillfully present both sides of the picture. Those who are incapable of seeing the weakness of the working class will be sure to overlook their strong points at the critical moment.

UNITY SOLIDARITY A CRYING NEED

It was inevitable that all R. R. workers as well as the R. R. union in general would sooner or later suffer from the defeat of the shop men in 1922. The favored position granted to the Brotherhood unions during and after this strike was little short of a bribe for non-support of the shop men. The Brotherhood members are now receiving the second installment of interest on their policy. No amount of excuses can eliminate the fact that the "Hoger" sat on his back side (two hundred and fifty pounds of solid anchorage) and pulled the throttle while the shop men were putting up a heroic but losing battle. Not a few of them, monkey wrench in hand, "got out and got under": It was thus that "Casey" Jones kept his junk pile running. And the trainmen and conductors were doing their stuff in perfect union. Even the "Fire Boys" with their militant traditions and from whose ranks came the undaunted Gene Debs, shamefacedly kept the "home fires" burning brightly beneath the leaky boilers. This was not the first but second offense, for the Brotherhoods did the same thing during the "out-law" switchmen's strike at an earlier date.

Could the Brotherhood men have struck in sympathy with the shop men in spite of their officials? The shop men set the example in the victorious "out-law" strike of 1919 when they told their officials to jump in the lake. Militant support of the shop men in 1922 by the Brotherhoods, leaving the job in sympathy, would have welded the R. R. workers together permanently with an unbreakable iron band of solidarity. It would have left an undying tradition in the R. R. unions.

Do the shop men then have anything to crow about? Very little. After the "out-law" strike victory in 1919, the rank and file allowed themselves to be swayed by a sense of self-security and self-satisfaction. The plea on the part of a few militants to take the maintenance of way men into the shop federation, for the most part, fell on deaf ears. They, the "skilled shop men", disdained to be too closely associated with "common" (some of the so-called laborers had almost as much skill as the shop crafts) laborers. Several of the shop craft unions (particularly the machinists) were more afraid of being "contaminated" by the Negro workers (who wanted nothing better than a chance to fight side by side and shoulder by shoulder with their white fellow workers) than they were of the R. R. bosses.

The writer knows whereof he speaks, for the main part of his effort during this time was in the direction of bringing the maintenance of way men into the shop federation. Opposition came not only from the officials but from the rank and file as well. Even where there was sympathy for the idea there was little concrete action and much passivity. In the midst of the strike of 1922 every shop man realized the mistake. But it was then too late. Instead of admitting the mistake however, some of them took to blaming it all on the then President of the Maintenance of Way Men. Although that culprit deserved to be condemned and kicked out of the labor

movement, the principal blame belongs to the shop men themselves, for it was they who placed the weapons in this faker's hands by their past policies.

The shop men are also to be blamed for their feeble effort toward the bringing of the several other A. F. of L. Railroad unions into a closely knitted strike alliance and making the R. R. Department of the A. F. of L. something more than a soft spot for such job holding scoundrels as Bert M. Jewel.

It is just at such a time, when the workers are compelled to suffer the consequences of past indifference, that the lessons flowing from past experience must be hammered home to them. In such a time, the logic of the militant minority has tenfold force. Those who waste too much time on the scoundrelly acts of the officials are often wont to divert attention from the more permanent lessons that the working class must learn before any lasting improvement can be made in their status.

Unless the events over the entire period from the end of the war onward are understood and explained, all comment on the present situation will be well nigh useless to the Railroad worker. The whole history must be reviewed and interrupted in language understandable to the working class. Treachery of the officials either past, present or future must not be allowed to become an excuse for individual desertions from the ranks of the old unions. The weaknesses and mistakes of the rank and file must not be minimized. They must be brought out in the open in order that they may be overcome and they can be overcome only by militant activity and real solidarity. There must be no deserting of the unions at the critical moment. The workers must be made to understand that the crying need is One Big Union of all the Railroad workers from the track laborer to the "Hoger" and that the way to get it is to work for it. By substituting unity for dissension, and solidarity for petty self-interest, the Railroad worker can not only regain all lost ground but can march ahead to new victories and the six hour day for the entire Railroad industry.

—J. M. AGITATOR.

- A Story of Boss Violence in the Illinois Mine Fields -

Andy is a young coal miner. He works in one of the big coal mines of southern Illinois. His job is possibly the most hazardous in the mines. He runs a locomotive on the main line. Andy and I started into the labor movement at the same time. One evening an organizer of the Young Workers' League came to our mining camp. He flayed capitalism, he spoke of the struggles of youth in the working class' general fight through out the world. The orator was convincing. Our early experience had taught us that he was right. We joined the Young Workers' League and became absorbed in the fight energetically. We did the best we could, we studied and everything in line with our class duties, was fulfilled to the greatest extent.

Nine years later, we again were together at the recent Indianapolis convention of the United Mine Workers of America. We joined together in a room during the two weeks in the convention city. Every morning we journeyed together at the conclave. We listened attentively to the orators. The infamous John L. Lewis, President of the International Union, bellowed and growled away at the insurgents. As we watched the portly, pot bellied, bushy browed, "leader" of "our" union, prance around with his air of sophistication, we began to wonder among ourselves, where such a species of a coal miner had ever originated from! We saw with our own eyes and heard with our ears, this betrayer of the miners for years and his cohorts. We had not made any mistake in the nine years that we had opposed this tool of the coal operators.

During the hectic sessions of the convention we took our place in the fight against the erroneous policies of the officialdom. Andy is not an orator, his early beginnings in the pit had not permitted him to get the education one deserves. Like scores of stevedo fighters of the class struggle, Andy's deeds are not measured by the wonderful language of a silver tongued speaker, but are transformed daily into action by his fights against the mine bosses and his service to the membership of his large local union in which he serves in the capacity of secretary. During the rank betrayals of the Lewis machine throughout the entire proceedings of the convention, Andy's teeth gritted, his mind was where the minds of the officers the union were farthest from; he thought about the miners back home, the miners in the unorganized fields, suffering, starving, dying like rats.

Upon our return home, we prepared for the regular local union meetings. Duty bound, we take the fight back to the coal miners of southern Illinois. Once more the United Mine Workers of America has met in an International Convention, and once more the Lewis machine has further hog-tied the coal miners of the continent. Andy, as a delegate from his local union reports to a well-attended meeting. He exposes the packed convention, the professional hand clappers that were brought in by official wrecking crew. Nothing was done for the miners! To send delegates to such a convention is like sending delegates to hell, Andy tells them. The miners know it. Their freedom to fight the coal operators and their murderous

attacks against them are stifled, not by the forces without, but by the forces from within, paid by the coal miners themselves in handsome salaries.

In the local union, as in every mass section of organized labor is present a stool pigeon of the coal company. One gangster by the name of Whitlow. Formerly on the district payroll of the reactionary clique, alleged to be on the payroll of the Lewis machine at present and for a fact deputized on several occasions to break local "wild cat" strikes and to slug and kill Communists. A general rumpus takes place in the local union meeting as the stool pigeon takes offense to the remarks of the delegates. The miners boo and jeer the agent of the bosses. Andy calls his bluff and challenges him to lay aside his brass "knucks" and his gun and to come in the center of the hall like a man. The complexion of the gangster turns pale, later it becomes green as his cowardly constitution fails him in a man to man fight. The gangster, like the rest of his ilk, is exposed. He must suffer the humiliation of being exposed! He is not now in the dark corners of the street gangling militant workers, his hand is called by a young miner. The meeting is tense, every miner is determined that no other alder of the gangster will interfere. But like all other cowards, the gangster and four of his lieutenants sneak out of the hall with a mad rush. Andy follows them outside, the young militant's indignation is past control. We follow Andy. As we approach the stairway, the gangster has a dead aim on

Andy, his wolfish eyes gleam like a demon in the darkness of the night. The murderer's gun barks twice. Andy is temporarily floored, the bullet strikes Andy in the back, piercing his abdomen. The other bullet strikes another young miner in the leg. A waiting automobile rushes the bandits away whom the enraged miners, speeding to the sheriff's office. The gangster receives the protection of the County Jail, as his blood lust body trembles from fear.

Andy is rushed to the hospital along with the other victim. Doctors hurriedly speed to and fro, as the young victim goes under the knife of the surgeon. Hundreds of miners swarm the dark shadows of the trees surrounding the hospital, awaiting news, hoping against hope that their young leader will live. At home, a young wife with her infant will have to be notified . . . What a task!

While Andy fights for his life, while every tissue and corpuscle exerts itself for life, as his gentle face is covered by a deathly sweat, the officers of law and order caucus with the murderer. The gangster has nothing to fear from the "law", he is encouraged to murder by the very "enforcers of justice"! "After all, shooting a Communist, especially a hunky, is no more serious than shooting a nigger, they're worse than niggers." This is the report from the County Office of the great American democracy, the land of equal opportunity, pursuit of happiness and symbol of world freedom.

—GERMINAL.

The Militant Subscription Drive

In the center of the drive to build the Opposition press stands the task of boosting the circulation of *The Militant*. This can be done in three ways. It is necessary to increase the paid subscription list. From March 1st to June 1st the subscription drive will take place. The branches of the League should take up the drive in an organized manner. The New York branch has organized two teams with a captain at the head of each. The progress of the teams will be recorded on a specially designed chart on the bulletin board. During the drive with each one year subscription of \$2.00 we will offer to the subscriber a paper bound copy of the *Permanent Revolution*; with each six months' subscription of \$1.00 the *Strategy of the World Revolution*; with a three months' subscription of \$.50 any one of our 10c pamphlets. Everywhere our comrades should canvass our sympathizers and their friends for subscriptions. The progress of the drive will be reported in *The Militant*.

The second way of boosting the circulation of the *Militant* is by going after expired subts. Our branches will be notified regularly in advance of the expirations. They are expected to canvass for renewals. Renewals will be considered on the same basis as new subscriptions and will be entered to the credit of the comrades. Where we have no branches, if our comrades will undertake this work, we will inform them regularly of further expirations.

The third method of boosting the circulation of *The Militant* is to increase the newsstand and bookstore sale. To help our comrades place *The Militant* on stands and in book stores we have printed posters with a picture of comrade Trotsky and the simple statement "Leon Trotsky writes every week for *The Militant*." These posters are attractive and should be placed on only those stands which carry or will carry *The Militant*. The publication of the first volume of the *History of the Russian Revolution* will no doubt be attended by a wave of publicity. It is our intention to ride the crest of this wave. The posters should be ordered immediately, and placed immediately. The bundle orders should also be remitted at once. Where stands carry *The Militant*, an attempt should be made to persuade them to increase their orders. The posters will be furnished gratis. But they should be distributed discriminatingly as our supply is limited.

If all our comrades pitch in this drive should make it possible to raise the circulation of *The Militant* 100%.

WANTED Literature Agents

Unemployed comrades who can devote a few hours daily can help themselves and at the same time spread the literature of the Left Opposition. Write for particulars.

PIONEER PUBLISHERS
New York City

Lectures on the History of the Communist International

On Wednesday, March 9th when comrade Shachtman begins his series of eight lectures on the *History of the Communist International*, the Left Opposition, in New York, will take another step to provide workers with an education along Marxian lines which the Stalinists have distorted to fit the needs of their factional strangulation of the party. The subject was chosen with this view in mind.

The lectures will trace the rise and development of the Third International under Lenin and Trotsky; its Stalinization and degeneration subsequent to Lenin's death, and its future perspectives. The lectures will be popular and designed to raise class consciousness as well as to equip workers with accurate factual data theoretically along the lines of Marxism-Leninism.

HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL A Series of Eight Popular Lectures For Workers

- Max Shachtman
 - March 9th—Origins of the Third International
 - March 16th—The Founding of the New International
 - March 23rd—The Twenty-One Conditions of the International
 - March 30th—The Struggle for the Conquest of the Masses
 - April 6th—The Last Leninist Congress
 - April 13th—The First Victory of the Right-Centrist Reaction
 - April 20th—The Triumph of the Epigones
 - April 27th—The Future of the Third International—What Next at the LABOR TEMPLE—14th St., and 2nd Ave. at 8 P. M.
- QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION.
Admission 15c per lecture
\$1 for the course

«Young Spartacus» No. 4 Out

The March issue of the *Young Spartacus* is ready for sale and distribution. It contains a summarized article by comrade Trotsky on Germany and Fascism, a report by Albert Glotzer on Imperialist War and the Class Struggle, an article on the murder of Harry Shims, one of the "Logic of the Theory of National Socialism", a brief biographical sketch of Karl Marx and other interesting items.

The comrades should make efforts for effective distribution and sale of the *Young Spartacus*.

The editorial board of the *Young Spartacus* wishes to apologize for the four blank pages which accompany some of the copies of this issue. Due to a misunderstanding the "form" of the *Young Spartacus* was removed from the press before the press work had been completed, and its contents distributed. We had no alternative but to use the eight page copies (four pages printed and four blank). These copies contain the complete issue of our paper.