

BOOK REVIEW

«The History of the Russian Revolution»

Leon Trotsky: The History of the Russian Revolution. Volume 1: The Overthrow of Tsarism.—Translated by Max Eastman.—Published by Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York.—\$4.00.

With the enforced leisure imposed upon him by the Stalinist faction for the past four years, the organizer of the Red Army, the comrade-in-arms of Lenin, has forged another great weapon for the international working class in its struggle for a higher form of society, for liberation from the capitalist yoke. And that is precisely what his History of the Russian Revolution is. A weapon, a manual of action for the proletarian revolutionists the world over.

If the Russian revolution in itself served to inspire in thousands of proletarian fighters in every country the spirit of Bolshevik internationalism, then this History of the Russian Revolution, by the scientific analysis of its inner processes, will teach these fighters how to put that spirit into practice.

Without for one moment leaving out of sight the broad historical outlines of the event, Trotsky displays a painstaking devotion to detail, a penetrating preoccupation with the minutest shadings of action, policy and thought such as only a craftsman is capable of. The whole gigantic scene, all of its complicated mechanism, rises before the reader with the whole lucidity of its deep internal logic. Neither the intrigues and counter-intrigues of the reactionary camarillas within the decrepit Romanov monarchy, nor the nuances of policy among the representatives of the big bourgeoisie, nor the squirming and vacillation of the petty bourgeois leaders are left out of account. Each is accorded its proper place and weight in the continuity of the narrative, each is evaluated from the point of view of the tactics of the revolutionary party.

The major place, however, is of course ceded to the chief actor in the immense drama—the masses. "The most indubitable feature of a revolution is the direct interference of the masses in historic events." And it is the study of the revolutionary consciousness of the masses in action that makes the book doubly valuable for the Communist militant. Here, the masses are shown marching ahead with determination while their "leaders" turn and twist and attempt to avoid struggle. Here the masses are shown smashing through the hardened shell of the conservative ideology accumulated by them in the course of peaceful times by bold, revolutionary, everyday activity.

The picture of the masses streaming into the streets in February to proclaim the downfall of the Romanovs, while the "democratic" Milukovs plead with the doomed dynasty for a "constitutional regime"; the picture of the masses demonstrating openly for the dismissal of Milukov in April, while Kerensky and Tseretelli and the other conciliators tremble lest the bourgeoisie leave all the power to them; and once again the picture of the masses rallying to the Bolshevik banner against the "offensive" in June, while Kerensky and Tseretelli prepare to outlaw the Bolsheviks as German spies, are only a few of the impressions that will help bring home the lesson of the tremendous historical importance of the masses to those who are dedicated to lead them in the struggles to come.

The masses are not to be trifled with. In the last analysis, it is they who decide, who and what shall prevail. And it is this fact that the Communists, who are needed by the masses just as much as they need them, must understand. "For better or worse, the revolutionary party bases its tactics upon a calculation of the changes of mass consciousness." Just to talk about the masses and their role, is not enough. It is necessary to understand what is going on in their minds. "However, the processes taking place in the consciousness of the masses are not unrelated and independent... consciousness is determined by conditions." To understand these conditions and their reflections in the mind of the people, a revolutionary, Marxist party is needed for "the active orientation of the masses by a method of successive approximations." Without a Marxist understanding of the character of the Russian revolution, of the relationship of class forces within it, and of the specific period of time in which it broke out, a successful conclusion was unthinkable. And it was just this understanding that Lenin brought to the Bolshevik party in April 1917, when the Bolshevik leaders, along with the other political chiefs, lagged behind the consciousness of the masses.

Lenin's rearming of the party is regarded by Trotsky as the most important factor in shaping the course of the revolution. Just as the "interference of the masses" formed the unmistakable general feature of the revolution, the

rearming of the revolutionary party, and the orientation of the masses subsequent to that, lent it its specific, ultimate character. In the chapter, "Rearming the Party", the role of the proletarian vanguard and that of the revolutionary leadership as a whole, is expounded with convincing precision. The personality of Lenin, his indispensable value for the progress of the masses to power, is cast in its true light. His great historical significance is enhanced by an objective, Marxist evaluation. Lenin's was the power of determining the conditions of the consciousness of the masses and of "actively orientating the masses by a method of successive approximations". And it was this power of Lenin's, combined with the "interference of the masses" of the party itself in the rearming of the party (up to then disoriented by Kamenev, Molotov and Stalin) that brought the Bolsheviks to the fore as the veritable leaders of the revolution.

Of especial value to the theoretical considerations involved in the estimate of the February revolution, is the appendix to the chapter "Peculiarities of Russia's Development". The dangerous practical implications of a schematic conception of the dialectics of economic development are pointed out in all their sharpness. Without a realistic, Marxist view of the specific character of Russia, without applying the Marxist theory of the permanent revolution to it, it is impossible to grasp the logic of the events of 1917. How can the impotence and the amazingly rapid elimination from power of the Russian bourgeoisie be understood without it? How can the dominating role of the young and numerically weak Russian proletariat be conceived of, from a different point of view? Those who are inclined to consider his characterizations of Kerensky, Milukov and the other protagonists of the big and the petty bourgeoisie as caused by personal malice only fail to give the slightest attention to Trotsky's scientifically grounded analysis of the social basis that produced them. Trotsky cannot be held responsible for the ridiculous spectacle of the Kerenskys and Milukovs any more than he can be held responsible for the precarious position of the Russian bourgeoisie in 1917. That was merely due to the peculiarities of historical development. And the same holds true for the portraits of Stalin, Tseretelli, Kamenev and the others, as well.

The chapter of "The Peasantry" is particularly significant in so far as it explodes the myth of the Stalinist epigones of an eternal alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry—as though it were created in heaven. It was certainly not Lenin who developed this disastrous theory which has since his death produced such frightful results in China and elsewhere. Lenin's conception of the alliance with peasantry like Trotsky's, was based on the temporary relationships of forces within the country. It was precisely the weakness of the bourgeoisie and the immature development of capitalism in Russia, Trotsky points out, that made the peasantry—always incapable of independent action—more amenable to an alliance with the proletariat. The agrarian problem of the Russia of 1917 and the actual attitude of Lenin towards it, are presented with telling proof.

The History of the Russian Revolution is a challenge to the bourgeois historians, it is a challenge to the social democrats and the Stalinists as well. Retracing the events step by step, illuminating each step with irrefutable facts and documents, Trotsky builds up the Bolshevik resume of the February revolution, and flings historic truth in the face of all the slanders and distortions to which this great event has been subjected in the past. It once more proves that only the Marxists can afford today to say what is, to speak out the truth. Without feigning historical impartiality, beneath the cloak of which reaction so desperately attempts to spread its deadly poison, Trotsky gives a fearless and objective account of events as they took place. The right to draw his own conclusions from the facts no one can deny him. That is his revolutionary duty. But in order that his conclusions may be most effective for the progress of the revolution, the Marxist knows that he must base them upon reality.

The great work of comrade Trotsky is so packed with action, so closely cemented with documents, so impregnated with powerful revolutionary lessons, that a brief review like the present cannot, by far, even attempt to do it justice: The History of the Russian Revolution is not merely a new publication, it is a creation that will become part of the life of future revolutionary generations. We shall come back to it again from time to time.

ATTENTION. BOSTON!

"What Is Europe Heading For?" Lecture by Albert Glotzer

Who has just returned from Europe, after a visit to TROTSKY. He will give us TROTSKY'S views on the European situation. on Sunday, March 20th, 1932, 8 P. M. at the ELM HILL BLDG. 632 Warren Street Silver Collection at the Door Sponsors: Communist League of America (Opposition), Boston Branch.

Rakovsky on the Five Year Plan

We are bringing below a chapter from a larger work by comrade Rakovsky. Although the figures cited have, in part, grown antiquated and, in part, surpassed, this work is nevertheless of exceptional significance. For the first time problems which facilitate a Marxist examination of the results of the five year plan and of the process of development in the Soviet Union are raised and subjected to a thorough analysis.

Christian Georgevitch Rakovsky is one of the most prominent personalities in the international revolutionary movement, with a record of versatile activities and of participation in the revolutionary movements of several countries behind him. He is now 59 years old, 42 years of his life—ever since 1889—he has spent in the revolutionary working class movement. Having from Dobruja (formerly Bulgaria, later Rumania), he still enjoys the greatest degree of confidence on the part of the Balkan proletariat. In the years 1906-1907 he founded the Rumanian socialist party and trade unions. During the war he participated in the Zimmerwald conference. The Russian revolution liberated him from imprisonment in Rumania. Since then, he occupied some of the most important positions in the civil war. Elected president of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, he remains at this post for four years, when he is sent to hostile England as the Soviet Ambassador to that country. From this post he is transferred to that of Ambassador to France. Wherever he goes, he remains faithful to his revolutionary internationalism. He showed himself prepared to exchange his position as Ambassador for the life of an exile when he saw the leadership of the C. P. of the Soviet Union deviating from the Marxist line. Ever since 1928, he has been living in exile, at first in Astrakhan. Physicians pointed out that Rakovsky would not, at his age, be able to bear the life of an exile, that he was doomed to physical destruction there. After this, Stalin deported him to Barnoul in Siberia! Stalin knows that the frightful cold and the general climate of that place will destroy this fighter physically. Every sincere worker must raise his voice against these shameful deeds. Rakovsky must become the model of the revolutionary youth that floods to proletarian internationalism. The campaign of physical destruction conducted by Stalin against the Bolshevik-Leninists cannot destroy the ideas of the Left Opposition. In spite of everything, they are forging ahead and penetrating the masses of Communist workers.—Ed.

The extraordinarily strong quantitative increase in production over that of last year is absolutely indisputable. The gross value of heavy industry for three quarters of this year (1930) amounted to 11,705 million Rubles (prices remaining equal) as against 91,374 million Rubles for the past year. This is an increase of 27.4 per cent. Although this increase is 3.7 per cent lower than that prescribed by the plan, it is nevertheless to be considered as exceptionally high. This would be sufficient ground for optimism, were we to stop with the mere mention of the fact, without going into an analysis of the accompanying circumstances and phenomena which are bound up with this rise in the quantitative co-

Lovestonites in A. C. W.

(Continued from page 1) The Necessity of A Correct Policy With a correct policy it is possible to reach the masses of clothing workers at this time and get them behind a serious movement against the betrayals of the Hillman officialdom. Hillman's grip on the organization has been greatly shattered and his prestige irreparably damaged. His betrayal of the tailors in the strike of last July and the recent wage cut imposed on the hitherto privileged cutters have created the conditions for a unified struggle. The cutters who paid the price for Hillman's fake struggle against racketeering are now realizing their common interests with the tailors. Hillman's policy of serving the bosses at the expense of the masses of clothing workers is forcing him to wipe out all vestiges of union conditions and reduce all branches to the lowest level of working standards. The bosses have succeeded in not only breaking the condition of the workers but also in weakening the Hillman administration. The time is not far when they will be ready to discard even the services of the Hillman bureaucracy as these services are approaching the point of exhaustion. When Hillman becomes useless to them, the fight against the A. C. W. will be the next stage in the history of the industry.

The Left wing must be prepared for great struggles. The Rank and File Committee has a great task to perform. The Lovestone Right wing combination holds no gains for the clothing workers, but it can, however, temporarily succeed in misleading the workers and cause more betrayals. The Rank and File Committee must stave off their demagogic advances. This cannot be accomplished by merely disrupting their meetings, even though they may not deserve any other treatment. There should be a consistent ideological preparation of Left wing forces and the adoption of a correct and clear policy. A thorough analysis of the past error and a correct approach to the present situation will clear the way for a much needed Left wing movement in the A. C. W.

—ALBERT ORLAND.

efficients. I have already pointed out that a growth in the quantity figures themselves does not represent an adequate criterion for the evaluation of the actual growth of the productive forces, nor even for determining the existence of any such growth in general. A genuine yardstick for the increase of the forces of production, and consequently, a guarantee for further raising the quantity figures, can be given by the following three factors: (1) the basis upon which these quantity figures have been achieved; (2) the relationship between the quantity and the quality coefficients; (3) the measure of accumulation and extension of industrial capital.

Two main types of increases in the quantity figures are possible: (1) an increase on the basis of the extension of investment capital, which is generally connected with a rise in the productivity of labor (in the Marxist sense of the word: i. e., an increase in the product of labor, figured per person, on the basis of the transition of industry to a higher level); (2) an increase on the basis of the old figure for investment capital (and consequently on the old technical basis) at the cost of its more intensive exploitation. In the latter case, a rise in the quantity figures is generally bound up with an increase in the intensity of labor and with a relatively big growth of the labor forces. In practice, both these methods of increasing the quantity figures generally go hand in hand, and the task before us consists of determining the share of each. An exact calculation of this is hardly possible (in any case it is impossible on the basis of the material I have at hand) so that it becomes necessary to employ a series of indirect indices which, in my opinion, suffice to give a general conception of the state of affairs. It is indisputable that in the course of the last year a certain extension of industrial investment capital has taken place regardless of the non-fulfillment of the plan in the main fields of production and regardless of the insufficient amortization. It is indisputable that this is also the case in the course of the present year, so that an increase of quantity has, to a certain extent, taken place also on the basis. But when we approach this question from the other end we are easily convinced that in reality, the rise in quantity has taken place on the basis of the methods of the second order. We have, above all, an enormous increase in the burden borne by the old investment capital through of the introduction of the uninterrupted working week and the increase in work shifts.

According to the control figures, the increase in the labor product per worker should have "supported itself only in a very slight measure on a rise in the intensity of labor". In practice this has worked out differently. Already in the first half year the number of workers increased 14.3 per cent in comparison with the same period of the past year. The increase in the number of workers surpassed the assumptions of the plan more than fourfold. In so far as the increase in the labor product per worker is concerned, that amounted in the first half year to about 18-19 per cent instead of the 25.3 per cent prescribed by the plan. If we could determine with precision to what extent this increase in the product of labor took place at the cost of improvement in the technical basis and to what extent at the cost of a rise in the intensity of labor, that would, of course, throw even more light on the subject. But at present we can only give an approximate calculation on the basis of the figures cited above. The introduction of the five-day week, in connection with uninterrupted work in the factory, signifies in itself an increase in the working time of the factory equipment amounting to 1-6 or 16.6 per cent. If within these three quarters of the year about 50 per cent of the workers, that is, about 1-2 of the industry, went over to the five day week, then this increased exploitation of investment capital alone must have brought with it an increase in production of about 8-9 per cent. The increase in work shifts must have brought an increase of 1-2 per cent. The increase in the number of workers tended in the same direction; since it took place in a considerable measure at the cost of an increase in unskilled workers, that meant an opportunity for the skilled workers to better exploit the equipment. Finally, when we take into consideration the fact that the transition to uninterrupted work in the factories meant the automatic abolition of a

CHICAGO ATTENTION!

There will be a Special Meeting on Wednesday, March 9th, 1932, 8 P. M. Speaker: AL GLOTZER Subject: American Policies in the Far East at the Open Forum at 1435 N. Western Ave. CHICAGO OPEN FORUM Sunday, MARCH 13, at 8 P. M. "LESSONS OF THE PARIS COMMUNE" Lecture by CHARLES CURTIS at 1435 N. Western Avenue MINNEAPOLIS WORKERS OPEN FORUM Sunday, MARCH 13, at 8 P. M. "THE PARIS COMMUNE" Lecture by CLARE COWLE at 1530 E. Franklin Street Admission Free Everyone Welcome

series of idle periods for equipment of a purely technical character, then it is probably not far from the truth to assume that 15 per cent of the increase in production is to be attributed to the introduction of the five-day week, the increase in the work shifts and the growth in the number of workers; in other words, to the rise in the intensity of the exploitation of the equipment.

The remaining 12 percent are to be attributed to the increase in the productivity of labor, to the increase in the intensity of labor and to the extension of investment capital. As we shall see further on, the lion's share must be attributed to the increase in the intensity of labor, which diminishes the specific weight of the influence of the two other factors with regard to the quantitative growth proportionally. I repeat that this calculation (I had to leave a whole series of details out of consideration) is only approximate but it is sufficiently exact to permit at least one conclusion with regard to the growth in quantity; the growth in quantity was produced, in a decisive measure, not at the cost of an increase in investment capital and not at the cost of an improvement of the technical basis, but at the cost of a more intensive exploitation of the investment capital that was at hand, with the increase in the number of workers on the one hand and the rise in the intensity of labor on the other. But such a method of increasing the quantity bears within its bosom the precondition for a breakdown, not to mention the fact that it in no way guarantees a further quantitative rise in industry. This method of increasing quantity very rapidly clashes with its

* Data regarding several isolated undertakings and branches show that these figures are actually even considerably higher.

own natural boundaries. Neither the intensive exploitation of the machine nor the intensification of labor can be increased endlessly. This sort of method has another meaning entirely—and that too, from an economic point of view—when it is applied only for a short period of time and when, parallel with its application, the possibility is given to create within just as short a period of time, the material basis: a new investment capital. But this same fact, that such a method must be seized upon and that it is elevated into a system, is precisely the proof for the fact that we are far behind with the creation of the material basis. The measure of depression in the working class with whose aid Centrism hopes to make up for lost time, further proves how great this backwardness is. The essence of the present situation consists precisely in this fact, that it has indisputably become evident that this backwardness cannot be liquidated within a short time merely with the aid of the internal resources of the country. Before I go over to a consideration of this question I still want to deal with three factors which prove from different angles and in different ways that with regard to the increase in quantity we have arrived very closely to the boundary, beyond which a further growth on the given basis is impossible.

The first and most important of these factors is the quality of production. It suffices to pick up anyone of our papers to become convinced that in this regard the situation is catastrophic. Neither agitation nor administrative measures, nor measures of a juridical character have been able to put a halt to the process of the deterioration of the quality. The facts are sufficiently well known so that I will only confine myself to a few of the most obvious examples.

(To Be Continued.)

—CHRISTIAN RAKOVSKY.

* Such a method can be dictated for example by a condition of war when the questions of reproduction generally recede to the background.

Uphold Our Revolutionary Classics!

When young comrades, who are too much impressed with their own importance, express it in supercilious scorn for the revolutionary classics, it is time to issue a serious warning. There is only one short step from such an attitude into either the camp of the useless petty bourgeois intelligentsia or else into the foul pollution of the most abominable revisionism. This latter is precisely what happened to one of our young comrades in an article entitled "Honor Bolshevik Leaders" and appearing over his signature in Young Spartacus No. 2. He stepped with both feet into that foul pollution.

It is said in that article: "Rosa, in her inaugural address, again investigated the new problems brought forth by the conditions of the war and post-war period. She re-examined the teachings of Marx and Engels on the questions of armed insurrection, guerrilla warfare, force and violence and concluded that history had once again placed on the agenda the tactic advocated by Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto in 1847-8, but later proclaimed by Engels as outlived. (Emphasis ours—A. S.)"

In criticizing Rosa Luxemburg Lenin once quoted two simple lines from a Russian proverb: "It sometimes happens to eagles that they descend lower than chickens, but chickens never succeed in mounting as high as eagles," and he added, "she was and remains an eagle". In its reversed form this would apply to our young comrade. The outrageous statement emphasized above looks too much like the attempt of a chicken to mount even higher than the eagle.

In ascribing these views to Engels our young comrade cites in parenthesis, evidently as his proof, the introduction to "The Class Struggles in France" by Marx. Perhaps he was unaware of the fact that long ago evidence has been unearthed of how this introduction, when appearing in print by the Berlin Workers, was miserably garbed by the German social democrats of the revisionist school, notably by Bernstein. The extent of this garbling became clear when Ryazanov discovered the original Engels manuscript, of which he has since produced photostats, showing the important deletions which had been made. Some of the results of his findings Ryazanov published in "Unter dem Banner des Marxismus" (Vol. 1 No. 1, German edition). In English these findings were reproduced by Trachtenberg in the "Workers Monthly" for November 1925.

What Engels himself thought of the printing of the introduction and of the garbled version becomes quite clear in his letters to Kautsky (then still fighting revisionism). First in his letter of March 25, 1895, he says: "My text has suffered some because of the scruples of our Berlin friends, due to timidity over the anti-socialist laws which, under the circumstances, I had to consider."

Again in his letter to Kautsky dated April 1, 1895, Engels said: "To my astonishment I saw today printed in the Vorwarts, without previous knowledge, an extract from my introduction so dressed up that I appear as a peaceful worshiper of legality and peace (in spite of all). The more pleased I am that now the whole appears in the "Neue Zeit", so that this shameful impression is obliterated. I shall tell Liebknecht very definitely what I think of this, and also those, whoever they may be, that gave him the opportunity to distort my meaning."

Engels spoke in a similar vein, of the "mean joke" played on him, in his letter to Paul Lafargue, dated April 5, 1895.

It is perfectly true that Engels, in this introduction, draws a sharp distinction between the conditions of 1848 and those of 1895. This is as it should be. And it is particularly in this respect that the deleted parts assume their enormous significance, we shall quote only one.

In drawing the sharp distinctions of difference in the two periods Engels says: "Does this mean that the street battles will play no part in the future? Not at all. It simply means that conditions have become far more unfavorable for the civilian fighters since 1848, and far more favorable for the military forces. Street battles in the future may be successful only if this unfavorable situation can be neutralized by other factors. Such fights will therefore be far less usual in the earlier stages of a great revolution, than in its further course, and will have to be fought with greater resources of strength. Such battles will rather resort—as in the great French revolution, and as on September 4th and October 31st, 1870, in Paris—to open attack than to the defensive tactics of the barricades."

Is there in this powerful testimony any evidence of Engels having proclaimed the tactics of the Communist manifesto as outlived? None whatever. On the contrary, the letters quoted contain the wrath of the revolutionary teacher against the monstrous falsifiers.

Such accusations made against Engels become a blot upon the Communist movement which we must eradicate. With our modest means we must hold aloft the banner of Marxism and particularly so in the Left Opposition. We can well afford to be humble students endeavoring to learn from our great teachers. We must guard against this supercilious, know-it-all attitude which steps with both feet into the foul pollution of social reformism. Comrades guilty of such an attitude must be called to order sharply.

—ARNE SWABECK.

N.Y. Paris Commune Affair

The Paris Commune Celebration to be held by the New York Branch on Saturday evening, March 19th at the Irving Plaza, 15th Street and Irving Place will be a joint mass meeting and entertainment. Comrade Swabek, National Secretary of the Communist League of America (Opposition) will speak on the Significance of the Paris Commune.

There will be a chorus of forty Hungarian comrades, a group of dances by members and sympathizers of the New York branch, as well as other forms of entertainment. There will be refreshments on hand.

A LECTURE OF INTEREST TO JEWISH WORKERS

The first lecture of the Left Opposition in the Jewish language in New York will be given by comrade M. Lewitt, Sunday, March 6th at 3 o'clock in the Stuyvesant Casino, 2nd Ave., at 9th St. His subject will be: What Does Left Opposition Stand For—Its Program and Aims. Following the lecture there will be questions and discussions. The price of admission is only 10c. Unemployed workers will be admitted free. This lecture will be held under the auspices of the Unser Kampf Arbeiter Club, an organization of Jewish workers sympathetic to the Left Opposition.

THE MILITANT Published weekly by the Communist League of America (Opposition) at 84 East 10th St., N. Y. EDITORIAL BOARD Martin Abern James P. Cannon Max Shachtman Maurice Spector Arne Swabek Entered as second class mail matter November 28, 1928, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. Under the act of March 3, 1879. SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 1932 Vol. 5, No. 10 (Whole No. 106) Subscription rate: \$2.00 per year; foreign \$2.50. Five cents per copy. Bundle rates, 3 cents per copy.