

Trotsky Answers Some Fundamental Questions

Gives Views on Problems of Communist Movement in Soviet Russia, Europe and the United States

(Continued from page 1)
 struggle against the Stalin regime.
Question: Do you still regard the present phase of the Bolshevik revolution as "Thermidorian", and has your view as expressed in your autobiography been borne out by events since your departure from Soviet Russia? **Answer:** I have never said that the present stage of the revolution was "Thermidorian." The historic conception of Thermidor has a very definite content: it means a completion of the first stage of a victorious counter-revolution. A Thermidor in the U. S. S. R. could mean nothing else than the coming into power, although at first in a semi-disguised form, of the bourgeoisie, and consequently a breakdown of the October revolution. I have never, at any time or anywhere, said that the October revolution has broken down. This opinion is persistently attributed to me by the Stalin press for purposes which have nothing whatever to do with the interests of truth. What I have asserted and do assert is that there has grown up on the basis of the October revolution a powerful bureaucratic stratum in which both active and passive Thermidorian tendencies are very strong. However, their victory is still far off. The opposition to these tendencies consists of a struggle for the independence of the Communist party, the trade unions and the soviets and for their vigilant control over the bureaucracy. This opinion was not formed by me after my exile from the Soviet Union; on the contrary, it was the cause of my exile. A bureaucracy does not tolerate any attacks upon its commanding role. The danger inherent in the Thermidorian tendencies of a bureaucracy was perfectly clear to Lenin. He gave warning against this danger in his last speech at the Eleventh Congress of the party in 1922. My last conversation with Lenin was devoted to this question. Lenin proposed that I form a bloc with him against that bureaucratic stratum, the focal point of which he considered, and I also, to be the secretariat apparatus of the party led by Stalin. Lenin's second illness

Sunday's Elections in Germany

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 capitalist Hindenburg as the latter candidate, supported by the extreme reactionary parties, signified the monarchy hovering over Germany. The E. C. C. I. then wrote correctly pointing out to the German Communist Party 10th congress, held July 10th, 1925: "The 10th congress of the Communist Party of Germany must frankly admit that the party committed an error by not following the advice given by the Executive Committee of the Communist International after the first presidential ballot and before the election of Hindenburg, namely, to signify to the German social democrats that the Communists were prepared to withdraw their candidate in favor of the social democratic candidate on certain conditions. Such errors and delays are unforgivable in politics and always costly to the party of the revolutionary proletariat."
 Germany 1925 is, of course, not Germany 1932. Today there is an objectively revolutionary situation in the country: Today there is the yet more serious and more direct menace of Fascism hovering over Germany. Today so much more is the question of working class unity, of a united front from organization to organization, from movement to movement, of workers under social democratic ideology and those of Communist ideology against Fascism, the vital issue of the moment. It is not yet too late. The German proletariat is still in a powerful fighting position. It has created a powerful Communist Party; but the supreme need is for the party to understand how to apply this essential united front tactic on a genuine and honest basis.

GERMAN LEFT OPPOSITION APPEALS TO PARTY FOR UNITED FRONT POLICY

This our German comrades of the Left Opposition have already proposed in a very concrete form embodied in its appeal to the official Communist Party in addition to putting forward a worker's united front presidential candidate also to create (1) Committees of Action consisting of representatives of factories, trade unions, political groups and other workers' organizations.
 (2) A Joint Council of Action to be constituted at a congress of delegates from these Committees of Action . . . to represent the proletarian concentration against the concentration of the reactionaries.
 (3) The congress must be organized in advance as the proletarian counter-parliament in the event of a Fascist Reichstag, or against an extra parliamentary or parliamentary Fascist government.
 (4) The congress must solve three tasks concretely:
 (a) the preparation of the general strike to prevent the seizure of power by Hugenberg and Hitler;
 (b) the formation of one common, non-party workers' defense corps;
 (c) the elaboration of a common minimum program with regard to the next steps to be taken by the Committees of Action.

—ARNE SWABECK.

prevented the carrying out of this plan. **Socialist Success, Prepare Ground For Weakening of Bureaucracy**
Question: Is there need of modifying the Communist dictatorship in Russia and how should this be modified? **Answer:** This question is closely bound up with the first two. The economic successes, it is needless to say, have greatly strengthened the Soviet Union. At the same time they have greatly weakened the position of Stalin's apparatus. In this there is no contradiction. In the first place, it is perfectly clear to all conscious elements of the population of the Soviet Union that the successes in the sphere of industrialization and collectivization became possible only because the Stalin bureaucracy came up against the resistance of its proteges, the kulak, who refused to surrender his grain to the State, and thus the bureaucracy was compelled to take over and carry out the program of the Left Opposition. Stalin has dealt with our program in much the same way that the free-trader MacDonald has dealt with the protectionist program of Joseph Chamberlain, who also in his time was cruelly beaten at the polls. Today Chamberlain (I mean the father, not the son) is in any case more popular in England than MacDonald. To be sure, Chamberlain died long ago. But the principal leaders of the Russian opposition are alive. Rakovsky in Barnaul is attentively following all the processes of industry and politics in the Soviet Union. A second and still more important cause of the weakening of the Soviet bureaucracy lies in the fact that the economic successes have greatly elevated not only the number of the Russian workers, but also their cultural level, their confidence in their own powers and their feeling of independence. All these traits are hard to reconcile with a bureaucratic guardianship. Nevertheless, the Stalin apparatus in its struggle for dominance has carried the bureaucratic regime to its utmost extremes. I want especially to emphasize this fact: the economic successes, as frequently happens in history, have not strengthened but, on the contrary, undermined the position of the ruling stratum. I consider important changes in the methods of the Soviet regime absolutely inevitable, and that, too, in the rather near future. These changes will involve a blow at the dictatorship of the Stalin bureaucracy, and will undoubtedly clear the road for a flourishing of Soviet democracy on the foundations laid down by the October revolution.

Predicts His Party's Return

Question: Do you look forward to your return to Soviet Russia? Under what conditions would that be possible and what would be your program? **Answer:** I think that the above-mentioned changes will make possible and inevitable a return of the Left Opposition to active work in the Soviet Union.
For Support of Bruening?—A Stalinist Slander!
Question: You have been reported as urging the Communists in Germany to support the Bruening Government as a means of staving off the victory of Hitlerism—is that true? Why do you consider the present policy of German communism erroneous? **Answer:** Dispatches to the effect that I have urged the German Communists to support the Government of Bruening are, of course, false. The Stalin press has attributed this plan to me, and the idea has been taken up by journalists who do not understand the situation. I proposed to the German Communists to carry out the policy of the so-called United Front. The Communists ought to propose to the Social-Democrats and to the trade unions led by them a program of cooperative, practical struggle against the attack of the Fascists. The Social-Democratic masses quite sincerely desire to wage such a struggle. If the leaders refuse, they will compromise themselves in the eyes of their own masses. If the leaders agree the masses, in practical action, will go beyond their leaders and support the Communists. One must

Railroads & Strike Policy

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 efficiency" and cooperation with the company policy have been put into effect with the consent of the labor officials. Stool-pigeonism is encouraged by the so-called merit mark system. Wage cuts have been voluntarily accepted by the labor leaders for the health of "our industry, or for some other equally foolish excuse. Strikes have been called on a number of small roads and been neglected and permitted to drag on aimlessly for years and finally forgotten. No attempt was made to spread these strikes, so they could be won. There was no picketing, and cars were delivered to and received from these striking roads by union workers on other lines. As a matter of fact, the class collaboration policy has practically wrecked the railroad unions and their only function at present is to collect dues from the members for the benefit of the salaried officials.
 However, there is a marked reaction manifesting itself among the members against this cooperation and surrender policy and signs are pointing to the formation of a growing organized minority in the railroad unions who will sooner or later be able to relegate the 15,000 dollar-a-year bureaucrats, with their cooperation policy, to the political dung heap.

—A. E.

learn to make use of disagreements in the camp of opponents and enemies. Only with a policy as flexible as this is it possible to rise step by step to the top. Strategy involves maneuvers as well as assault. I have not the slightest doubt that the German Communist party, in spite of the resistance of the Stalin bureaucracy, will learn this strategy, through which alone bolshevism was able to win the power in Russia.
The Present Crisis: Its effects on Europe and America
Question: What is your view of the present world economic crisis and its implications for the prevailing social order? Do you still look for world revolution as a likely consequence of the crisis or do you believe that capitalism may surmount the crisis and enter upon a period of stabilization? What would be the situation of Soviet Russia in event of stabilization? Has not the world economic crisis placed Soviet Russia before the need of revising her own economic policies? **Answer:** The present economic crisis is an indubitable expression of the fact that world capitalism has outlived itself as a system. The question of the historic date when it will be replaced by another system will be decided, of course, in different ways for different parts of the world. Present-day Europe has no way out. Even though the automatic working of the laws of the market lead to a softening of the crisis in Europe after a year or two, the crisis will return again in a comparatively short time with redoubled force. The productive forces are being strangled in the national cells of Europe. The dilettante plan of M. Briand for a union of Europe has not emerged and never will emerge from the laboratory of the chancelleries and editorial offices. The ruling classes will cure the crisis with a further economic declination of Europe and a strengthening of protectionism and militarism. Under

The Communists and the Agrarian Crisis

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 first concentrated in the developing cities and later, with the development of capitalism, reach out and invade the countryside as agricultural workers almost to the degree that capitalist production subordinate agriculture and molds it to its own liking. "The advent of capital as an independent and leading power in agriculture does not take place generally all at once, but gradually and separately in various lines of production. It seizes first not agriculture proper, but such lines of production as cattle raising, especially sheep raising, whose principle product, wool, offers a steady surplus of the market price over the price of production during rising industry, and this is not balanced until later. This was the case in England during the 16th Century." Marx: Capital, Vol. 3, page 931)
 In the first stage of production, its forces work destructively against the pre-capitalist condition of the unity of agriculture and manufacturing. But once it has smashed this relationship, it starts the process of unifying capitalist industry and capitalist agriculture on a new plane. Developed capitalism lays the base for the transformation of agriculture into a modern industry. In the negative sense this is already accomplished in advanced America, but in the positive sense it is not, and will not be until after the seizure of power by the proletariat and the establishment of the socialist mode of production.
The Agrarian Crisis
 What is the relationship between agriculture and industry in America and what is the meaning of the agrarian crisis? The agrarian crisis seems to be a permanent feature of American capitalism, and logically so, because it is by the phenomena of the concentration of capital (and land capital is no exception) that American capitalism is further transforming American agriculture to its own liking. The centralization carries with it a greater diversification of the division of social labor, with different sections specializing in different food-stuffs, even through diversified uses of the soil, in order to rotate crops for the greatest exploitation of the capital invested.
 "It is the nature of the capitalist mode of production to reduce the agricultural population continually as compared to the non-agricultural, because in industry, (strictly speaking) the increase of the constant capital compared to the variable capital goes hand in hand with an absolute increase, though relative decrease, of the variable capital: whereas

Youth Club Activities

YOUTH CLUB
 A class in the A B C of Communism will hold its first session Sunday, March 13, 330 P. M., at 84 E. 10th St. This class has been arranged by the Spartacus Youth Club. Comrade George Ray will be the instructor. All young workers and students who are interested are invited to attend. The Spartacus Youth Club itself will meet at the same address on Sunday, March 13, at 5 P. M. A lecture by comrade Joseph Carter on "The Role of the Socialist Party" will be given. Extensive discussion will follow. The program of discussions for the next few meetings are as follows: March 20, "The Events in the Far East"; March 27, "The History of the Russian Revolution"—a discussion on Trotsky's book

these circumstances I see no prospect of a general stabilization of European capitalism.
Question: How do you view the position of the United States in the present world situation? **Answer:** I think as a result of the present crisis the pre-dominance of American over European capitalism will grow still more pronounced. In the same way, as a result of every crisis, you see a growth in the predominance of the big enterprise over the small, the trust over the isolated undertaking. However, this inevitable growth of the world hegemony of the United States will entail further deep contradictions both in the economy and in the politics of the great American Republic. In asserting the dictatorship of the dollar over the whole world the ruling class of the United States will introduce the contradictions of the whole world in a very basis of its own dominance. The economy and the politics of the United States will depend more and more directly upon crises, wars and revolutions in all parts of the world. The position of "observer" cannot long be maintained formally. I think that America will create the most colossal system of land, sea and air militarism that can be imagined. The conclusive emergence of America from its old "provincialism," the struggle for markets, the growth of armaments, and active world policy, the experience of the present crisis—all these things will inevitably introduce deep changes into the inner life of the United States. The emergence of a labor party is inevitable. It may begin to grow with an "American tempo," leading to the liquidation of one of the two old parties just as the Liberals have disappeared in England.
 To sum it up, you must say the Soviet Union will be Americanized technically, Europe will either be Sovietized or descend to barbarism, the United States will be Europeanized politically.

The Illusions of the Anglo-Russian Committee

However, the "Leftism" of 1924 soon converted itself into its opposite, the period of the opportunism of the Right-Center Bloc. Here Trotsky examines the mistakes committed by the Stalin-Bucharin leadership in the maneuvers with the Anglo-Russian Committee. The Left Opposition condemned the policy on the Anglo-Russian Committee not because it is opposed to the united front tactic, as the Right wing stupidly asserts, but because of the illusions with which it was invested. "The Anglo-Russian Committee was perceived not as a purely episodic bloc of leaders that would inevitably have to be and would be demonstratively broken at the first serious test in order to compromise the General Council. No, not only Stalin, Bucharin, Tomsky and others, but also Zinoviev saw in it a long-lasting 'friendship,' an instrument for the systematic revolutionization of the English working masses, and if not the gate, at least the threshold of the gate over which the revolution of the English proletariat

BOOK REVIEW

«The Strategy of the World Revolution»

The Strategy of the World Revolution (Part I of the "Criticism of the Draft Program of the C. I." by Leon Trotsky
 Published by the C. L. of A. Opposition)
 New York City, 1931

This important document which was originally the second section of the Criticism of the Draft Program of the Communist International was published in the United States by the Left Opposition nearly a year and a half ago. The reason for its publication subsequent to the appearance of the two other sections of the criticism (published as The Draft Program of the Communist International, A Criticism of Fundamentals) was, as is related in the introduction, its complete suppression by the Stalin-Bucharin bloc so that the American Left Opposition was totally unaware of its existence. In the four years since it was written, far from having diminished in its usefulness in relation to the developments of the world revolution, it has, on the contrary, become more valuable, particularly when revolution is again being placed on the order of the day in Europe.

Trotsky on the Character of Our Epoch

Without understanding the nature of the epoch in which we live, the manner and tempo in which events unfold themselves, the enormous weight of the subjective factor in accelerating, precipitating, or retarding changes in the international situation, and without drawing the strategic lessons from the revolutionary convulsions of the post-war period and the Russian revolution, a repetition of the defeats of the world revolution are unavoidable. It is precisely upon these crucial questions that the program of the Communist International fails to give an adequate answer. "Without an extensive, general, dialectical comprehension of the present epoch as an epoch of abrupt turns," writes Trotsky, "a real education of the young parties, a correct strategic leadership of class struggles, a correct application of tactics and a sharp and bold right about face at a turn of the situation, is impossible. And it is just at such a turn that in two or three days often decides the destiny of the world revolution for years to come."

Events in Germany are now converging toward such a decisive point. For this reason the lessons of the defeat of 1923 which Trotsky succinctly reviews in this pamphlet assumes extraordinary timeliness. The German party was unable to reorientate itself toward mobilizing for the seizure of power in 1923 after it had been directed by the Third Congress toward the conquest of the masses through daily work in the trade unions, in parliament, in factories, in the press and so on. The party was confronted with what Trotsky calls the crisis of the revolutionary leadership on the eve of the transition to armed uprising. Elements of the leadership and middle layers of the party succumb to the furious assaults of bourgeois public opinion, to its material and ideological terror, and vacillate at the moment the party must proceed unhesitatingly into the armed struggle.

After the opportune moment had been missed in Germany, the Comintern leadership instead of recognizing that, as a result of the defeat, they were confronted with a new stage in which it was necessary to retreat, to consolidate one's positions, to wage defensive struggles, entered upon a policy of ultra-Left adventurism. It was at this time in 1924 that Stalin declared: "The social democracy is an objectively more moderate wing of Fascism." But it was not until 1929, when the "third period" swept in that this original idea of Stalin ripened into the flourishing theory of "social-Fascism."
The Illusions of the Anglo-Russian Committee
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Young Spartacus Affair

YOUTH AFFAIR
 On Saturday, March 26, at 8 P. M., a youth affair will be held at The Militant headquarters, 84 East 10th St., for the benefit of Young Spartacus, youth organ of the Left Opposition. All comrades are assured of a good time. There will be dancing, entertainment, and refreshments. The affair is being held under the auspices of the Spartacus Youth Club.
FOR INFORMATION ON THE YOUTH MOVEMENT READ YOUNG SPARTACUS

would stride." Stalin conceived the bloc as a means of preventing military intervention of the imperialist powers in the Soviet Union.
 The chapter on "The Maneuverist Character of Revolutionary Strategy" illuminates a tactic that has been systematically abused by the Right wing and deeply confused by the Centerists. Trotsky with scathing irony ridicules those corps of maneuver specialists who imagine that by maneuvers they can solve all the big questions of the class struggle. "Once and for all it must be impressed that a maneuver never decides anything in great matters . . . A correct maneuver can only facilitate the decision by giving the possibility of gaining time or of attaining greater results with smaller forces. Difficulties in principle, on the contrary, cannot be overcome with the aid of a maneuver." What should be the attitude toward the so-called ally? "In a maneuver, one must always proceed from the very worst assumptions with regard to one's adversary to whom concessions are made, or with regard to the dubious ally with whom arrangements are concluded, and not from the best. It must be constantly borne in mind that the ally can perhaps become an enemy by tomorrow." And above all, in every maneuver the independence of the party must be maintained.
 Trotsky devotes a chapter to the question of the party regime. In a thoroughly dialectical manner he analyzes the question of groups and factions within the party, shows under what conditions they arise, and under what conditions they are absent; analyzes the question of Bolshevization and leadership, the relation between the C. P. S. U. and the parties of the West. After all the monstrous perversions on these basic questions by the bureaucratic apparatus it is indeed refreshing to read these lines, so lucid and so Marxian.
 —G. R.

Lectures on the History of the Communist International

On Wednesday evening, March 16th at 8 P. M., comrade Shachtman will give the second of his series of eight lectures on the History of the Communist International. This lecture will deal with the first congress of the International held in 1919. Comrades and sympathizers who intend to attend this lecture would do well to read "The Manifesto of the Moscow International" which was signed in Moscow in March 1919 by comrade Lenin, Trotsky, Platten, Zinoviev and Rakovsky.
A Series of Eight Popular Lectures
 by
 M a x S h a c h t m a n
 March 16th—The Founding of the New International
 The First Congress—1919
 March 23rd—The Twenty-One Conditions of the International
 The Second Congress—1920
 March 30th—The Struggle for the Conquest of the Masses
 The Third Congress—1921
 April 6th—The Last Leninist Congress
 The Fourth Congress—1922
 April 13th—The First Victory of the Right-Center Reaction
 The Fifth Congress—1924
 April 20th—The Triumph of the Epi-gones
 The Sixth Congress—1928
 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.
 \$1 for the course
 Admission 15c per lecture

Glotzer's National Tour

In the west comrade Glotzer's national tour has met with success as well as with some difficulties. In St. Louis the meeting was held in the main public library hall with better than 100 workers in attendance. This attendance gives testimony to the growing interest in Communism displayed by the workers there. This became further evident in the discussion following the lecture with many questions addressed to the speaker touching upon the fundamental proletarian problems.
 In the mine field of Illinois comrade Glotzer met some difficulties. Our most active comrade had to be away from the preparatory work to take part in negotiations of the union scale committee. In addition, and most important much intimidation already exists amongst the miners, further intensified by the latest Communist persecutions. Under such conditions, as could be expected, the meeting became small but nevertheless gave an opportunity to discuss some of the workers' problems with the live wires present.
 There were additional difficulties in Kansas City which were also of the character hitting the Communist movement as a whole. Our comrades were actually unable, even after much effort, to secure a hall. The meeting therefore had to be held in a private but spacious house. It was the same house where one of the existing unemployment councils meet. While it is located a good deal out of the way there was nevertheless an attendance of about 40 workers who took serious part in the questions discussed.