# Perspectives Of Marxism

# Open Letter by Leon Trotsky to V. F. Calverton on the Revolutionary Intellectuals ogical old clothes of the past, the more

Revolution", and read it with interest such suchs is a waste of time. What we and to be doomed to demoralization. On elevation of revolutionary theory to new of the six-hour day slogan and even fact that the forces of class relations as well as advantage to myself. Your are talking about are the other, more seri- this subject, I hope we shall not have heights can be looked for in the next state that it is necessary to pay attenarguments against the American ous Marxists, who are in no way inclined any differences with you. vincing, certain of them are really splen- whom the present Communist party dis- great theoretical tradition and that is inquiry, what you wanted from me was, reaucratism and lack of genuine revolu- ed Marxist studies the differences be- years its national center of gravity sevary importance.

By its character and structure, your to criticize it? pamphlet was most appropriate for the thinking representatives of the academic youth. To ignore this group would, in INTELLECTUALS TO QUANDARY any case, be out of the question: on the contrary, it is necessary to know it and talk to it in its language. However, you of the present leadership of the Comyourself have frequently emphasized in munist International and of its American this study those thoughts which are ele- section are too evident to require emmentary to a Marxist that the overthrow phasis. In any case, it is impossible and of capitalism can be affected only by the useless to repeat within the framework proletariat. The revolutionary education of this letter what is said on this theme of its vanguard, you rightly proclaim as in a series of independent works.\* All the chief task. But in your pamphlet, questions of theory, strategy, tactics and I do not find the bridge to that task, nor organization end by becoming the object any indication of the direction in which it of deep divergences within Communism. must be sought.

### CALVERTON OMITS

### REVOLUTIONARY REALITIES

yes and no. In its essence your little in the Soviet Union every difference with portant is it to elaborate for oneself a book represents an answer to that kind of the current ruling group leads to imme- clear understanding of the theory and petty bourgeois radical (in America they diate expulsion from the party and to practice of the Anglo-Russian commitseem to be wearing out the threadbare State repressions. The Marxist intellitee, of the "third period", of "socialname of liberals) who is ready to ac- gentsia in the United States as well as Fascism", of the "democratic dictatorcept the boldest social conclusion on con- in other countries is placed before an ship" in Spain, and the policy of the undition that they involve no political ob- alternative; either tacitly and obediently ited front. The study of the past is in ligation. Socialism? Communism? An- to support the Communist International the last analysis justified by the fact archism? All very good but in no other as it is, or to be included in the camp of that it helps one to orientate himself in way than that of reform. To transform the counter revolution and the "social- the present. from top to bottom society, morality, the Fascists". A part of the intelligentsia family? Splendid! but by all means chooses the first way; with closed or to pass by the congresses of the First with the permision of the White House half-closed eyes, it follows the official International. But a thousand times and of Tammany. Against these preten- Party. Another part wanders without a more urgent is the study of the living tious and fruitless tendencies you deve- party home, defends where it can the differences concerning the Amsterdam lop as said before, a victorious argumen- Soviet Union from stander, and occupies anti-war congress of 1932. What is the tation. But this dispute thereby inevit- itself with abstract sermons in favor of ably takes on the character of a domestic the revolution without indicating through warmest sympathy for the Soviet Union debate in an intellectual club where which gate they can go to meet it The there is a reformist and a Marxist wing. difference between these two groups, the methods of its defense? So thirty and forty years ago in Peters- however, is not so great. On both sides burg and Moscow the academic Marxist it is an abdication from the creation of disputed with academic Populist: must an independent opinion and from the Russia pass through the stage of capi- courageous struggse for it, which is pretalism or not? How much water has cisely where the revolutionary begins. flowed over the dam since that time! On both sides we have a type of fellow-The very necessity of taking the question tarveler and not an active builder of the as you do in your pamphlet throws a proletarian party. Certainly, a fellowglaring light on the political backward- traveler is better than an enemy. But a ness of the United States, technological- Marxist cannot be a fellow-traveler of ly the most advanced country in the the revolution, and besides, the experiworld. Insofar as you neither can nor ence of history bears witness that in have the right to tear yourself out of the most decisive moments the storm of the American background, there is no re- the struggle hurls the majority of the proach in my words.

nothing about them Your pamphlets barricades. does not mention a word about the so- MARXISM NO DOGMAcalled Socialist party, nor the Communists, nor the transitional formations, not GUIDE TO ACTION to speak of the struggling factions within Communism. This means that you are talking to nobody in particular and calling them to nowhere in particular. You explain the inevitability of the revolution, but the intellectual who is convinced by you can quietly smoke his cigarette to the end and go on to the order of the day. Insofar there is in my words an element of reproach.

I would not put this circumstance in the first place if it did not seem to me it from your articles is typical of a nifies to ignore the activity which quite numerous and theoretically very valuable stratum of left intelligentsia in the United States.

# INTELLECTUALS FEAR

# CONSEQUENCES OF CLARITY

as a tool of the proletarian revolution it is, they acomplish a progressive and Volumes two and three of the History is evidently out of the question. With- praiseworthy work. For a Marxist rev- of the Russian Revolution by comrade out having achieved in the slightest de- olutionary, it is absolutely insufficient. Trotsky will be out in January. The gree the power of European reformism, The task of the October revolution, do price of a boxed set of all three is American Social-Democracy has appro- not forget, has not yet been accomplish \$10.00. They may be bought singly or priated all its vices, and barely passed ed. Only a parrot can find satisfaction in sets or two at a time. childhood, has already fallen into what in the repetition of the words, "the vic- We know that a great many of our the Russians call "dog-senility". I hope tory is assured". No, it is not assured! comrades and readers are anxious to that you will agree with this evaluation The victory is a problem of strategy. read and study these books but are un- THE PUBLISHING FUND and perhaps explain these considerations There is no book which indicates in ad- able to pay for them at one blow. For on many future occasions. But in the vance the correct orbit for the first work- them we offer the following arrangepamphlet "For Revolution" you did not ers' State. The head does not and can- ment: they may begin now to pay for speak a word about Social-Democracy. not exist which can contain the com- them on an installment plan; when they purpose will be used exclusively for Why? It seems to me because, after plete formula for Socialist society. The have paid up we will ship them copies speaking of Social-Democracy, you would roads of economy and politics must still of the volumes they want. We would early to speak of a publishing fund. But following our expulsion, the policy behave had to give an evaluation of the be determined through experience and like to ship the books on credit but that is the direction in which we are came completely emasculated. Instead Communist party too and this is not only created collectively, that is, in permanent we are unable to do so. Our very bad headed. This can very well be the bea delicate but also an exceedingly re- conflicts of ideas. A Marxist who limits financial situation makes it impossible ginning of it. The idea is to raise a had the withdrawal of the militant minsponsible question, which imposes obliga- himself to a summary sympathy, without to invest any money in this. We will tions and leads to consequences. Per- taking part in the struggle on questons keep accurate records and issue receipts tion of literature. haps I may be mistaken in thinking so of collectivization, industrialization, the as we go along. There will be no erwith respect to you personally but many regime of the Party, etc., stands no rors from this end. American Marxists obviously and higher than the progressive bourgeois of THE UNEMPLOYMENT PAMPHLET ostentatiously avoid fixing their posi- the type of Duranty, Louis Fischer, etc., The raging financial crisis has made tion with respect to the Party. They but on the contrary, lower because he it necessary to postpone for a while the consider themselves friends of the Soviet misuses the name of revolutionary. Union, sympathize with Communism, write articles about Hegel and the in- man's buff with great problems, to re- ago. From the enthusiasm which greetevitability of the revolution and that is main diplomatically silent and wait, or ed our announcement we know that a reprint of the Draft Program and the ing the reactionaries gained at the exall. Still that is not enough, since the still worse, to quiet oneself with the many will be keenly disappointed by Strategy as one work, which they really pense of the revolutionists. In the instrument of the revoution is the party, thought that the present struggle within this delay. But it could not be helped are. is it not?

I would not like to be misunderstood. Under the tendency to avoid the pracfor personal well-being. Admittedly, by the Pioneer Publishers. The paper end of January. It will be about twenty- again. there are many quasi-Marxists whom the as well as the publishing house belongs four pages, printed on newsprint, and Communist party repels by its aim of to the Communist League of America will sell for five cents. We will sell USE THE CLUB PLAN. GET SUBS bringing the revolution out of the dis- (126 E. 16th Street, New York City). | them from New York in lots of not less FOR THE MINERS.

cussion club into the street. But to dis- bitions, means to protect mental laziness, I have received your pamphlet, "For pute about a revolutionary party with to yield to the worst Philistine prejudice, will strike. And it is near. The over, they will consider the advisability trade union unity fully cognizant of the "knights of pure reform" are very con- to be scared by revolutionary action, but The policy of the proletariat has willing to grant your request since the which stands furthest to the Left, which problems of American Marxism have ac- is bound up with the Soviet Union and quired at the present time an extraordin- which represents it in a certain sense. Is it right to attack it, is it permissible

## STALINISM DRIVES

The opportunist and adventurist vices Three fundamental factions have been formed, which have succeeded in demon-Yet at the same time there is a re- emy's camp. If they still return, it is technology; it is necessary to build Engels: "The porridge is beginning to intellectual fellow-travelers into the enproach, since, beside pamphiets and clubs only after the victory has been conso. bridges. What would be thought of a boil, and the transfer of the center of where academic discussions for and lidated. Maxim Gorky is the most color- young doctor who, instead of working in the International to the United States against revolution are carried on, in the ful but not the only example. In the the operating room, would satisfy him- will yet be justified finally". Several the question of attitude toward the two ranks of the American proletariat, with present Soviet apparatus, incidentally, self with reading the biographies of great days later, Engels answered him: "Only main problems: the organization of the all the backwardness of its movement, clear up to the top a very important surgeons of the past? What would Marx twelve years after the abolition of bond unorganized and activity within the A there are different political, and among percentage of people stood fifteen years have said about a theory which, instead slavery, and the movement has already F of L. Essentially the policy of organi-

teaches how to change it. The will is the self-sufficient American provincialism is ical and generalizing thought, and permoving element in the domain of knowl- in any case nearing its end. Those com- haps in not so long a time as from the for our orientation. But this question edge, too. If Marxism loses its will to monplaces which invariably nourished transfer of the theoretical center of the transform political reality, it loses the American political thought in all its ramability to understand it. The Marxist ifications are completely worn out. All who, for one secondary consideration or classes need a new orientation. A radianother, does not carry his conclusion to cal renewal, not only of the circulating spectives! the end, betrays Marxism. To overlook but also of the fixed capital of political the different Communist factions, so as ideology, is imminent. If the Americans Prinkipo, Nov. 4, 1932 L. TROTSKY. not engage and compromise oneself, sigthrough all its contradictions, forms the vanguard of the class; it signifies to cover oneself with the abstraction of the revolution, as with a shield, from the blows and bruises of the real revolution-

When the Left bourgeois journalists To talk of the Hillquit-Thomas party summarily defend the Soviet Republic as REVOLUTION

Bolshevism is a question of personal am-

bookworm but a proletarian revolutionary, it is a thousand times more important and urgent for him to elaborate for to 1932. It was precisely on that question that the struggle within Bolshevism first reached the state of an explosion. Impossible to be a Marxist without taking a position in a question on which depends the fate of the Chinese revolution and of the Indian, too, that is, the future of almost half of humanity!

## AMERICAN MARXISM

### AT CROSS ROADS

It is very useful to study, let us say, the old differences among Russian Marxists on the character of the future Russtrating their character in the course of sian revolution; naturally, according to the great events and problems of recent first hand authorities, and not the ignoryears. The struggles among them have ant and disloyal compilations of the epi-Is this a reproach on my part? Both taken on all the sharper character since gones. But incommensurably more im-

Impermissible for Marxist theoretician value, in effect, of the sincerest and if it is accompanied by indifference to

Is there now a theme more important for a revolutionary, more gripping, more burning, than the struggle and the fate of the German proletariat? Is it possible, on the other hand, to fix one's relations to the problems of the German revolution while passing by the differences Communism? A revolutionary who has no opinion on the policies of Stalin-Thaelmann is not a Marxist. A Marxist is not a revolutionary.

them, revolutionary groupings. You say ago openly on the other side of the of deepening revolutionary practice, achieved such acuteness!" They both, zation of the unorganized adopted by the Most probably he would repeat his sar- in the other cases, they were wrong as we, who are today in the Left Opposicastic sentence, "No, I am not a Marx- to tempo, but not as to direction. The tion, had a considerable part, still re-

persist in their backwardness in the domain of Socialist theory, it does not mean that they will remain backward always. It is possible to venture without much the Yankees are satisfied with the ideoltic East and America.

The proletarian movement has displaced did. But, so far as I understand your quiets by its low theoretical level, bu- one of the sources of its power. A train- in the course of the last hundred-odd not literary compliments, but a poli- tionary initiative. At the same time, tween Engels and Lassalle with regard eral times. England, France, Germany, tical evaluation. I shall be all the more they say to themselves, that is the party to the European war of 1859. It is nec- Russia-this was the historical sequence ting off minorities versus the issue of the curves and territory traversed. We essary to do so. But if he is not a of the home of Socalism and Marxism. pedant of Marxist historiography, not a The present revolutionary begemony of Russia can least of all claim a durable various parties. That is not only in- or formula which will fit the various character. The fact itself of the existence of a Soviet Union, especially before opments of the class struggle but also tactics and our methods while fitting himself an independent opinion about the the proletarian victory in one of the adrevolutionary strategy in China from 1925 vanced States, has naturaly an immeastern. urable mportance for the workers' movement of all countries. But the immediate party has attained a mass basis. But influence of the Moscow ruling faction it has, of course, pursued the Cominupon the Communist International has altern policy of splitting the trade unions. ready become a brake on the development The independent, "revolutionary" un- trades unions in the form of proposing of the world proletariat. The fertilizing ions failed to attract the masses. Con- a united front leading to a merger beideology of Bolshevism has been red sequently the German delegation went placed by the stifling pressure of the to the fifth RILU congress with the apparatus. It is not necessary to prove slogan to "conquer Lozovsky but not to as a step toward unity, that the industhe disastrous consequences of this re- annihilate him". They counted on the trial union should declare its readiness gime: it suffices to point to the leader- support of Piatnitzky. But that was ship of the American Communist Party. before Stalin intervened. After that the on the condition of trade union dem-The liberation from the witless bureau- idea of splitting and creating indepen- ocratic rights being guaranteed. In this cratic command has become a question dent unions all along the line won out there is no change of general policy; of life and death for the revolution and completely. One of the German dele- only the formula for realization of unfor Marxism.

of its own country too. In a certain that was yesterday." in American soil, to verify it against the ary cadres. events of American history, to explore Should these shifting winds not fully with the UMW of A but of the various revolution. A great work! It is time to direction. We will not contend

On the occasion of strikes in the Uniwho has an opinion but remains silent ted States, where the decomposing center of the First International was trans-It is not enough to preach the utility of ferred, Marx wrote, on July 25, 1877 to tion than heretofore. would serve to separate one from it? Marx and Engels, were wrong. But as party in 1928, in the shaping of which All the evidence is that the present the ocean begins to boil; the turn in the field have not grown less today but have It is necessary to remember that crisis will be a great milestone in the development of American capitalism will rather increased. That will be even more Marxism both interprets the world and political road of the United States. The inevitably provoke a blossoming of crit-International to New York.

Before the American Marxist open virtually grandiose, breath-taking per-

With sincere greetings,

# Pioneer Publishers Notes

# HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN

publication of the two popular Marxist tion Stands For by comrade Shachtman; leading strings. This could serve only To avoid direct answers, to play blind pamphlets we announced a short time We are getting around to the first one. \* I permit myself to refer you to a ing Class by comrade Swabeck. If we ducks and drakes with our plans. But mine fields new independent unions have tical consequences of a clear position, I New York weekly paper, The Militant, are able to keep anywhere near your the publishing fund is the key to the replaced the TUUL. And to complete

sive cost of postage which is terrific.

Comrades may order now. It will help mining conditions for unity. considerably. The funds raised for this getting out the pamphlet. It is too correct party policy. But, subsequently,

# OUR SCHEDULE

period to getting out the following organize "revolutionary" unions from works: after the unemployment pam- the top down which all remained numphlet will come What the Left Oppost erically small, sectarian and kept in Soviet Economy by comrade Trotsky: the A F of L bureaucracy leaving it The Only Road by comrade Trotsky; and in undisputed control. Generally speak-

Unemployment and the American Work- for these. The financial crisis plays trades the A F of L has gained. In the am far from understanding the concern and a series of books and leaflets issued schedule it should be out toward the problem. We will return to this theme the picture practically the same condi-

# The A. F. L. and Union Unity

## risk a contrary phophecy: the longer The Stalinist Policies Fail to Meet the Test of the Situation

(Continued from page 1) powerful will be the impetus of their, boration unions instead of company unrevolutionary thought when its hour ions. That marks an advance. More position proceeds with the slogan of

### Will There Be a Change of Policy

union policy, and in particular, the method of making the curves encounterquestion of independent unions by split- ed depends entirely upon the nature of trade union unity is due for some seri- are not bound in advance, nor can we ous attention by the Comintern and the lay down in advance, any specific form dicated in the compelling force of devel- situation which arise. Our slogans, our in the shifting winds within the Comin- into a general strategy must also be

In Germany, for example, the official) gates reproached Piatnitzky: "But com- ity has changed and, of necessity, so You are totally right; the vanguard of rade Piatnitzky you spoke yesterday in as to correspond to the relation of the American proletariat must come to an entirely different vein." Whereupon forces which have become more favorbase itself on the revolutionary traditions the latter answered laconically: "Yes, able to the Right wing. The proposal

sense we can admit the slogan, "Ameri- But within the Comintern the turn canize Marxism!" It does not mean, toward the Right has since become more to the A F of L while the present dircertainly, to submit its foundations and unmistakable. Many of the lesser bu- ectly implies inclusion within it. Such methods to revision. The attempt of Max reaucrats, who want an end to the pol- questions, of course, must also be deter-Eastman to throw overboard the mater- icy of trade union splits, are therefore ialistic dialectic in the interests of the again turning upon Lozovsky, not mere-"engneering art of revolution" repre- ly to conquer him, but also to annihilsents an obviously hopeless and in its ate him. The formula, by which he won possible consequences retrograde adven- them over in the past; that just as the ture. The system of Marxism has com- revolutionary unions are schools for pletely passed the test of history. Es- Communism so are the reformist unions pecially now, in the epoch of capitalist schools for capitalism; that formula is forces within became the majority and decline-of wars and revolutions, storms now used as the noose with which to found no alternative but the formation of and shocks—the materialistic dialectic hang him and his policy. But such a new, independent union. Nevertheless fully reveals its indestructible force. To methods of change, of course, can not the unity issue is posed there and has Americanize Marxism signifies to root it serve at all to educate the revolution- been advanced correctly by the Left Op-

by its methods the problems of American succeed in affecting a change at this new miners unions against it, and in economy and politics, to assimilate the moment we may expect that the actual this sense also against the A F of L world revolutionary experience under the forces of class relations will soon exert In this field, as elsewhere, the formula viewpoint of the tasks of the American a sufficiently strong pressure in that for the realization of unity must corapproach it with the shirt-sleeves rolled the question of these independent, "rev. cause it is primarily determined by the olutionary" unions and the liquidation relation of forces. But while the forof that kind of splitting policy is posed mula is quite different from that of the as acutely here as, for example, in Ger-needle trades it is still essentially many. Not at all. Nor do we attempt same general policy. to draw a direct analogy. But we do To the party leadership these quescontend that the increased speed of the tions are still anathema. Can they reclass relations in motion compels much main so very long? Obviously not. It more serious consideration of this ques- will also be compelled to take cogniz-

The Unorganized and the A. F. of L. great porridge from the other side of mains correct. The potentialities in this

sembling a mass character is the A F of L and the kindred unions of the railroad brotherhoods. It would be foolish to contend that things will always remain so. As a matter of fact, as the A F of L has constantly become narrow ed down toward embracing skilled trades exclusively, it is well to pay attention to the possibilities of organization within the basic and unorganized industries arising entrely as a new movement. That than five. Postage will be extra. In should also mean possibilities for a new lots of ten and more we will give a militant base. But even that gives no reduction of two cents on a pamphlet. reason whatever to assume that the A A lot of ten will sell for thirty cents F of L will pass out of existence. Nor plus postage if ordered from us at one should the revolutionary policy be pretime. Comrades who order a lot of dicated upon that. On the contrary, five or more can sell them one at a even the most favorably variant of futime, of course. The idea behind the lot ture possibilities would still not eliminrequirement is to cut down the exces- ate the question of trade union unity. If the revolutionets are able to build up some strength within the unions they will also be able to participate in deter-

These, in general, were our views ions. The TUEL was taken off its path as the center of the Left wing within the mass unions. It was trans-This fund will be devoted in the next formed into a revolutionary center to South, whatever unionism is left is in We are unable to assign dates now the hands of the A F of I. In the needle tions obtain throughout the union field.

The Question of Trade Union Unity open for questions which were answered by comrade Basky. This is the picture of devastation

wrought by a false trade union policy. And it is from this that the Left Opfew decades from two sources: the Asia- tion to the question of trade union un- cess of unity cannot remain the same at every stage or in every sphere. While revolutionists have the general road to In general the whole question of trade their goal definitely marked out, the so molded and applied that they barmonize with each specific stage of development. Two years ago the Left Opposition ad-

> tween the party directed industrial union and the ILGWU. Today we propose, to re-enter in a body into the ILGWU of two years ago did not attempt to define in a direct sense the relations mined primarily upon the basis of the relation of forces in each specific instance.

> vanced the unity slogan for the needle

In the minefields today, on the other hand, we have a situation of a different character. In the soft coal fields the UMW of A broke down, the rebel position. But it is an issue of unity not that respond to the existing conditions, be-

ance of the development of the relation of forces within the trade union field. In the future, the question of trade union Such consideration involves primarily policy will have more far-reaching implications.

If the revolutionary party is to have any influence upon the future course of the trade union movement it must, first of all, return to the policy of active work within this movement. It should now be in a position to draw a balance from its period of creation of new, "revolutionary unions". The result will, of course, appear quite negative; but it can and should become a starting point for a new orientation, an orientation toward trade union unity. Within that general orientation should be coordinated the ecorts of a correct policy ment; it demands a correct preparation of organization of the unorganized together with active work in building a Today the only trade union base re- Left wing within the existing mass

-ARNE SWABECK.

### PARTY MILITANT SPEAKS FROM PLATFORM OF OPPOSITION IN NEWARK, N. J.

A very interesting lecture was arranged by our Newark branch on Sunday, December 4, at the Hungarian Workers' Home. The lecture was delivered by comrade Basky on the subject of the world crisis and the immediate tasks of the Communist parties. An unusually large crowd turned out, among them many party members and sympathizers. Before the floor was turned over to the speaker, a party comrade, representing the Unemployed Council of Newark requested the floor to speak on outrageous brutalities the Hunger Marchers received at the hands of the authorities. He called upon the meeting to register its protest. Comrade Basky supported his call when we participated in shaping the and suggested the adoption of a resolution of protest, to be sent by the meeting to president Hoover, demanding the right of the Hunger Marchers to present their the meeting and sent by wire.

The lecture of comrade Basky, presenting the position of the Left Opposition on the world crisis and counterposing the Marxian-Leninist policies of the Left Opposition to those of the Stalinist leadership of the party, was followed by the audience with the greatest attention.

After the lecture comrade Nagy, chairman, called upon comrade Leitner, a well known functionary of the party. to present the position of the party on the same subject, offering him the floor for whatever time he deemed necessary for an adequate discussion of the question. Comrade Leitner spoke for forty minutes, quite objectively. He made a very sincere, but unsuccessful attempt to defend the Stalinist policies of the party. After his speech the floor was thrown