

Historical Objectiveness..

Everyone digests his food and oxygenates his blood. But not everyone will dare write a thesis about digestion and blood circulation. Not so with the social sciences. Since each person lives under the influence of the market and of the historic process in general, it is considered sufficient to possess common sense in order to write exercises on economic and especially historic-philosophic themes. As a general rule only "objectives" is demanded of an historical work. In point of fact whatever does bear this high-sounding title in the language of common sense, has nothing to do with scientific objectiveness.

The Philistine, especially if he is separated from the fighting arena by space and time, considers himself elevated above the fighting camps from the mere fact that he understands neither one of them. He sincerely takes his blindness regarding the working of historical forces for the height of impartiality, just as he is used to considering himself the normal measure of all things. Notwithstanding their documentary value, too many historical papers are being written according to this standard. A blunting of sharp edges, even distribution of light and shadow, a conciliatory moralizing, with a thorough disguising of the author's political sympathies, easily secures for a historical work the high reputation of "objectiveness."

In so far as the subject of investigation is a phenomenon as poorly recognizable with common sense as a revolution, this historical "objectiveness" dictates in advance its immutable conclusions: the cause of the disturbances lies in the fact that the conservatives were much too conservative, the revolutionaries much too revolutionary; the historical excesses called civil war can in the future, be avoided if the private owners will be more generous, and the hungry people more moderate. A book with such tendencies has a good effect on the nerves, especially during an epoch of world crisis.

The demand of science, and not of a parlor-philistine "objectives", really is that one should expose the social conditioning of historical events, no matter how unpleasant they may be for the nerves. History is not a dumping-ground for documents and moral maxims. History is a science no less objective than physiology. It requires not a hypocritical "impartiality" but a scientific method. One can accept or reject the materialistic dialectic as a method of historical science, but one must reckon with it. Scientific objectiveness can be and must be lodged in the very method itself. If the author did not manage its proper application it must be pointed out exactly where.

I attempted to base my History not on my own political sympathies, but on the material foundations of society. Revolution I considered as the process, conditioned by all the past, of the direct struggle of classes for power. The center of attention for me was those changes in the consciousness of the classes taking place under the effect of the feverish tempo of their own struggle. I considered political parties and political agents in no other light than that of mass shifts and clashes. Four parallel processes conditioned by the social structure of the country formed thus the background of the whole narrative; the evolution of the consciousness of the proletariat from February to October; the change of the moods in the army; a growth of the peasant vindictiveness; the awakening and insurgence of the oppressed nationalities. By revealing the dialectic of the consciousness of masses thrown out of equilibrium, the author ought to give the nearest immediate key to all the events of the revolution.

A literary work is "truthful" or artistic when the inter-relationships of the heroes develop, not according to the author's desires, but according to the latent forces of the characters and setting. Scientific knowledge differs greatly from the artistic. But the two also have some traits in common, defined by the dependence of the description on the thing described. An historical work is scientific when facts combine into one whole process which, as in life, lives according to its own interior laws.

Is the depiction of the classes of Russia true? Do these classes through their parties and politicians talk their own language? Do the events—naturally, without being forced—go back to the social source, i. e. to the struggle of living historic forces? Does the general conception of the revolution conflict with actual facts? I must admit with gratitude that a large number of critics have approached my work precisely from the standpoint of these really objective, i. e., scientific criteria. Their critical remarks may be right or wrong, but the great majority of them are fruitful.

It is not accidental, however, that those critics who miss "objectiveness" neglect completely the problem of historic determinism. They are really complaining about the "injustice" of the author toward his opponents, as if it were a question not of scientific research, but of a school report-card with marks for good conduct. One of the critics is offended for the monarchy, another for the liberals, a third for the compromisers. Since the sympathies of these critics got neither recognition nor indulgence from the actual reality in 1917, they would now like to find con-

solation in the pages of history; just as some people seek shelter from the blows of destiny in romantic literature. But the last thing the author had in mind was to interpret in his book the verdict of the historic process itself. The offended persons themselves, by the way, in spite of the fifteen or sixteen years which they have had at their disposal, have never attempted to explain the causes of what happened to them. The White emigration has not produced one single historical work worthy of the name. The cause of its misfortunes it still tries to find in "German gold", the illiteracy of the masses, the criminal plots of the Bolsheviks. The personal irritation of the apostles of objectiveness—I trust this is indisputable—must necessarily be the sharper, the more convincingly the historical narrative reveals the inevitability of their destruction and their want of any hope for the future.

The more cautious of these politically disappointed critics often disguise the source of their annoyance in complaints to the effect that the author of the History permits himself to use polemics and irony. That, they seem to think, is beneath the dignity of the scientific guild. But revolution itself is a polemic become a mass action. Nor is irony lacking to the historic process; during a revolution it can be measured in millions of horse-power. Speeches, resolutions, letters of those taking part, as well as their subsequent recollections, have necessarily a polemic character. There is nothing easier than to "reconcile" all this chaos of bitter struggle of interests and ideas according to the method of the golden mean; there is also nothing more fruitless. The author strove to define the true relative might in the course of the social struggle of all opinions, slogans, promises and demands by means of a critical (or, if you wish, polemical) sorting and cleaning. The individual he reduced to the social, the particular to the general, the subjective he confronted with the objective. This is exactly what history consists of in our opinion as a science.

There exists a quiet special group of critics who are offended personally for Stalin, and for whom history outside of that question does not exist. These people consider themselves "friends" of the Russian revolution. In reality they are merely attorneys for the Soviet bureaucracy. That is not the same thing. The bureaucracy grew stronger as the activity of the masses weakened. The power of the bureaucracy is an expression of the reaction against the revolution. It is true that this reaction is still developing on the foundations laid by the October revolution, but even so it is a reaction. The attorneys of the bureaucracy are often attorneys of the anti-October reaction. This is not altered by the fact that they perform their functions unconsciously.

Like shop-keepers grown rich who create for themselves a new and more suitable genealogy, the bureaucratic class which grew out of the revolution has created its own historiography. Hundreds of rotary presses are at its service. But its quantity does not make up for its scientific quality. Even to please the most disinterested friends of the Soviet authorities, I could not leave untouched those historic legends which are perhaps very flattering to the vanity of the bureaucracy, but which nevertheless have the misfortune to contradict facts and documents.

I shall confine myself to one single example which, as it seems to me, well illustrates the matter. A number of pages in my book are devoted to refuting the fairy-tale created after 1924 to the effect that I attempted to postpone the armed insurrection until after the Congress of Soviets, while Lenin, it

seems, backed by a majority of the Central Executive Committee, succeeded in having the insurrection carried out on the eve of the Congress. By adducing numerous evidences, mostly indirect, I tried to prove—and I think I undeniably did prove—that Lenin, cut off by his illegal status from the theatre of struggle, was too impatient to bring on the insurrection, separating it completely from the Congress of Soviets. I, on the other hand, backed by the majority of the Central Committee, tried to bring the insurrection as near as possible to the Congress of Soviets, and cover it with the latter's authority. With all its importance the disagreement was of a purely practical and temporary character. Later Lenin frankly admitted that he had been in the wrong.

While I was working on my History I did not have in hand the collection of speeches pronounced at the Moscow anniversary meeting of April 23, 1929, celebrating Lenin's 50th birthday. One of the pages in that book reads verbatim as follows: "We in the Central Committee decided to go ahead with reinforcing the Soviets, to summon the Congress of Soviets, to open the insurrection, and proclaim the Congress of Soviets the organ of state power. Ilych, who was then in hiding, did not agree and wrote (in the middle of September—L. D.) that ... the Democratic Conference must be dissolved and arrested. We understand that things were not so simple. ... All the holes, the pitfalls on our course were more visible to us. ... In spite of all Ilych's demands we went ahead with reinforcement, and on the 25th of October confronted the picture of an insurrection. Ilych smiling, slyly looking at us, said: 'Yes, you were right.'" (Fifteenth Anniversary of V. I. Ulyanov-Lenin, 1929, pp. 2728).

The above quotation is taken from a speech pronounced by none other than Stalin, some five years before he put into circulation the poisonous insinuation that I attempted to "belittle" the role of Lenin in the revolution of October 25th. If the just quoted document, which fully confirms my story (in cruder terms, it is true), had been in my hands a year ago, it would have relieved me of the necessity of adducing indirect and less authoritative proofs. But, on the other hand, I am content that this small book, forgotten by all, poorly printed on poor paper (1929, a heavy year!) happened into my hand so late. By this very fact it brings additional and very striking proof of the "objectiveness", or, more simply the truthfulness of my narrative, even in the sphere of those disputed questions of a personal character.

Nobody—I shall allow myself to state this in a most categorical manner—nobody has so far found in my narrative a violation of truthfulness which is the first commandment for historical, as well as all other narratives. Particular lapses are possible. Tendentious distortions—no! If it were possible to find in the Moscow archives even one single document directly or indirectly refuting or weakening my narrative, it would have been long ago translated and published in all languages. The adverse theorem is not hard to prove: all the documents in the least degree dangerous to the official legends are carefully kept out of sight. It is not surprising that the advocates of the Stalin bureaucracy, calling themselves friends of the October revolution have to make up for this lack of arguments by a surplus of zeal. But this type of criticism worries my scientific conscience least of all. Legends dissolve, facts remain.

—LEON TROTSKY.
Prinkipo, April 1, 1933.
(Translated by Max Eastman)

Relief Cut in New York
(Continued from page 1)
the face of the threat to cut off relief is a single, united unemployed organization that will be able to rally the whole million or more of jobless in the city solidly under its banner. That is the task for at present. That requires the immediate adoption by the Unemployed Councils of the unity basis put forward by the Chicago Conference, which last May created the national Federation of Unemployed Workers Leagues, in which the Stalinist participated. On this basis, they will be able to challenge the social reformists to enter into the united front and to hold them responsible before the masses of workers.

The establishment of such a genuine, Leninist united front—with freedom of expression and criticism for every labor tendency—will also enable the Communists to carry out the Communist task in the mass movement—that of educating broad layers of the working class with demonstrative class struggle facts in the futility and rottenness of the capitalist system and in the inevitability of the Communist way out of misery—the proletarian dictatorship.

The Tammany threat still impends. The need for the unity of the unemployed workers is indispensable, if it is to be defeated, if Tammany is to be prevented—by splitting the workers' ranks—from reducing the unemployed to a state where they get not enough to live and just too much to die. The task of the Communists is obvious—a frank and open, Leninist united front proposal to the reformists, which will be of permanent value insofar as it will permit the Communists to implant class consciousness within broad strata of the workers.

FROM CHINA
Preparations are being made here to reopen the Soviet Consulate building, which has stood deserted since 1927 when Sino-Soviet diplomatic relations were ruptured by the Nanking government. It will interest readers of the Militant to know that in the imposing reception hall of the building—when the latter was opened by the renovators—there were found a bust of Lenin and a large portrait of Leon Trotsky. The removal of the latter has evidently been overlooked up to now, but it will be absent for a certainty when the building is again officially opened, and doubtless a life-size portrait of Stalin will take its place. There is none at all there now. Stalin was evidently not thought of as a "great leader" by Soviet consular officials in China even as late as 1927.

FROM CHINA
Preparations are being made here to reopen the Soviet Consulate building, which has stood deserted since 1927 when Sino-Soviet diplomatic relations were ruptured by the Nanking government. It will interest readers of the Militant to know that in the imposing reception hall of the building—when the latter was opened by the renovators—there were found a bust of Lenin and a large portrait of Leon Trotsky. The removal of the latter has evidently been overlooked up to now, but it will be absent for a certainty when the building is again officially opened, and doubtless a life-size portrait of Stalin will take its place. There is none at all there now. Stalin was evidently not thought of as a "great leader" by Soviet consular officials in China even as late as 1927.

The Columbus Conference

(Continued from Page 1)
Unemployed Councils are associated (note the substitute for affiliation), and such other groups as are willing to cooperate in the unification of the unemployed organization into one organization through a Unity Convention."

We call attention to the fact that this official statement of the Council N. C., which had been circulated in leaflets from the first day on, was made before any national organization of Leagues was formed. Thus we see that the Stalinists for some reason or other saw fit to stop their earlier plea that "a new dual organization" be not set up. We also call attention to the fact that although both the Councils and Leagues are represented on the N. C. of the Federation, Amter and the Councils did not ask support and affiliation to the FUWLA; they proposed instead a Unity Convention for amalgamation, which unification should be prepared by a local "united front federations."

All the Stalinist-Musteite talk about preparing for "unity" and amalgamation without first of all having all the unemployed organizations work together in a National Federation for a long period of time is plain deception. Both of these groups are more interested in maintaining mechanical control of their own national movements for the furthering of their own "political" ends than they are in building one huge mass organization of unemployed workers on a national scale. When the Musteites and Stalinists refuse to support completely the national Federation movement they in fact refuse to take the most necessary step towards the complete unification and amalgamation of the unemployed; and all their talk about the fact that the FUWLA has not yet told them just how much representation they will get on its committees shows that neither of them believe that they will be able to long re-

tain their "leadership" if once they should happen to lose mechanical control of their movements.

While the Stalinists found it necessary to sabotage the work of the national Federation in a roundabout manner the Musteites merely used their machine for a steam roller. First the Resolution Committee which they controlled saw to it that no resolutions dealing with the question of affiliation, to the FUWLA came up until long after they had placed a new constitution before the convention and had it adopted. This constitution of the National Unemployed League contains a clause which leaves the whole question of unity, federation, etc., up to the incoming Musteite National Committee.

After this was adopted, a resolution by delegate Newby, asking that the convention affiliate the new organization which it had just set up to the FUWLA, was allowed to come before the convention for a short time. But this was only after the new organization had been set up and all of the officers' uncontested nominations. Moreover, a resolution from Rose of California dealing with the setting up of a provisional committee of federated and other delegates for the calling of a unity conference was just ignored in committee.

Budenz set the Musteite key-note by speaking against Newby's resolution for affiliation to FUWLA, and after Newby was permitted to speak, the Musteite chairman Lamuglia closed the discussion and railroaded Budenz's motion that the resolution be referred to the incoming National Committee. A "division of the house" was not permitted as such would have shown much more support for affiliation to the FUWLA than the mere hearing of "ayes" and "nays" showed. For example, if put to a vote the 8 delegates from California would have received 10 votes equal to the votes of the 307 from Ohio,

(Continued from Page 1)
endorsement of their BILL, they did not obtain an endorsement of the December meeting. Muste gained the most out of the united front from above. However, this much can be said, now that the Musteites have the executive committee and the power to make the decisions that the conference should have made, they will be able to complete the original agreement by the continuation of the united front from above. The bloc of Leagues and Councils lost at Columbus but they hope to make up for this by December.

The political tendencies primarily carried on a struggle around the three positions; of the Right wing, socialist grouping; the center, Musteite-Stalinist bloc and the Left wing around the National Federation of Unemployed which included the Left Opposition. The Lovestonesites flirted between the center bloc and the Left bloc.

LEFT OPPOSITION DELEGATES
A fraternal delegate from the Left Opposition was given the rights of a fraternal delegate but the Musteites overcame the problem of reporting a fraternal delegate from the Communist League by reporting through the credential committee that the report on the fraternal delegates will be given later. It was never delivered. Left Opposition members, representing unemployed organizations from all parts of the country as regular delegates and fraternal delegates representing a substantial number of unemployed in different organizations were at the conference.

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF UNEMPLOYED
The Unemployed Councils are affiliated to the Federation but they came to the Ohio conference fighting the Federation because they do not have mechanical control of it. The Musteites have two members on the national committee of the Federation so they established a division of labor. The members of the national committee could talk for the Federation but the other Musteites took the floor to speak against a resolution calling for affiliation. One must listen to the words of leaders of the different tendencies but one must see that the action conforms to these words. At Columbus the words and deeds of the Stalinist-Musteite bloc were two altogether different things.

The Musteite-Stalinist bloc attempted to establish a committee of fifteen, composed of members of the Leagues, Councils and Federation which would give the Musteite-Stalinist bloc 13 of the 15. This committee was to call a conference to amalgamate all the organizations into one. The Left bloc objected to this attempt at mechanical control of the unemployed movement and the exclusion of other larger unemployed organizations on the provisional committee, for example, the California unemployed organization which has 150,000 members. Other organizations should likewise have been considered in the provisional committee.

So far the Stalinists obtained nothing from their united front from above, and the Musteites obtained only a hollow victory. The Musteites are trying to marry their child, the Unemployed Leagues, to the Stalinist Unemployed Councils, but the reactionary child, the product of the miseducation of Musteism, objects to the marriage. However, the continuation of the united front from above will no doubt force the deal.

The Left Opposition fraction in the unemployed organizations will continue the work started at Chicago for the unification of the unemployed movement. The Musteite-Stalinist bloc at Columbus and the Right wing flag-waving element prevented the working class from utilizing this conference to its fullest extent. The temporary setback can be overcome in the coming months by intensifying the work for the unemployed program of the Left Opposition and the building of the National Unemployed Federation.

—H. O.

and one delegate from Washington who favored affiliation had a vote of 5. The big votes of Ohio and Pennsylvania voted from the other states could quite likely have been gained for the federation affiliation if the Musteites railroaded the thing through because their followers could make the most noise.

It appears that the struggle of the workers for first federation and later unity of unemployed organizations on a national scale will have to be fought out in opposition to the Musteites and Stalinists. —N.

The German Catastrophe

(Continued from Page 3)
In August 1932, when Germany was still ruled by the "social general," von Schleicher, who was supposed to assure the union of Hitler with Weis, announced by the Communist International, I wrote:

Everything goes to show that the Weis-von Schleicher-Hitler triangle will fall apart before it has really been put together. But perhaps it will be replaced by a Hitler-Weis combination? Let us assume that the Social Democracy, without being afraid of its own workers, would seek to sell Hitler its toleration. Fascism, however, does not need this commodity, it is not the toleration of the Social Democracy which it needs but its abolition. The Hitler government can realize its task only when it has broken the resistance of the proletariat and all the possible organs of such a resistance. Therefore lies the historical role of Fascism. ("The Only Road," page 31.)

That the reformists, after the defeat, would be happy if Hitler were to permit them to vegetate legally until better times return, cannot be doubted. But unfortunately for them, Hitler—the experience of Italy has not been in vain for him—realizes that the labor organizations, even if their leaders accept a muzzle, would inevitably become a threatening danger at the first political crisis.

Doctor Ley, the corporal of the present "labor front," has determined, with much more logic than the Præsidium of the Communist International, the relationship between the so-called twins. "Marxism is playing dead," he said on May 2 "in order to rise again at a more favorable opportunity.... The sky fox does not deceive us! It is better for us to deal him the final blow rather than to tolerate him until he recovers. The Leiparts and the Grossmans may feign all sorts of devotion to Hitler—but it is better to keep them under lock and key. That is why we are striking out of the hands of the Marxists their principal weapon (the trade unions) and are thus depriving it of the last possibility of arming itself again." If the bureaucracy of the Communist International were not so infallible and if it listened to criticism, it would not have made additional mistakes between March 22, when Leipart swore fealty to Hitler, and May 2, when Hitler, in spite of the oath, arrested him.

Essentially the theory of "social Fascism" could have been refuted even if the Fascists had not done such a thorough job of forcing themselves into the trade unions. Even if Hitler had found it necessary, as a result of the relationship of forces, to leave Leipart temporarily and nominally at the head of the trade unions, the agreement would not have eliminated the incompatibility of the fundamental interests. Even though tolerated by Fascism, the reformists would remember the fleshpots of the Weimar democracy and that alone would make them concealed enemies. How can one fail to see that the interests of the Social Democracy and of Fascism are incompatible when even the independent existence of the Steel Helmets is impossible in the Third Reich? Mussolini tolerated the Social Democracy and even the Communist party for some time, only to destroy them all the more mercilessly later on. The vote of the Social Democratic deputies in the Reichstag for the foreign policy of Hitler, covering this party with fresh dishonor, will not ameliorate its fate by one iota.

As one of the main causes for the victory of Fascism, the luckless leaders refer—in secret, to be sure—to the "genius" of Hitler, who foresaw everything and neglected nothing. It would be fruitless now to submit the Fascist policy to a retrospective criticism. One need only remember that Hitler, during the summer of last year, allowed the high peak of the Fascist tide to escape him. But even the gross loss of rhythm—a colossal mistake—did not have fatal results. The burning of the Reichstag by Göring, even if this act of provocation was crudely executed, did, however, yield the necessary result. The same must be said of the Fascist policy as a whole, for it led to victory. One cannot, unfortunately, deny the superiority of the Fascist over the proletarian leadership. But it is only out of an unbecoming modesty that the beaten chiefs keep silent about their own part in the victory of Hitler. There is the game of checkers and there is also the game of losers-win. The game that was played in Germany has this singular feature, that Hitler played checkers and his opponents played to lose. As for political genius, Hitler has no need for it. The strategy of his enemy compensated largely for anything his own strategy lacked.

Prinkipo, Turkey. —L. TROTSKY.