

Trotsky Against Leninism

By BERTRAM D. WOLFE.

IN the Soviet Union, the workers rule. They use their power as the ruling class to destroy step by step the remains of capitalism and to build up socialism.

Within the Soviet Union, the workers are greatly outnumbered by the peasants. Outside the Soviet Union, is a ring of hostile capitalist states, armed to the teeth and plotting the destruction of the workers' government.

The workers of the Soviet Union have made their revolution with the aid of the peasants. They cannot resist attack without the support of the peasants. They could not maintain their rule if that support were changed to hostility. The problem of maintaining working class rule and building socialism in the Soviet Union is in the first place the problem of maintaining the alliance between peasants and workers.

Alliance a Vital Necessity.

Any policy which threatens to break that alliance is dangerous.

Whoever does not understand the importance of that alliance for the maintaining of the proletarian dictatorship is not fit to be a leader of the Russian workers. Be his intentions what they may, be his past services however important, one who proposes measures which will break the alliance between workers and peasants is proposing measures which lead to the overthrow of the Soviet Union, to the destruction of the workers' rule. Such a man cannot lead the Party which leads the workers.

Opposition's Fatal Mistake.

One of the fundamental errors of the Opposition consists in just this. They do not understand the relation of class forces in the Soviet Union. They do not understand the role of the peasantry. They do not understand the importance of maintaining the alliance of worker and peasant and the role that this alliance can play in the building of socialism. They make concrete proposals which, if adopted, would destroy this alliance, hence their proposals are dangerous for the working class of the Soviet Union.

Trotsky's Old Quarrel With Lenin.

Leon Trotsky is the real leader of the Opposition in the Communist Party. He expresses in the sharpest form the failure to understand this essential problem of the proletarian dictatorship. In fact, he has never

really understood it. He had his first difference with Lenin on this question back in the period of the revolution of 1905.

On this and other grounds, Trotsky has fought against the theories of Lenin and the leadership of Lenin since 1903, when the Bolshevik wing of the Social-Democratic party was formed. In 1917, he accepted Lenin's program as to the seizure of power by the working class, aided by the peasantry, but even then, as we shall see from Trotsky's own words, he did not agree with Lenin as to the role of the peasantry and expected that alliance would break off immediately after the victory over Kerensky.

Trotsky's Theory of the Nature of the Revolution.

AFTER the failure of the revolution of 1905, Trotsky published a book concerning his theories with the title "1905." In this he expressed some of his differences with Lenin on this question. In 1922, five years after the revolution of November, 1917, he republished the same book with a new introduction, maintaining substantially the same views.

We will let Trotsky speak for himself:

"It was just in the period between the 22nd of January and the October strike (this refers to events in the year 1905—B. D. W.) that the views of the present writer (Trotsky) were formed on the character of the revolutionary development of Russia. . . . The idea that the Russian revolution, confronted by immediate bourgeois aims, cannot be content after gaining these. The revolution cannot solve its first bourgeois task by any other means than by the seizure of power by the proletariat.

"But after it has seized power, the proletariat cannot confine itself to the bourgeois frame-work of the revolution. On the contrary, the firm establishment of victory requires that the proletarian vanguard at once inaugurate its rule by energetic attacks, not only upon feudal property, but upon bourgeois property as well. (Thus far Trotsky agrees with Lenin's theory.—B. D. W.)

Thinks Workers Must Fight Peasants.

"This means for the proletariat hostile encounters with every group of the bourgeoisie which has supported the proletariat at the beginning of the revolutionary struggle, not only with these but with the broad masses of the peasantry as well, whose support has enabled them to attain power."

Considers Alliance Temporary.

From this quotation we see that even after Trotsky came to accept Lenin's theory that the peasantry must be won to help the working class in its struggle for power, he considered this alliance to be only temporary, and believed that the working class, once in power, would take such measures against the interests of the peasantry as would break the alliance and arouse the peasantry to attack the workers' rule.

This was Trotsky's mature belief in 1922, after the experience of 1905 and 1917. And we shall see further, that this is still his belief and the official theory underlying all the proposals of the opposition bloc. That is what makes the proposals of the Opposition so dangerous to the safety of the Russian revolution.

Lenin Showed Trotsky's Error.

How different is the revolutionary theory of Lenin. Lenin maintained that the conquest of power and the control of the state apparatus by the working class would make it possible for the workers' government to satisfy the needs of the peasantry and win permanent support from them for the defending of the proletarian state and the building up of socialism.

In fact the alliance which Trotsky would break immediately after the conquest of power, Lenin believed would not really become strong until the workers were in power and able to show their ability to defend the interests of the peasant masses as well as their own interests.

Thus Lenin said:

"In order to win the majority of the population to its side, the proletariat must first overthrow the bourgeoisie and get the state power into its own hands. Second, it must introduce the Soviet power . . . whereby it roots out immediately the leadership and authority and the influence of the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois compromisers among the non-proletarian toiling masses (particularly the peasantry.—B.D.W.). Third, it must destroy once and for all the influence of the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois compromisers among the majority of the toiling masses through the revolutionary satisfaction of their economic needs at the cost of the exploiters."

Hence we see that Lenin believed that the proletarian dictatorship or rule of the working class would make it very much easier to satisfy the elementary needs of the peasants at the cost of the exploiters and thus make it easier for the working class to become the leader of the entire mass of peasants and maintain and strengthen the alliance with them.

Trotsky Failed to Understand.

Because Trotsky did not understand these things, because he lacked faith in the potential revolutionary role of the peasants as the ally and supporter of the working class, therefore he also lacked faith in the revolution itself, in the possibility of the working class maintaining power for any length of time in Russia unless

they were helped by the victory of the working class in various other countries and by the actual and immediate aid of the working class governments in other countries.

Menshevik Views.

In the period before 1905, Trotsky's views were even worse. He tended to agree with the Mensheviks who did not believe that the peasants should play any role in the revolution at all.

The Mensheviks, in the period preceding 1905, were opposed to Lenin's policy of stirring up the peasantry. They were opposed to Lenin's theory that the working class should assume state power immediately upon the overthrow of the Czar.

Therefore, on the eve of 1905, the Mensheviks said:

This revolution that is now beginning is not and cannot be a working class revolution. It must be a bourgeois (capitalist) revolution to establish capitalist democracy in Russia. The working class must help the capitalists in this fight but must not fight as an independent force to establish working class rule. The peasants can help the capitalists but cannot help the working class.

This was a counter-revolutionary proposal which would have meant neither capitalist democracy nor working-class rule and would have made the working class nothing but a tool of the capitalist class that was really afraid to fight the Czar to a finish.

Trotsky's "Revolutionary" Phrase.

The revolutionary workers would never accept this counter-revolutionary theory in its naked form.

But Trotsky came forward at this time, as at many other times in Russian revolutionary history, with a beautiful ultra-revolutionary-sounding slogan to cloak the same Menshevik attitude on the peasantry and on the character of the revolution.

This slogan of Trotsky's was: "No Czar, but a Labor Government."

Meaning No Revolution.

This sounds very revolutionary, but Lenin pointed out that the slogan "No Czar but a labor government" was really a slogan which meant the revolution without the peasantry. But the revolution without the peasantry was impossible—hence the slogan, "No Czar but a labor government," for all its fine revolutionary sound, meant in practice—no revolution at all.

Kamenev, who now follows Trotsky, at that time declared of the Trotsky slogan:

"The original theory of Trotsky takes from the Bolsheviks the appeal for decisive revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and for conquest of political power by the proletariat; from the Mensheviks the negation of the role of the peasantry. . . . In reality Trotsky approaches the liberal labor politicians of Russia, who by the 'negation' of the role of the peasantry understand the reluctance to stir up the peasantry."

Reactionary Content of Trotskyism.

We shall see in the course of this series of articles that many times in critical moments in the history of the Russian revolution, Trotsky plays the

same dangerous role of furnishing radical-sounding ultra-left revolutionary phrases to conceal and cloak the most counter-revolutionary content, the most dangerous proposals, which would lead to the betrayal or liquidation of the revolutionary movement.

Lenin had to attack Trotsky again and again for his "empty hollow phrases" and for his lack of a sound standpoint on fundamental questions.

"Never", says Lenin, "in a single serious question of Marxism, has Trotsky had a firm opinion. He always squeezes himself into a division between this and that difference of opinion and always runs from one side to the other."

At another time Lenin said of him:

"He (Trotsky) was in the year 1903 a Menshevik, he left this Party in 1904, returned to the Mensheviks in 1905 and paraded around with ultra-revolutionary phrases. In 1906 he again abandoned this Party. At the end of 1906 he again defended the election alliance with the Cadets. . . . Trotsky borrows some ideas, today from one faction and tomorrow from the other, and, therefore, considers himself as a man standing above both factions."

Fundamental Difference.

To sum up:

We have noted above that Lenin regards the alliance between the workers and the peasants as the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat, whereas Trotsky believes that the dictatorship of the proletariat is a form of rule in which the working class attacks the peasantry, makes of them a bitter enemy and causes "hostile encounters" between the working class government and "the broad masses of the peasantry."

Peasants Friends or Enemies?

Lenin speaks of the working class as the leader of all the toiling and exploited masses, including especially the peasantry.

But Trotsky regards the working class as the enemy of the peasantry and speaks of the "contradiction of a workers' government in a backward country with an overwhelmingly peasant population."

For Trotsky, the dictatorship of the proletariat is carried on against the peasantry and cannot endure unless the proletariat is aided by successful revolution and state aid from other countries.

For Lenin, the dictatorship of the proletariat is a form of state power based upon the alliance of the proletariat and the masses of the peasantry, an alliance which is to last until capitalism is completely overthrown, the socialist system completely set up and classes abolished.

Key to Dispute.

It is important that these fundamental differences between the theories of Trotsky and the theories of Lenin be understood because we will see that these differences give the key to all important differences in practical proposals and all fundamental conflicts in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The next article will take up the basis of Trotsky's lack of faith in the possibility of building up socialism in the Soviet Union while it is surrounded by a capitalist world.

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SEABOARD AIR LINE AGREES TO STABILIZE

SHOP EMPLOYMENT; 800 STILL LAID OFF

By LELAND OLDS, (Fed. Press).

The spotlight is again turned on the problem of stabilizing railroad shop employment by the recent agreement between the shop craft system federation on the Seaboard Airline and the management of that road guaranteeing steady jobs to at least 2170 shopmen during 1928. Although this will mean an increase of about 800 in the number of shopmen employed on this road it falls at least that much short of the number on the payroll prior to recent layoffs which reduced the force from about 3000 to somewhat over 1300.

In August, the Seaboard Airline was ready to sacrifice the condition of its equipment to its determination to reduce the number of shop employees. In this period when the per-

centage of the Seaboard Airline's equipment in bad order was increasing, it was cutting its shop forces to less than half their previous strength. The present agreement will restore about half of those laid off. It sets forth in detail for each shop point on the line the number of mechanics, helpers, etc. to be guaranteed employment for the year 1928. Previously this road could cut its forces to any extent desired by the management provided it gave 5 days notice.

The Seaboard Airline is not alone in seeking to stabilize shop employment at a lower level than prevailed some years ago, although it is the first to sign an agreement establishing a minimum below which it will not go. The question is also very much to the fore on the Chicago & Northwestern.

Anti-Monopoly League To Fight Power Trust

WASHINGTON, (FP) Dec. 2.—George L. Record of New Jersey is president, and Benj. C. Marsh of Washington is director of the new Anti-Monopoly League, established by numerous labor and farm organization officials.

It announces that one of the chief purposes of its organization is to fight the power trust. Public ownership of that industry may be advocated.

Protest Shooting of Colorado Miners at Two Mass Meetings

CLEVELAND, Ohio, Dec. 2. — Shooting of Colorado miners by the national guard will be protested at two meetings in Cleveland arranged by the Workers (Communist) Party, District 6.

The first will be held at Gardina Hall, 6021 St. Clair, on Friday evening, December 2; the other, at Hungarian Hall, 4309 Lorain Ave. on Sunday, December 4 at 2 p. m.

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