

Special Supplement of The Russian Revolution Anniversary Number of 'FIGHT'

The Literature Of The Fourth International

JUST as in the past Lenin carried on a fight against Kautsky's distortions of Marxism, so now the Bolshevik-Leninists, Trotsky and others, resist the attempts of Stalinists to revise the teachings of Lenin. The struggle is essentially one of internationalism against Stalin's particular brand of nationalism, and on its outcome depends the course of history for a long time to come.

This literature is already extensive. In 1923 Trotsky published a pamphlet in Russia, *The New Course*, criticising bureaucratic tendencies which had grown up in Government and Party circles, and calling for real workers' democracy to revive the directive abilities of the masses. The pamphlet appealed for the energy of youth in this task, and furthermore laid emphasis on the need for *planning* in the economic progress of the country. This pamphlet, published in French (*Cours Nouveau*) is invaluable for its early insistence on the plan. It was taken by the leadership of the Party as a "declaration of war" against bureaucracy, the elements of which rallied behind Stalin in a vicious campaign of slander, which was not lessened by a further publication by Trotsky. This was *Lessons of October*, where the author revealed the way in which Lenin had to force the leading Bolsheviks towards the proletarian revolution, after the first bourgeois revolution of February, 1917.

Stalin's campaign resulted in the exile of Trotsky, and in the emergence of the main conflict between the two—that between Stalin's theory of "socialism in one country," and Trotsky's theory of the *permanent revolution*, described in his pamphlet of that

name. The nature of this conflict is evident in a detailed criticism by Trotsky of the draft programme of the Communist International for the Sixth Congress of the Comintern, prepared by Stalin and Bukharin. The criticism was literally smuggled out of Russia, where it had been almost completely suppressed on arrival from Trotsky's place of exile, and it was published in America as a separate pamphlet. Later it was incorporated in a larger work, *The Third International after Lenin*, a collection of the polemical writings of Trotsky, dealing with his view of the world revolution, with the vital distinction between revolutionary strategy and tactics, exemplified chiefly by the disasters of the Chinese revolution. This volume also covers the German Revolution of 1923, and the general development of the pro-Kulak policy in Russia between 1924 and 1927.

Another large volume of Trotsky's writings was published in 1937, *The Stalinist School of Falsification*—giving chapter and verse of the actual events of the author's independent stand in Russia, after Lenin died; the realities of Stalin's campaign of slander, and the trend of that campaign towards liquidation of the gains of the October revolution.

These two large volumes, issued by Pioneer Publishers in New York, give a comprehensive account of what has become known as "Trotskyism." The account is made up largely of Trotsky's replies to his opponents, and its polemical nature requires an introductory volume for those unacquainted with the matter. Such an introduction is provided by *World Revolution, 1917-1936*, by C. L. R. James. The sub-

title of this invaluable work is *The Rise and Fall of the Communist International*. It treats of the great organisational weapon of Marxism built on the initiative of Lenin, and destroyed on the initiative of Stalin. All the main historical events of the period are reviewed in the light of Marxism, including the Russian revolution, the General Strike of 1926, the Chinese revolution of 1925-27, the Five Year Plan, and the coming to power of Hitler. In some 400 pages James epitomises not only the degeneration of Stalinism and its nationalist basis, but also the essence of Leninism, which belongs to the working class of the whole world.

From the bird's eye view of *World Revolution* the reader may approach the above two volumes by Trotsky, who dissects in detail the motive forces, manoeuvres and meaning of the same body politic. While James reviews carefully but simply, Trotsky proves up to the hilt with contemporary writings, detailed verifications, documents and minutes. The three volumes together provide a knowledge without which the post-war history of Europe and the Far East is a maze of mysterious frustrations and inexplicable disasters.

The theory of the permanent revolution points out that the world revolution—an epoch of human society—has its peaks and valleys, its accelerations and delays, its different varieties of revolutionary action,

all conditioned by the proletarian revolution, permanent in the sense of constantly erupting until the final victory of socialism. At the present moment the Russian revolution holds first place as a source of revolutionary inspiration, and the U.S.S.R., in spite of Stalin, his bureaucracy, and his policy, still remains a workers' state, since the means of production remain the property of a state based on the Russian proletariat. The fact that the state dominated by the bureaucracy behaves in a fashion hostile to the interests of the international proletariat does not alter that fact.

Though the clerks of the Russian working class have become petty tyrants, and the secretary of the clerks a megalomaniac, that does not alter the fact that private ownership of the means of production has not returned to Russia. Nor can the social system of Russia be correctly termed state capitalism, since there are not two classes in economic opposition, the one devoting its main energy to the exploitation of the other. The bureaucracy of Russia may be termed a caste, but it is not a class. Violence will occur between workers and bureaucrats before the latter are shorn of their misapplied power, but the victory of the workers will not result in a new social system: it will be a return to workers' democracy, and a mighty leap forward along the road to socialism—a road now blocked half-way by Stalin's officialdom. The October revolution has been betrayed, but its

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main results have not yet been liquidated. The U.S.S.R. must be defended, even while blows are necessary against its leaders—whose policy, based on a nationalist conception, can only end in ruin.

Such in brief is the view of Bolshevik-Leninists regarding the U.S.S.R. a view developed by Trotsky in a number of publications. One of the first of these is *The Real Situation in Russia* (1928), the famous Platform of the Opposition, a book full of facts and shrewd warnings. Then follows the pamphlet *Problems of the Development of the U.S.S.R.* (1931), and just recently *The Revolution Betrayed* has been published as a concise and readable account of Russia under Stalin. This last book deals with the cultural, political and economic degeneration which is eating away at the successes of the workers, even while these are being actually achieved.

Another work illuminating the development of Russia and the Third International is *From Lenin to Stalin*, by Victor Serge, who played a prominent part in the history of the period which he reviews. This book makes a valuable addition to the literature of Bolshevik-Leninism, since Serge is a revolutionary with an international reputation. Its lively style adds to the interest of the contents. Serge has written another book to be published in English this autumn under the title *Destiny of a Revolution*.

For confirmation of the truth of much of the criticism of the above authors, there are two recent books, *Back From the U.S.S.R.* and *Afterthoughts on the U.S.S.R.* by Andre Gide, the famous French writer, who visited Russia as an enthusiast but managed to retain his critical faculties. His friendly, sincere and penetrating remarks, the fruit, not of Marxist analysis but of acute observation, give a remarkable sidelight on conditions in Russia.

Among particular questions of vital importance in the study of "Trotskyism," the past writings of Trotsky on developments leading up to the victory of Hitler are indeed sensational—not only regarding the warnings and advice given before that victory, but also as an exposure of the lies about Trotsky. The pamphlets *The Turn in the Communist International and the German Situation; Germany, the Key to the International Situation; What Next?*, and *The Only Road*—all written before the victory of Hitler—prove beyond any shadow of doubt that Trotsky was justified a thousand times over in his fierce criticism of the Third International's German policy from 1928 to 1933. Stalin's theory of "social-fascism" is here shown as the fatal madness which it turned out to be—a bar to working class unity in the face of a common danger.

On the subsequent further decline of the Third International, into the bottomless betrayals of Popular Front policy, Trotsky has written the pamphlet *Whither France?*, quoted more than once in Alexander Werth's *Destiny of France*. This pamphlet does for the so-called communists of France what the same

author's *Whither England?* did for the pseudo-socialists of Britain. Both are masterpieces of irony and invective, on a basis of logic and bedrock fact.

Spain and China have passed through post-war periods of revolutionary activity, with direct bearing on the present conflagrations in those countries. Trotsky's *Problems of the Chinese Revolution* sheds much light on present as well as past relations of Stalin with Chang-kai-shek, as well as on the Red Partisan armies of the Chinese peasantry and on the tragic decline of the revolutionary movement in the towns after Stalin's ally turned on and slaughtered so many of its members in 1927.

The Revolution in Spain and the *Spanish Revolution in Danger* are two of Trotsky's pamphlets dealing with the events of 1930-31, and the part of the Third International in those events.

On imperialist war, the Bolshevik-Leninist pamphlet, *War and the Fourth International* sets out the principles and strategy of revolutionary conduct in war, and the prospect of the only organisational force that will be able to end war for ever—a Fourth International. F. A. Ridley, an independent writer has made a valuable analysis of how a second world war is likely to develop, in his *Next Year's War*.

George Padmore's *Africa and World Peace* shows Africa as the chief centre of Imperialist scramble and proves the futility of collective security and war for democracy. This is a valuable study.

Two supporters of the Fourth International, Mary Low and Juan Brea, have written an account of the first six months of the revolution in Barcelona. The work, political only by implication, is a vivid picture of how the revolution affected the broad masses of the people, and the ruinous result of the Stalinist insistence on the bourgeois republic and not the socialist revolution as the objective.

For a study of the Russian Revolution, Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution* is unexcelled, and for a study of Trotsky himself, the autobiography, *My Life* is available—objective in method and brilliant in style.

The Moscow Trials have been dealt with in numerous pamphlets, notably one by Max Schactman, *Behind the Moscow Trials*, a devastating analysis which leaves no doubt in the mind of any unbiassed reader as to the gross fraud which has been perpetrated on the British working class movement. The evidence of the preliminary enquiry into Trotsky's defence against the Stalinist accusations, will be published this au-

tumn in a volume of over 600 pages. It contains a complete and detailed refutation of every charge made, and as it contains an exposition of Trotsky's political line over the whole period of his activity it is not only the results of an enquiry, but is a compendium of Bolshevik-Leninism.

R. W.

The following is a list of the most important books. They, and numerous other pamphlets can be obtained through the Marxist Group Bookshop, 97, Kings Cross Road, London, W.C.1.

The Real Situation in Russia. (*Harcourt, Brace & Co.*) 1928.

Lessons of October. (*Labour Publishing Co.*) 1925.

Where is Britain Going? (*C.P.G.B.*) 1926.

Cours Nouveau. 1925.

Whither France? (*Pioneer Publishers.*) 1936.

La Troisieme Periode. (*Librairie du Travail.*) 1930.

Problems of the Chinese Revolution. (*Pioneer Publishers.*) 1932.

What Next? (*Pioneer Publishers.*) 1932.

The Only Road. (*Pioneer Publishers.*) 1933.

Defence of Terrorism. (*Allen & Unwin.*) 1935.

My Life. (*Thornton Butterworth.*) 1930.

History of the Russian Revolution. (*Gollancz.*) 1933.

The Permanent Revolution. (*Pioneer Publishers.*) 1931.

Draft Programme 1929. (*Of Stalin and Bukharin before the 6th Congress, 1928. Smuggled out of Russia.*)

The Third International After Lenin. (*Pioneer Publishers.*) 1936.

The Stalin School of Falsification. (*Pioneer Publishers.*) 1937.

The Revolution Betrayed. (*Faber & Faber.*) 1937.

All the above are by Leon Trotsky.

World Revolution. C. L. R. James. (*Secker & Warburg.*) 1937.

Since Lenin Died. Max Eastman. (*Labour Publishing Co.*)

Back From the U.S.S.R. Andre Gide. (*Secker & Warburg.*) 1937.

Afterthoughts on the U.S.S.R. Andre Gide. (*Secker & Warburg.*)

From Lenin to Stalin. Victor Serge. (*Secker & Warburg.*) 1937.

Red Spanish Notebook. Mary Low and Juan Brea, with an introduction by C. L. R. James. (*Secker & Warburg.*) 1937.

Africa and World Peace. George Padmore, with an introduction by Stafford Cripps. (*Secker & Warburg.*) 1937.

To be published this autumn:

Destiny of a Revolution. Victor Serge. (*Jarrolds.*)

Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Charges against Leon Trotsky. (*Secker & Warburg.*)

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