

TROTSKY



CENTENARY

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Review

FIVE OF LEON TROTSKY

Lessons of October

HERE IS Trotsky emerging from the battlefield, stepping from his legendary military train, having built the Red Army to vanquish the Whites and the imperialist armies of intervention.

He is back in Moscow in the thick of a new battle. It is 1924. Lenin is dead, the Soviet masses are heroically confronting the impact of famine, starvation, the legacy of ten years' continuous wars and the economic blockade by imperialism.

Stranglehold

The cruel failure of the revolutionary uprising in Germany is weighing heavily on the Bolshevik Party.

Trotsky and his supporters have opened the struggle against Stalin, who has begun to impose a bureaucratic stranglehold on the party, the Soviets and the fledgling state.

Under Lenin's express encouragement, before he died, Trotsky has pinpointed the growth of bureaucracy, factionalism and conservatism in the upper echelons of the party.

A year earlier — 1923 — he has published 'The New Course', outlining an alternative revolutionary economic and political strategy to overcome the catastrophic problems facing the first workers' state.

He has affronted those who are basking in the reflected glory of Lenin's personal triumph in the 1917 revolution and the collective victory of the Bolshevik Party in leading the armed insurrection.

Now comes 'Lessons of October', the first time that one of the party's leaders, other than Lenin, has analysed the party crisis on the eve of the revolution.

It is never Trotsky's method in arguing principled questions to vacillate or observe the corrupt niceties of reformist, social democratic debate. So he names names.

Class forces

From the party's official records, and the issues of 'Pravda' and Lenin's correspondence, he analyses the class forces represented in the Bolshevik leadership showing who was for the seizure of power and the dictatorship of the proletariat and who wilted, retreated and actually opposed the taking of power.

Its importance today is not only in tracing the origins of Stalinism, but as Trotsky observes in the Introduction, in guiding the revolutionary movement all over the world.

'We ourselves may never have to repeat the experiences of the October revolution,' he writes, 'but this does not imply that we have nothing to learn from that experience. We are part of the International and the workers in all other countries are still faced

with the solution of the problems in their own 'October'.'

The book brims with Trotsky's dialectical grasp of the turbulent social forces which are unleashed before, during and after the revolution. This class turbulence is reflected at its sharpest point inside the revolutionary party itself, since the party must be the conscious expression of the unconscious historical processes within the movement of class forces in society.

'Lessons of October' assails the revolutionary party which becomes weighed down by routinism, indecision and opportunism. Such a party cannot measure up to the abrupt historical turns which develop in the objective situation.

Trotsky writes: 'The party is ravaged by a crisis, the movement passes the party by — and heads towards defeat.'

To overcome this tendency, to ward off the pressures and ideology of the bourgeois class and its petty bourgeois agents, the party must live in the revolution each day and every day.

Historic

Its day-to-day tasks must become the vital interconnections in the struggle for power. Because the social democratic parties and today's Stalinist parties don't base themselves on the revolutionary role of the masses and the establishment of workers' power, they can never lead the masses in this historic task. On the contrary, they are the agencies for preparing betrayal and defeats. Trotsky makes this solemn warning:

To put the case more plainly: the party which does not keep step with the historical tasks of its own class becomes, or runs the risk of becoming, the tool of other classes.'

There can be no higher verification of the dialectical method in action than in the revolution itself, and Trotsky's rigorous analysis of 1917 demonstrates that Marxism is the revolutionary theory of the working class to guide practice.

He demolishes those for whom Marxism is a set of fixed rules. He is scathing against those who cling to old slogans and yesterday's habits of work. He gives Lenin's famous dictum:

'We must keep in step not with the old formulas but with the new realities.'

It was from this standpoint that Lenin repudiated the slogan of 'The democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry' and launched the struggle in mid-1917 for the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'.

This dialectical method lives today in the continuous development of theory to guide practice in the Workers Revolutionary Party, British section of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

In September 1977, with the Labour leaders betraying the mass movement in a coalition with the 'tiny Tories' of the Liberal Party, and the living standards of the working class placed completely in the hands of the cut-throats of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the WRP made a fundamental change in policy.

Superseded

The demand for 'Labour to power on a socialist programme' was abandoned and superseded. This had been rendered not only inadequate but also become reactionary since it tied the masses to illusions in the reformist leaders, both left and right, and the fraud of parliamentary democracy.

The hour had come for the masses to establish their independent strength as the only revolutionary class in

society. The world crisis now exposed British capitalism as the weakest link in the chain of world imperialism. Revolutionary confrontation between the two major classes became an inevitable feature of the economic and political crisis.

The WRP put forward the demand for the struggle for power. It meant turning the party deeper into the working class, the trade unions and the youth to fight for an independent programme of revolutionary action to smash the capitalist system and the state machine and establish workers' power.

Each strike, each demonstration, each occupation had now become infused with the new content of the developing world crisis.

The working class was no longer fighting only the employer, but was obliged to confront the government and therefore the capitalist

state. It was the objective situation driving the working class along the road to power.

The situation is concretely expressed in the fight against the Tory government's cuts. The Stalinists and the revisionists say 'Restore the cuts'. Meanwhile the government ignores their advice and introduces additional cuts worth £3.5 billion.

Malignant

But it is absolutely clear that the cuts cannot be stopped let alone restored under capitalism. The malignant disintegration of capitalism means the destruction of all social services and they cannot be rescued this side of the socialist revolution.

When Trotsky wrote on those who defended the imperialist war and the Provisional government, he was

describing the future, political evolution of today's Stalinist parties, with their counter-revolutionary theories of the 'peaceful parliamentary road to socialism' and the IMG and WSL revisionists who call on the 'left' MPs to fight.

The highest tribute to be paid to this volume is its timeless value for today's revolutionary struggles.

The 'Lessons of October' lives in the Trotskyist movement, in the International Committee of the Fourth International. The approaching 'world October' means that this stirring polemic is basic reading for workers and youth who are gripped by the lightning speed of events and who want to take their place in the ranks of the struggle for a revolutionary socialist future.

Alex Mitchell



Leon Trotsky with Lenin and delegates to the Second Congress of the Third International in 1920

The Third Interna

WRITTEN in 1928, when Trotsky was expelled from the Communist Party and living in forced exile in Kazakhstan, this book has at its core the fundamental question at issue between Stalinism and Marxism: socialism in a single country, the programme of Stalin and his faction, or world revolution?

In his criticism of the Draft Programme of the Communist International, which takes up most of the book, Trotsky first of all proves beyond doubt that the revolutionary Marxist theory upon which the Communist movement and the October Revolution were based is in complete contradiction to Stalin and Bukharin's 'socialism in a single country'.

From the words of Stalin himself, Trotsky shows how the teachings of Marx and Lenin were deliberately distorted: Stalin wrote in 1924:

'To overthrow the bourgeoisie, the efforts of one country are sufficient — the history of our revolution bears this out. For the final victory of socialism, for the organisation of socialist production, the efforts of one country, particularly of such a peasant country as Russia are insufficient. For this the efforts of the proletarians of several advanced countries are necessary...'

That was in April 1924. When the same book ('Foundations of Leninism') was republished in October 1924, Stalin removed this passage, and invented instead the 'theory' that socialism could be built in Russia alone.

This, Trotsky insisted was nationalism, a break from internationalism, which is basic to Marxism. It was a break from the scientific conception of capitalism as a world system, creating the objective pre-conditions for

socialism, with the world proletariat the principle of these conditions.

Here, in 'socialism in a single country' was the conception suited to the narrow and privileged bureaucracy of state and party and their allies in the middle class in Russia.

It reached beyond the borders of the Soviet Union to middle-class allies in the capitalist world. The first vehicle for this was also invented in 1924 by Stalin: the idea of a 'two-class party'. With these political weapons, Stalin and his faction proceeded to abandon all the fundamental Leninist positions: in particular, as Trotsky stresses in this book:

'The cardinal question for us here, as everywhere and always, is the question of the communist party, its complete independence, its irreconcilable class character.'

Stalin, Bukharin, and their centrist faction which represented the interests of the bureaucracy against the working class, were directly responsible for major defeats because they abandoned these principles.

In China, the young Communist Party was instructed by the Stalin group to 'do coolie service' for Chiang Kai Shek and the bourgeois nationalist Kuomintang. They led the proletariat of China in actually carrying out the revolutionary defeat of the feudal overlords and their imperialist backers, but they handed over the leadership and the power to the Kuomintang. Chiang Kai Shek then turned on the Chinese comrades with a brutal mass murder.

In Britain, the same abandonment of this independence of the Communist Party in favour of the flimsy alliance (the 'Anglo-Russian

All five books by Leon Trotsky reviewed in this supplement are published by New Park Publications Ltd and are available from New Park bookshops or 21b Old Town, Clapham, London SW4 0JT

STALIN'S MAJOR WORKS

Review

Stalin school of falsification

THESE articles and speeches, dating mainly from 1927, expose and refute the unprecedented structure of lies, forgeries and systematic falsification of history constructed by Joseph Stalin and his supporters.

They are the products of Trotsky's bitter struggle, in the face of huge odds, against the bureaucratic caste which grew up in the Soviet Union during its isolation and backwardness, and which usurped political power from the working class.

The aim of Stalin's 'school of falsification' was to discredit Trotsky, the co-leader of the Russian Revolution and founder of the Red Army, and to rewrite history in favour of Stalin.

Here, Trotsky not only answers Stalin's lies in devastating fashion, but also reveals their source in the objective conditions existing in the Soviet Union and inter-

nationally after the revolution of October 1917.

In 1918, on the first anniversary of the October Revolution, Stalin wrote: 'All the work of practical organisation of the insurrection was conducted under the immediate leadership of the Chairman of the Petrograd Soviet, Trotsky. It is possible to declare with certainty that the swift passing of the garrison to the side of the Soviet and the bold execution of the work of the Military Revolutionary Committee, the party owes principally and above all to Trotsky.'

Yet after 1924, Stalin was writing: 'Comrade Trotsky played no particular role in the party or the October insurrection and could not do so.'

Stalin thus said one thing about Trotsky's role in 1918 and the opposite after 1924, and the source of that was the change in the objective

situation. The revolutionary conditions of 1917 had been succeeded by the counter-revolution, particularly following the defeat of the German working class in 1919 and 1923.

The lies of Stalin, and the complete lie machine which he and his supporters constructed, were therefore not the products of an individual, but the form of a struggle of which the content was the change from revolution to counter-revolution.

These lies and falsifications, the product of the changes in the objective world, served as the fundamental ideological cement of the bureaucracy which, in order to preserve its own privileges, was compelled to pervert the entire theory of Marxism.

The more irreconcilable the conflict between the bureaucracy and the working masses, and the more

crude the lies became, the more rapidly they were transformed into criminal falsifications, and the more certainly they led to judicial frame-ups.

What was involved was not personal intrigues or 'power struggles' but a profound political process in which the bureaucracy, raising itself above the revolutionary class in the period of counter-revolution, needed to invent an ideology and a 'history' which justified its position and defended it against all criticism.

In this book Trotsky produces a mass of documentary evidence to refute Stalin's attempts to hide his real role in the revolution.

In his 'Letter to the Bureau of Party History', written in October 1927, Trotsky presents extracts from his own writings, Lenin's writings and speeches, party documents and even the writings

of Stalin and his supporters to establish beyond question that Lenin and Trotsky stood together on every major issue during and since 1917.

Where there were differences — as over the Brest Litovsk treaty with Germany or over the role of the trade unions — Trotsky shows how these were 'born of the practical struggle and liquidated in struggle'.

And these differences, which the Stalinists sought to exaggerate and present out of context, assumed their real proportions beside the blank sheet of paper at the bottom of which Lenin affixed his signature endorsing any order issued by Trotsky!

In this 'Letter', Trotsky establishes his own role as Chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee which led the insurrection, founder of the Red Army and a leading organiser of the planned economy and an efficient transport system, as well as his leading part in the first four congresses of the Communist International.

He answers the bureaucracy's attacks on his theory of permanent revolution and the lying allegation that he 'underestimated the peasantry'.

The section 'Some Documents Relating to the Origin of the Legend of Trotskyism' shows how the Stalinists decided to string together old disagreements with new issues in an attempt to discredit Trotsky. It contains signed statements from leading party members confirming how this 'legend' was invented.

Particularly important sections of the book are 'The Lost Document' — the minutes of the Petrograd Committee of the Bolsheviks held on November 1, 1917 — and an appendix containing the minutes of the March, 1917, Party Conference.

The November minutes show how Lenin and Trotsky jointly fought against those rightists in the Bolshevik ranks — including many of Trotsky's later opponents — who wanted a coalition with the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries after the Revolution, and threatened to walk out of leading party committees if they didn't get it.

The March minutes graphically confirm the charges made by Trotsky against Stalin in his Letter to the Bureau of Party History.

In the first month after the February Revolution, before Lenin's return to Russia, Stalin had supported the Provisional Government of Prince Lvov, advocated unity with the Mensheviks, and rejected opposition to the imperialist war.

The March minutes had been suppressed because they compromised Stalin, and the November minutes had been suppressed because they obstructed the work of falsifying Trotsky's role.

The 'Two Speeches to the Session of the Central Control Commission' are Trotsky's defence against attempts to remove him from the Party's Central Committee for opposing Sta-

lin's line on Britain and China, and for participating in a demonstration in support of an exiled oppositionist.

Here Trotsky warns, nine years before the Moscow Trials, that the unbridled internal party repression meant Stalin was preparing the physical annihilation of the Opposition.

He denounces the theory of socialism in one country as a fundamental distortion of Marxism and Leninism which could undermine all the gains of the October Revolution.

A further speech by Trotsky on 'The War Danger' (which the bureaucracy was trying to use to silence the Opposition) shows how Stalin's policy of supporting the British trade union bureaucrats in the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee, and backing the bourgeois nationalist Chiang Kai-Shek in China, actually endangered the Soviet Union by undermining the working class, the only real force capable of opposing imperialist war.

The 'Contribution to the Political Biography of Stalin' concentrates on the absence of theoretical and political writings by Stalin, particularly during key periods such as the World War and the collapse of the Second International.

This book proves that on every question Trotsky was right and Stalin wrong. The structure of lies and falsifications created by the bureaucracy is demolished beyond recovery.

However, it is not ideas but objective reality which determines the outcome of such struggles. What was decisive was the isolation of the Soviet Union and the defeats of the working class internationally.

Every blow struck at the world revolution, including Germany in 1923, Britain in 1926 and China in 1927, strengthened the Stalinist bureaucracy and undermined those who fought for the continuity of Leninism.

But this vital book is more than a historical record of Trotsky's heroic battle against the degeneration of the Soviet Union.

It is a living weapon in the hands of revolutionaries today when imperialism, and its creation Stalinism, face defeat after defeat at the hands of the world revolution.

Despite the tremendous gains made by the revolution, from Vietnam to Iran and Nicaragua, final victory cannot be achieved without the political destruction of counter-revolutionary Stalinism.

The historic conditions for that are at hand and the means for carrying it out are available in the revolutionary, historic tradition of Trotskyism, of which this work is an essential part.

Only those who fight to carry on this tradition, in the International Committee of the Fourth International, can provide the leadership which will bring this victory to fruition.

Jack Gale



Trotsky at his last official appearance in the Soviet Union — as a pall bearer with Stalin (right) at the funeral of Dzerzhinsky in 1926

tional after Lenin

Trades Union Committee' with the 'left' trade union bureaucracy made it impossible for the Communist Party to win leadership and combat the betrayal of the General Strike of 1926.

These centrist policies and the resultant defeats were the fruits of 'socialism in one country', and in this book the dialectic of these struggles, in relation to the conflicts within the Soviet Union, is traced in detail. For this reason it is an indispensable foundation of the education of every Trotskyist.

Trotsky shows how the Left Opposition carried out the historically vital task of defending and developing Marxism in conditions where the exhausted Soviet proletariat came under enormous pressure from imperialism and from the middle class and bureaucrats within Russia itself.

On the one side, there

could be no serious building of the revolutionary movement unless the objective reasons for the defeat of the Left Opposition were understood scientifically. It was not a matter of individual judgements, or superior organisation and not even of the theoretical correctness of one side or the other:

'The growth of the economic and political pressure of the bureaucratic and petty bourgeois state within the country on the basis of the defeats of the proletarian revolution in Europe and Asia — that was the historical chain which tightened around the neck of the Opposition during these four years (1924-1928). Whoever fails to understand this will understand nothing.'

On the other side, the 'subjective factor', the work of conscious revolutionaries must prepare the future through continuous struggle under all conditions. As

Trotsky concluded his criticism of the Draft Programme:

'During this year the entire soil must be deeply ploughed by the plough of Marxism. Only as a result of such labour can the international party of the proletariat secure a programme, a beacon which will illuminate with its penetrating rays and throw reliable beams far into the future.'

Today, as the International Committee of the Fourth International builds its sections as the world party of socialist revolution, we work in the light of those 'penetrating rays', without which we could not carry through the struggle to abstract from the present explosive revolutionary world developments what they have to give for the working class and the revolutionary party.

We are guided, in this sense, by Trotsky and Lenin's insistence that:

'The revolutionary party of the proletariat can base itself upon an international programme corresponding to the character of the present epoch, the epoch of the highest development and collapse of capitalism... The international programme must proceed directly from an analysis of the conditions and tendencies of world economy and of the world political system taken as a whole in all its connections and contradictions, that is, with the mutually antagonistic interdependence of its separate parts...'

What could show more clearly the fact that this book, 'The Third International After Lenin', is no mere historical record of a past struggle, but rather an essential part of the armoury of the revolutionary movement today.

Cliff Slaughter

Review

Revolution Betrayed

THE scientific answer to all questions about the sociology and economy of the USSR today can be found only in Trotsky's unique and invaluable work 'The Revolution Betrayed', written in 1936.

The incomparable merit of Trotsky's work is that he sets out not to make an academic investigation of social relations in the USSR, but to dialectically analyse the USSR, its history, origins, economic development and political degeneration, from the standpoint of the world revolution and the building of a revolutionary leadership in the world working class.

Trotsky writes not as a neutral observer in a metaphorical ivory tower, but as a conscious and passionate participant in the struggle to create the first workers' state and — more important — to regenerate it through the world revolution.

The book itself is a tribute to the colossal intellectual courage and audacity of Trotsky. Written at the height of the ideological and political reaction of the 1930s, and the Moscow Trials, he was keenly aware of the enormous hostility the book would provoke in the ruling bureaucracy of the USSR and the scepticism it would evoke from the army of fellow-travellers and agents abroad who argued that any criticisms of the USSR would impede socialist construction and facilitate imperialist aggression. Trotsky's reply in the concluding pages of the book succinctly summarises the aim of his work:

'In reality a Marxist criticism, which calls things by their real names, can only increase the conservative credit of the Soviet diplomacy in the eyes of the bourgeoisie.'

'It is otherwise with the working class and its sincere champions among the intelligentsia. Here our work will actually cause doubts and evoke distrust — not of the revolution, but of its usurpers. But that is the very goal we have set ourselves. The motor force of progress is truth and not lies.' (Revolution Betrayed, New Park Publications, p.308)

Indeed, no book of Trotsky's has provoked the ire of the bureaucracy as much as 'Revolution Betrayed'. The very title makes the purpose of the book and the character of the author inescapably and challengingly clear. Stalin's answer however did not come in the form of a written reply, but, typically, in that of an assassin with an ice-pick four years later in Mexico.

Stalin's criminal deed only gave additional corroboration to the absolute correctness of Trotsky's analytical method and the substance of his conclusions. What was the gist of these conclusions?

The most important was the fact that the Soviet socialist revolution was not an

accident of history. Nor was it an unnatural disaster which, as the Mensheviks argued, was the product of a Bolshevik 'conspiracy'.

It was the inevitable and legitimate product of history which does not proceed in a uniform, straight-line and gradual way, but in a contradictory, uneven and spasmodic manner.

Necessary

'Russia took the road of proletarian revolution, not because her economy was the first to become ripe for socialist change, but because she could not develop further on a capitalist basis. Socialisation of the means of production had become a necessary condition for bringing the country out of barbarism. That is the law of combined development for backward countries.' (Revolution Betrayed, p.5)

If the contradictory combination of a backward semi-Asiatic despotism with modern industry, commerce and a proletariat enabled the political conditions for a victorious socialist revolution to mature first in Russia and not Western Europe, as Marx had predicted, nevertheless the technical and cultural backwardness of Russia demanded that the revolution be carried into Western Europe in order that socialist construction and planned economy could be completed victoriously.

But the defeats of the working class in the post-revolution period and the isolation of the USSR from the resources of world economy held back the development of Soviet economy and permitted the swift rise of a privileged bureaucracy which, in a few years, usurped political power from the working class through purges and frame-up trials and established a plebiscitary regime which prevails to this day.

As Trotsky wrote:

'While the first attempt to create a state cleansed of bureaucratism fell foul, in the first place, of the unfamiliarity of the masses with self-government, the lack of qualified workers devoted to socialism, etc., it very soon after these immediate difficulties encountered others more profound.'

Functions

'That reduction of the state to functions of "accounting and control", with a continual narrowing of the functions of compulsion, demanded by the party programme, assumed at least a relative condition of general contentment. Just this necessary condition was lacking. No help came from the West. The power of the democratic Soviets proved cramping, even unendurable, when the task of the day was to accommodate those privileged groups whose existence was necessary for

defence for industry, technique and science. In this decidedly not "socialist" operation, taking from ten and giving to one, there crystallised out and developed a powerful caste of specialists in distribution.' (Ibid, p.59)

Lenin, Trotsky and the Bolsheviks were deeply imbued with the perspective of the European and world socialist revolutions as the precondition for the victory of socialism in Russia.

'... there is no doubt that if the proletarian revolution had triumphed in Germany — a thing that was prevented solely and exclusively by the Social Democrats — the economic development of the Soviet Union as well as of Germany would have advanced with such gigantic strides that the fate of Europe and the world would today have been incomparably more auspicious.' (Ibid, p.23)

The failure of the German revolution was the greatest single factor in hastening the victory of the new caste of officials who now not only administered the nationalised industry, but also acquired the political right to dispose of the surplus product of Soviet society.

The political degeneration, however, was accompanied by indubitable and significant economic successes made possible by the new property relations and planned economy. This development in conditions of isolation from world economy was achieved only at the price of stimulating essentially bourgeois tendencies in the distribution of income and the system of work — wages and wage differentials — which intensified social inequality and parasitism.

These inequalities also prevail within the collective farm peasantry whose land, although technically nationalised, is leased to them in perpetuity. These and many other violations of nationalised economy are encouraged if not tolerated by the bureaucracy in order to preserve its bonapartist rule against the working class.

The defeats, combined with the technical and cultural problems and the economic successes, enabled the bureaucracy to establish a relative independence of the masses, exemplified by the bonapartist regime of Stalin.

It did so by the triple process of transforming the Bolshevik Party from the organisation of the proletarian vanguard into an instrument for the exercise of its own power, of converting the trade unions from organisations of class training and defence into bureaucratic organs of state administration and of completely emasculating the Soviets under the terms of the 1936 constitution so as to change their very character of living workers' organs of struggle and power. Not only are Soviets now based on geographical divisions, but the



The death mask of Leon Trotsky, acquired by the Workers Revolutionary Party in the week of the Trotsky Centenary celebrations. It was presented for auction in Paris in late October after being kept a secret for 39 years

vote of workers and peasants are equalised.

Does this give any credence to the theory of 'state capitalism' and bureaucratic collectivism? Trotsky's answer is a categorical NO. Despite its reactionary, parasitic character and its insatiable appetite for consuming a disproportionate share of the national income, the bureaucracy's position and privileges remain rooted in state property and the collective farms. The bureaucracy having politically appropriated the working class distorts the new property relations in its own interest but has not overthrown them.

This factor is decisive in the characterisation of the Soviet Union.

So the USSR — Tony Cliff and the 'state capitalist' Socialist Workers' Party notwithstanding — remains a workers' state though a degenerate one.

Is it then possible to reform the bureaucracy as the revisionists of the Unified Secretariat alleged? Here too, Trotsky's analysis leaves no room for sedative

generalities and equivocal answers.

'The social meaning of the Soviet Thermidor now begins to take form before us. The poverty and cultural backwardness of the masses has again become incarnate in the malignant figure of the ruler with a great club in his hand. The deposed and abused bureaucracy, from being a servant of society, has again become its lord. On this road it has attained such a degree of social and moral alienation from the popular masses, that it cannot now permit any control over either its activities or its incomes.' (Ibid, p.113. Emphasis added)

It has all the vices and none of the virtues of the early bourgeoisie. It prefers to remain anonymous within the social census. To do otherwise would be to challenge its basic assumption that socialism in one country has been achieved irrevocably.

This theory is aimed principally against the development of revolution in the West and seeks to defend the

bureaucracy's power and privileges by converting the foreign working classes into a means for neutralising the world bourgeoisie with secret diplomacy and betraying the socialist revolution.

Anticipating the Stalin-Hitler pact of 1939 Trotsky wrote: 'Diplomatic agreements, as a certain chancellor with some reason once remarked are only "scraps of paper". It is nowhere written that they must survive even up to the outbreak of the war.'

Truly prophetic! The real defence of the USSR is inextricably bound up with the transformation of imperialist war into civil war against the bourgeoisie and the extension of the world socialist revolution into and beyond Western Europe.

To defend the USSR is to carry forward the world socialist revolution. To overthrow imperialism in the West is to regenerate the USSR by creating the conditions for the political revolution against the bureaucracy.

Michael Banda



Exterior of Trotsky's house in the Avenida Viena, Coyoacan, Mexico City, where Stalin's agents and trained murderer struck the fatal blow against the co-leader of the 1917 Russian Revolution



Trotsky's study at Coyoacan, the scene of his assassination

In defence of Marxism

THIS book is a collection of articles and letters written by Leon Trotsky just a few months before he was assassinated by an agent of Stalin.

They relate to a struggle which had broken out in the Socialist Workers Party of the United States about the class nature of the Soviet Union.

It all started towards the end of 1939, approximately 40 years ago, just after World War II had begun. Trotsky's leading opponent was one Professor James Burnham, who combined in a common faction against Trotsky with some prominent leaders of the SWP, such as Max Schachtman and Martin Abern (both now dead). The political basis of the faction was the rejection of the dialectical materialist method.

Shortly after the dispute was decided by a majority of the SWP in Trotsky's favour, Burnham deserted the SWP and became a spokesman for neo-fascist ideology, which he remains to this day. Meanwhile, as we shall see, history has entirely vindicated the political positions defended by Trotsky.

The theme of the dispute concerned the class nature of the Soviet Union on the eve of World War II. Trotsky insisted that despite the counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinist bureaucracy, it remained essentially a degenerated workers' state and should be defended by the international working class in the event of imperialist attack.

Burnham and the opposition rejected Trotsky's analysis. They described the Soviet Union as a 'bureaucratic collectivist' state in which all the gains of the October Revolution of 1917 were lost. They insisted that in the event of imperialist attack it should be treated the same as any other impe-

rialist state and not defended by the international working class. Burnham was the driving force behind this position.

Commenting on their revisionist theories Trotsky remarked: 'It is not surprising that the theoreticians of the opposition who reject dialectic thought capitulate lamentably before the contradictory nature of the USSR. However the contradiction between the social basis laid down by the revolution, and the character of the caste which arose out of the degeneration of the revolution is not only an irrefutable historical fact, but also a motor force. In our struggle for the overthrow of the bureaucracy we base ourselves on this contradiction.' ('In Defence of Marxism' p.69)

Trotsky's task was not an easy one. It was not simply a question of defeating those who were capitulating before imperialist pressure and abandoning the defence of the Soviet Union as an outpost of the world revolution.

He was called upon to re-educate the members and cadres of the SWP as well as the Fourth International, founded by him in 1938, in Marxism as a scientific world outlook. This is the method of dialectical materialism. If this method were to be abandoned by the Fourth International it would become what Trotsky described as an organisation like a 'clock without a spring'.

The dialectical method:

On page 66 (New Park publications edition) he briefly explained the historical implications of the dialectical method in the following condensed way.

'We call our dialectic, materialist, since its roots are

neither in heaven nor in the depths of our 'free will' but in objective reality, in nature. Consciousness grew out of the unconscious, psychology out of physiology, the organic world out of the inorganic, the solar system out of the nebulae. On all the rungs of this ladder of development, the quantitative changes were transformed into qualitative. Our thought, including dialectical thought, is only one of the forms of the expression of changing matter. There is a place within this system for neither God, nor Devil, nor immortal soul, nor eternal norms of laws and morals. The dialectic of thinking, having grown out of the dialectic of nature, possesses consequently a thoroughly materialistic character.' (Our emphasis)

Dialectical Nature is the material source of the evolution of dialectical human beings. Their thoughts reflect the dialectical and universal self-movement of matter. Nature objectively predominates over them whilst they are united with it (Being).

At the same time in creating their own means of subsistence, they take from Nature the food and air that they require in order to live. In this way they are not only united with Nature but are in conflict with it.

Thus contained within the unity is the conflict between man and nature which is manifested today in the conflict between private capitalist ownership of the means of production (tools, factories etc) and the mode of production in which the working class sell their labour power — the source of all value — to the capitalist.

Under a contract with him they produce and manufacture products which embody far greater value than that for which they are paid in wages. The working class

are an oppressed class, denied by the selfishness of the profit motive full access to what they are entitled from Nature.

Hence the manifestation of the conflict between man and Nature takes the form of the class struggle in society.

Man's unity and conflict with Nature, is reflected in dialectical thought from 'Being' Positive (unity of man with Nature) to 'Not Being' Negative, which is the abstract of universal unity contained in 'Being'. From this 'whole' (Being) emerges the parts through 'Not Being' (abstraction). These parts containing the whole appear as essence in countless finite forms through Semblance: Appearance and Actuality the sub-divisions of Essence.

This movement of Positive into Negative and Negative into Positive is through the interpenetration (transition) and transformation of them into one another as opposites. Concrete into abstract, content into form etc., obliges us to dialectically analyse Thought as 'one of the expressions of changing matter'.

Out of the Concrete (Positive) comes Abstraction (Negative). Thus, a combination of abstractions arises which the self-movement of matter manifests in the class struggle. This brings us closer to the reality of that struggle, enabling us to develop new practices corresponding to the revolutionary requirements of that struggle.

Materiality of Thought:

The 'thoroughly materialist character' of dialectical thinking is that it sensuously grasps the moment or moments of Universal indeterminate Nature and transforms them into thought.

'Consciousness grew out of the unconscious' says Trotsky and, as Engels before him explained, it is 'Being which determines consciousness'. It is therefore essential that we perceive these materialist elements in our dialectical thought.

If consciousness is to grow out of unconsciousness the whole historical movement must be incorporated in dialectical thought.

Human beings, as Feuerbach explains, possess no more and no less than five senses to perceive material reality. These senses have developed and matured dialectically from Nature during the pre-history of man and before, and they are still maturing and developing.

Unconscious Nature must find its historical expression in our dialectical mode of thinking if we are to guide our dialectical revolutionary practice today. Only in this way can we express the objective reality in thought and language. Otherwise the thoughts and the word forms which express them in language are empty.

This thoroughly revisionist method is called 'critical philosophy' and it has been brazenly paraded as 'Marxism' by several political shades of idealist renegades from Trotskyism since he was assassinated.

Pragmatists on the other hand insist that it is 'facts' which must dominate dialectical thought. They reserve the right to arbitrarily select the 'facts' depending on which side of the fence they are on.

But all 'facts' are derived from previous abstractions and fall behind the changing dialectical implications of the self-movement of matter as reflected in thought. The 'Concrete', as Trotsky emphasises, is a combination of abstractions, not an

arbitrary or subjective combination, but one that corresponds to the laws of the movement of a given phenomenon!

The word 'laws' here refers to the form of dialectical laws, whose contact is the essential relation, interconnection and transition of all particles of matter in motion which must be manifested and revealed as the content of these 'laws'.

The pragmatist with his eternal, for all time, fixed conception of 'facts' rejects the need to study dialectical laws in their transition into one another in thought. 'Facts' which are used to determinate the indeterminate universal whole of Nature, must reveal the transition of this Universal whole into the determinate **factual thought** derived from previous objective practice.

The transition of 'Being' into 'other', as the abstract of this 'Being' (Universal, indeterminate Being) must be dialectically understood. The external infinite world existing independently of Man and his mind contains within itself the power of reflection.

The concept must, as Lenin and Hegel insisted, be 'determined out of itself', (the thing must be considered in its relations and development). The conscious relative concept must be determined out of the indeterminate unconscious, universal 'whole', otherwise it is relative 'facts' interpreting relative 'facts' or 'thought interpreting thought', as was Hegel's idealist mistake.

The passage of the 'other' (abstract concept) of the Universal first moment of thought, interpenetrate the abstract factual knowledge which we already have acquired thus establishing a

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

Review

Revolutionary heritage can

'The Tragedy of Leon Trotsky' by Ronald Segal. Hutchinson £2.50.

THIS book has received a great deal of publicity in the Press and on television. It is claimed by the publishers to be a 'major reassessment' published to mark the centenary of Trotsky's birth.

And yet Segal has carried out no original research, quotes no Russian sources, bases himself entirely on biographies already written (and especially Deutscher's), and into the bargain, simply ignores many of the most important works of Trotsky.

Why all the fuss then? It is because Mr Segal, in the guise of an admirer of Trotsky, has spent 400 pages trying to cut him down to size.

That is, to the size of the middle-class intelligentsia.

By discrediting both the Marxist theory and the Marxist practice (leadership) of Trotsky, at the same time praising him as artist, writer and noble individual, writers like Segal serve to appropriate Trotsky to their own world, thereby to rob the working class and the revolutionary movement of their most priceless heritage, the continuity of revolutionary Marxism, represented by Trotsky during and after Lenin's lifetime.

Segal himself notes that the 'selective revelations' about Stalinism by Khrushchev and his successors stop at Trotsky, and that this is because in Trotsky lives the Revolution itself.

But he does not draw any conclusions. It is impossible to grasp the historical significance of Trotsky's life and work if you ignore completely his last major work 'In Defence of Marxism' (1939-1940). Here he summed up the lessons of a whole revolutionary generation.

'It is historical experience that the greatest revolution in all history was not led by the party which started off with bombs, but by the party which started with dialectical materialism.' (New Park Publications, page 100.)

For Mr Segal dialectical materialism does not exist.

As if that were not enough, Segal finds it possible to deal with the Fourth International in just one paragraph in the whole book! And even then, it is only in order to illustrate 'how few of the faithful were left'. The founding document of the Fourth International, Trotsky's 'Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International' ('Transitional Programme') is nowhere mentioned in this book.

Now it is no use Segal complaining that he wasn't discussing that question in his 'major reassessment'. After all, the struggle to defend and regenerate the Third International, and after 1933, to build the Fourth International, was declared by Trotsky himself to be the most important work of his life.

Not only that, Segal permits himself to serve up the usual warmed-over garbage



TROTSKY — A youth in exile; Heading the Brest Litovsk delegation in 1918; Leader of the Red Army; In 1924, shortly after Lenin's death; Exiled in Prinkipo . . . then Mexico

about Trotsky's expectations of revolution after World War II being misplaced.

History has qualified the perceptions of Trotsky. Capitalism was not, as Trotsky maintained to the end of his life, in its death throes. (p404) How is it possible even to discuss this (leave aside any 'major reassessment') without even considering the existence of Trotsky's own conception of the epoch, namely, that the era of capitalist decay, a historical crisis of all humanity, was concentrated in a crisis of revolutionary leadership of the working class.

Ignores

It is to avoid this, knowingly or not, that Segal ignores the Transitional Programme.

Here, in the revolutionary role of the working class and the building of its own conscious leadership, is the whole content of the historical period, and of the lives of Lenin and Trotsky. This is 'missed out' by Segal. To commemorate Trotsky's centenary outside of that, is to fly in the face of everything Trotsky lived for. Segal's own attitude to this working class is as contemptuous as it is to the revolutionary movement. According to him:

'Capitalism . . . has discovered remedies for some of its ailments. And it has, as an essential part of the process, so transformed the labour force of industrial advancement that this bears scarcely any resemblance to the proletariat of the revolutionary texts. In place of one united by destitution and despair, is one, at least in the main, divided by distinctions of prosperity and addicted to hire-purchase hope. In place of a leadership driven to confront that state as the directorate of private capital, is one that belongs to the board of the mixed economy.'

Without acknowledgment, here is all the rubbish developed by Marcuse, Goldmann and other enemies of Marxism and then adopted by all the revisionist theorists of 'neo-capitalism', like Mandel. Not content with condemning the working class for 'hire purchase addiction', Segal ends up by blaming the workers for

their own reactionary leadership.

With the same middle-class arrogance he dismisses the revolutionary movement . . . Trotskyism is 'a factional disorder'. With Trotskyism and the working class disposed of in a few sentences, the way is left clear for Segal and his friends to re-make Trotsky in their own image.

It is this combination of ignorance and arrogance that makes Segal ignore totally all that has been revealed by the International Committee's investigations into the GPU and FBI penetration into Trotsky's household and into the Trotskyist movement before and after his assassination.

By referring to Joseph Hansen as 'one of Trotsky's secretaries' and then repeating without comment from Deutscher's 'Prophet Outcast' the story of Trotsky's last words to Hansen, and saying not another word about this proven FBI agent and collaborator with the GPU, Segal lends a hand to the Stalinists and their agents as well as to the US State Department.

The notorious Etienne, the

GPU agent in the Fourth International who delivered Trotsky's son Sedov for GPU assassination in Paris in 1938, is also mentioned only in passing, as having turned out to be one Marc Zborowski, who later confessed his role, in the course of a United States espionage trial.

But Segal 'forgets' to tell his readers that Zborowski still works as a respectable Professor of Anthropology, forgets the IC's exposure of the whole network of agents like Sylvia Franklin, a GPU plant who was personal secretary to James Cannon, leader of the American Trotskyist movement.

In place of this actual struggle between Stalinism and Trotskyism, the always necessary struggle to wrest the historical truth from the class enemy and its agents, the only real continuation of Trotsky's work, Segal puts his own 'insight', his psychological speculation about the 'real' Trotsky. This is why his work is a travesty of the truth, and not at all the sympathetic presentation of Trotsky that he and his reviewers claim.

Segal's version of the historical role of Trotsky, and

particularly his struggle against Stalinism, contains so many contradictions and is marred by so many omissions that it is possible only to indicate the most important of these, so that perhaps some lessons can be learned along the way.

Those who seek to understand the real history of the struggle will turn to Trotsky's own autobiography ('My Life', published by Pelican) and to his many theoretical and historical works, only a few of which have been considered, by Segal, and then only to extract what serves his purpose, taken out of context.

Rewrites

Segal rewrites history in order to get to the conclusion that revolutionary practice is not and cannot ever be consistent with revolutionary theory and human dignity. Thus on p175 he writes of 'a gap, between what he [Trotsky] recognised as right for the revolution and what he believed to be right for the revolutionary, which he could never manage to close.' This is in truth the exact opposite of the meaning of Trotsky's

life, in which he subordinated everything to the necessity of proletarian revolution and the struggle for revolutionary Marxism.

Segal thinks he knows better. He says, on the question of Trotsky's pre-1917 criticisms of Lenin's methods of party building: 'His break with Lenin had been so imperatively right, as if it were a self-evident truth (as of course it is to the dilettante). Naturally he ignores Trotsky's own verdict, at the end of his life, on these matters, again in 'In Defence of Marxism'.

'I had not freed myself at that period, especially in the organisational sphere, from the traits of a petty-bourgeois revolutionist.'

Segal likes to pontificate, from his own elevated pedestal of morality, about the 'unworthy' action of Trotsky, keeping revolutionary discipline, in affirming Lenin's pre-1917 correctness against him, in 1925, but of course chose to ignore (thus showing his own 'morality') Trotsky's considered and open statements on these matters in 1939-1940.

Segal's whole presentation of the relations between

● FROM PAGE 5

unity whose content is essence. This has already unified the content of the universal knowledge which we are acquiring and the abstract knowledge ('facts') which we have already acquired. Dialectical essence stands higher than 'facts' because it grasps the movement as against fixed facts.

Whole and parts

Out of the Universal indeterminate dialectical 'whole' emerges dialectical determinate concepts which are parts of this whole. The dialectical actualising of these parts in the world of reality thus enables us to reveal necessity in the emergence of abstract notions, negated into the idea which in turn guides our objective practice. In this dialectical process the 'whole' infinite, absolute, must be analysed as the absolute (abstract universal) within the relative finite part.

One of the most important

verifications of Trotsky's defence of the Soviet Union is today revealed in the development of the dialectical method by Soviet scientists, particularly in the field of non-classified physics.

Those of us engaged in the training of cadres in the use of the dialectical theory and practice of Cognition, have, thanks to the Soviet scientists, a gold-mine of information verifying the dialectical developments of the sciences.

And yet, despite those achievements, Soviet scientists are obliged to concentrate only on the parts revealed in their investigations and experiments in their particular department of science. They are still blighted by the reformist theory of Stalin's 'socialism in a single country'.

The Soviet Union is only part of the international whole of the world. Without

world revolution, this part cannot survive. 'Socialism in a single country' meant the subordination of the international whole of world revolution to one of its parts.

Stalin's narrow nationalist approach is presently embodied in the Brezhnev bureaucratic leadership. Thus Soviet scientists cannot start from the whole because that would be to start from the world revolution and its effects on the sciences, and this in turn would bring them into head on collision with the bureaucracy.

The Soviet philosopher E.V. Ilyenkov in the introduction to his book on 'Dialectical Logic' refers to the problem as follows:

'In the past ten or 15 years quite a few works have been written devoted to separate branches that are part of the whole of which we still only dream, they can justly be regarded as paragraphs, even

chapters of the future logic, as more or less finished blocks of the building being erected. One cannot, or course, cement these 'blocks' mechanically into a whole.' ('Dialectical Logic' p.5)

Quite so. To understand parts, we must start with the whole and not just 'cement the parts together'. To understand the whole we must analyse the dialectical implications of the parts which arise out of the whole.

We must abstract this dialectical infinite 'whole' within the finite part and the interconnections between infinite and finite as well as with other objects under consideration. Lower down in the same page Ilyenkov reveals mild frustration with this dilemma he finds himself in. His next paragraph exclaims:

'In philosophy, more than in any other science as Hegel

In defence of Ma

not be smothered



Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin becomes total distortion because he separates in this way the personal behaviour of revolutionaries from the working class and from the concrete struggle to build the revolutionary party and develop Marxism. The depth of Segal's ignorance is shown by his statement that '... there, in the liberation of the mind, lay the source of Trotsky's morality.'

With this medieval baggage he attempts a 'major reassessment' of the life-work of Trotsky, who from his youth understood how to begin in everything from Marx's materialist discovery that the emancipation of the working class is the task of the working class itself, and died fighting for dialectical materialism as the theory and practice for that liberation.

Discovery

This brings us to Segal's staggering discovery of why Trotsky did not win the battle in the Bolshevik Party against Stalin and the bureaucracy which lay behind him. Apparently Trotsky misjudged Stalin's nature.

What is more, he shared this underestimation with Lenin. They failed to understand what Segal and every clever commentator knows, that bureaucracy comes from the Party itself, so that it will always be open to use by a personality like Stalin.

What these gentlemen never can explain is how such a bureaucratically doomed organisation could successfully lead the October Revolution, after transforming itself in a struggle between February and October 1917.

The other side of this is that they never explain the objective historical conditions under which the Bolshevik Party was turned into an instrument of counter-revolution. For Segal and his like, there are only individuals, with greater or lesser degrees of intelligence, foresight, moral fibre, talent and so on. He complains that in Trotsky's writings 'we are denied any real understanding of how the revolution went wrong' (p.326). So that 'we must question the nature of a revolution which Stalin could come to command'.

Where can one begin? Stalin did not come to command the revolution of

course. He emerged, as Trotsky said (quoted by Segal himself) as candidate for 'gravedigger of the revolution'.

What he 'commanded' were the forces of counter-revolution. The fact that these forces were there and that Stalin provided the most satisfactory representative is precisely what Trotsky did explain, and moreover, combatted, first with Lenin and then without him.

Confusion

Segal's own 'explanation' is utter confusion: 'Trotsky was never to understand Stalin, even at the end', he says, and for Segal this 'understanding' Stalin is a thousand times more important than understanding Stalinism. For all his expressed hostility to Stalinism, his own 'explanation' is only another version of that given by the Stalinist bureaucracy — there was a 'cult of the individual'.

His criticism of Trotsky is that he should have seen Stalinism in the Stalin of 1923, or 1917, or 1905. That the actual 'individuality' or historical role of each individual in history is the totality of his social relations, the product of the objective struggle of class forces, this understanding we cannot expect from Segal. He accuses Trotsky and Lenin of the 'assumption that politics was merely the shadow of economics' (p.389).

Conscious

It goes without saying that neither Trotsky nor Lenin was so simple-minded as to understand historical materialism to mean anything so abstract and mechanical. They knew very well that politics is a matter for conscious decision by revolutionaries on the basis of a constant struggle to abstract from objective reality its essential meaning.

What Segal is actually telling us is that Marxism itself, historical materialism in this case, is wrong, and this led Trotsky and Lenin to underestimate the role of that great individual Joseph Stalin. No wonder then, that, as we have noticed, Segal thinks the fight for dialectical materialism ('In Defence

of Marxism') to be totally irrelevant to his 'major reassessment'.

After all his complaints that Trotsky failed to explain the rise of Stalin, we get his own very short answer: The government of the Soviet Union under Stalin was in substance a personal despotism with the appearance of bureaucracy! Now isn't that brilliantly simple? How could we all have missed it before? Is it not obvious that 180 million people can be ruled by one man?

Even the documents which Segal does quote and which are now well-known, make nonsense of his claim that Stalin was imposed on Russia by Lenin's and Trotsky's misjudgements. Lenin wrote, on January 4, 1923:

'Stalin is too rude, and this facet, quite tolerable in our midst or in relations among communists, becomes intolerable in one who holds the office of general secretary. Therefore I propose to the comrades that they consider a means of removing Stalin from that post and appointing to it another person who in all respects differs from Stalin in one advantage alone, namely that he is more patient, more loyal, more polite and more considerate to comrades, less capricious and so forth.'

The fact, however, of Stalin's mediocrity proves that it was the weight of the objective forces of counter-revolution that made it impossible at that stage of history for Lenin and Trotsky and their supporters to win against the bureaucracy. It does not, of course, occur to Segal that the carrying through of the fight, the development of Marxism through the whole period of defeats in the 1920s and 1930s was just as vital if not more vital, than in the years of victory.

His notion of the tragic hero lacks any historical concreteness, because he cannot see the relation between these actions of historical individuals on the one hand and the struggle of classes and parties on the other.

Most of Segal's book, for example, is concerned with the aftermath of the Russian Revolution and the rise of Stalinism. And yet the most central works of Trotsky in



One of the most famous pictures of Trotsky — addressing Red Army troops from the top of an armoured train called 'Guard of the Revolution' during the Civil War period of 1918

this period might as well never have appeared.

'The Third International After Lenin' does not even make the 'Select Bibliography' at the end, let alone a discussion. Yet it was there that Trotsky explained exhaustively the strategy of world revolution and exposed the revisionist doctrine of 'socialism in a single country' upon which Stalin built his faction.

Without this, Segal's thumbnail sketch of Trotsky's 'Where is Britain Going' and his criticism of Comintern policy in China are worse than useless. He sees the former work as one in which Trotsky sought to 'persuade the British workers' (p. 291) of the nature of their reformist leaders and revolutionary traditions and tasks. In China, he details the Stalin leadership's collaboration with the Chiang Kai Shek regime against the Chinese Communists.

Important

But he simply ignores the most important questions of all. These were: first that in China and in Britain defeat was assured by a right-centrist policy which abandoned the revolutionary independence of the party; and second, that these and other defeats had an objective role, without which the impact of individuals is incomprehensible.

'The growth of the economic and political pressure of the bureaucratic and petty-bourgeois strata within the country [the Soviet Union] on the basis of defeats of the proletarian revolution in Europe and Asia — that was the historical chain which tightened around the neck of the Opposition during those four years.' ('Third International After Lenin')

There is more wisdom in these few lines than in a thousand books by Segal, of whom Trotsky might have been thinking when he concluded the paragraph:

'Whoever fails to understand this will understand nothing.' Quite so.

In conclusion, Segal's combination of flippancy with apparent ignorance when it comes to Trotsky's theoretical work should be contrasted with his estimate of Stalin's. We have said that Segal adds nothing (and even subtracts a great deal from) the work of others who have written on Trotsky and Stalinism, but that is perhaps unkind.

He is the only one, at least since 1956, to discover an element of original theoretical genius in Joseph Stalin. He tells us (p.32) of Stalin, that: 'His success was in large measure due to his doctrine of socialism in a single country, which enabled him to support his system at home with the appeal of nationalism, and subordinate the parties abroad to Soviet national interests. For Trotsky, this was the supreme socialist heresy. Yet he refuses the distinction of originating that the founder of so momentous a heresy would deserve'.

This is another of those passages which defies all logic in deciding where to begin in criticising it. Is the test of an original theory that it 'works' in bolstering a bureaucracy? Is that Marxism or pragmatism? Was 'Soviet national interest' the same thing as the interest of the Stalinist bureaucracy?

Come now, Mr Segal!

More to the point, even, does Segal really think that the 'theory' was invented at the very start to scrap world revolution and prepare for Stalin's later development?

Trotsky exposed that simple-minded nonsense many times. It was the defeats brought about by a Stalin-Molotov-Bukharin leadership, seeking to win revolutionary struggles with right-centrist policies, which led eventually to the fatal degree of independence of the party bureaucracy from the masses and the tyranny of the 1930s and after.

History is not the gladiatorial combat of the Gods and devils that Segal (one of the angels) thinks it to be.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

rxism

remarked with some regret in his PHENOMENOLOGY OF MIND, 'the end or final result seems... to have absolutely expressed the complete fact itself in its very nature: contrasted with that the mere process of bringing it to light would seem, properly speaking, to have no essential significance.'

'That is very aptly put. So long as dialectics (dialectical logic) is looked upon as a simple tool for proving a previously accepted thesis (irrespective of whether it was initially advanced as the rules of medieval disputes required, or only disclosed at the end of the argument, in order to create the illusion of not being preconceived, that is of saying "Look here is what we have obtained although we did not assume it"), it will remain something of "no essential significance". When dialectics is converted into a simple tool for proving

a previously accepted (or given) thesis, it becomes a sophistry only outwardly resembling dialectics, but empty of content.' ('Dialectical Logic' p.6)

The emphasis which Soviet scientists and philosophers place on the dialectical method is undoubtedly attributable to the power of the October Revolution which lives on in the nationalised property relations established in that revolution. It certainly isn't advocated in the writings of those scientists tied to the idealist capitalist methods of thinking in the West.

Thus the dialectical method, which starts from the whole and not the parts, expounded by Trotsky in 'In Defence of Marxism' makes it one of the most important books ever compiled.

G. Healy

Revolutionary heritage is not smothered

● FROM PAGE 7

But, of course, the biggest error of all — and perhaps the sharpest exposure of Segal's incompetence in this field — is his supposition that 'socialism in a single country' was something invented by Stalin.

Segal had only to read Trotsky to discover that the theory was a repetition of that which surfaced 30 years earlier in the right wing of German social democracy, where it was fully expounded by one Herr Vollmar. So much for Stalin's originality. (See 'The Third International after Lenin'.)

The reader will not be surprised, given these omissions and distortions on the most basic matters, by Segal's failure to deal with all sorts of important questions and his total blindness to the truth on others. For example, he refers on p. 373 to 'the Trotskyist POUM' even though there are literally volumes of articles, books and correspondence of Trotsky exposing the abandonment of Trotskyism which was represented not only by the policy of this party but also by the decision to form it. Only someone who knows literally nothing of Trotsky's positions on

Spain and on the building of the Fourth International, or who wants to distort them, could write such things.

No doubt capitalist publishers and media men will have many more, and equally reactionary things to say and do on this centenary of the man who, along with Lenin, ranks as the greatest of this century, because he struggled successfully to mobilise and develop all the physical and mental resources at his command to build the necessary leadership for the proletarian revolution.

That is a historical role and personal discipline that is impossible to conceive for a middle-class intellectual, however 'radical', who has not re-made himself through a struggle for the Marxist scientific world outlook.

Trotsky's centenary will be celebrated by the Workers Revolutionary Party as a re-affirmation and a development of this revolutionary task.

The centenary will also see works like Segal's, and not all as amateurish as his in their attempt to either condemn Trotsky or turn him into a 'harmless icon'. Let this be a warning.

Cliff Slaughter

A poem for Trotsky's Centenary

One hundred years have passed since first you came
Into this world crying like millions who came before.
No one knew then or could suspect that history
Would march on your infant feet and from that new-born cry
Would come the tongue to move the mighty millions, Lev
Davidovitch Bronstein.

And a century on we celebrate that birth
Not like pilgrims at some voodoo shrine
Fetid with incense and incantation rife
But with the self same purpose that was your life
Warriors of the working class
To deepen and continue your historic fight
To liberate mankind and nothing less
To force the frozen circumstance to dance
By singing them their own melody.

* * *

The Russian earth, its trees and valleys
Mountains and springs, the stars and heavens
You grew to know
Not as the playthings of some Godly purpose
But that the whole wide axis of the universe
Multifarious matter in all its multifarious motion
Was first and foremost, no beginning and without end
Nature
And man a part of nature and opposed
Governed by its laws
That were not writ in letters large across the firmament
But had to be unearthed, uncovered
Brought conscious to the light of day
By the thinking mind itself
The highest form of matter.

The laws of eternal motion
Unity, conflict, interpenetration and transformation of
opposing forces.
The laws that moved the sea, the planets in their orbit
Galaxy upon galaxy in the dark reaches of space and time
Moved also the smallest mouse, the microscopic atom
Moved man
That was the real, that the true
Stripped of all its mind-made gods and demons.

Behind the mask of moments
Hidden but ever at work
The forces of change
That too would find the moment
Break through the old
Give birth the new.
That was the message, that the true.
That no emperor or bloody tyrant
Could withstand
The banker with his glittering horde
His army and his guns
Was doomed.
Nothing remains, nothing is fixed
All passes and decays, my friend.

* * *

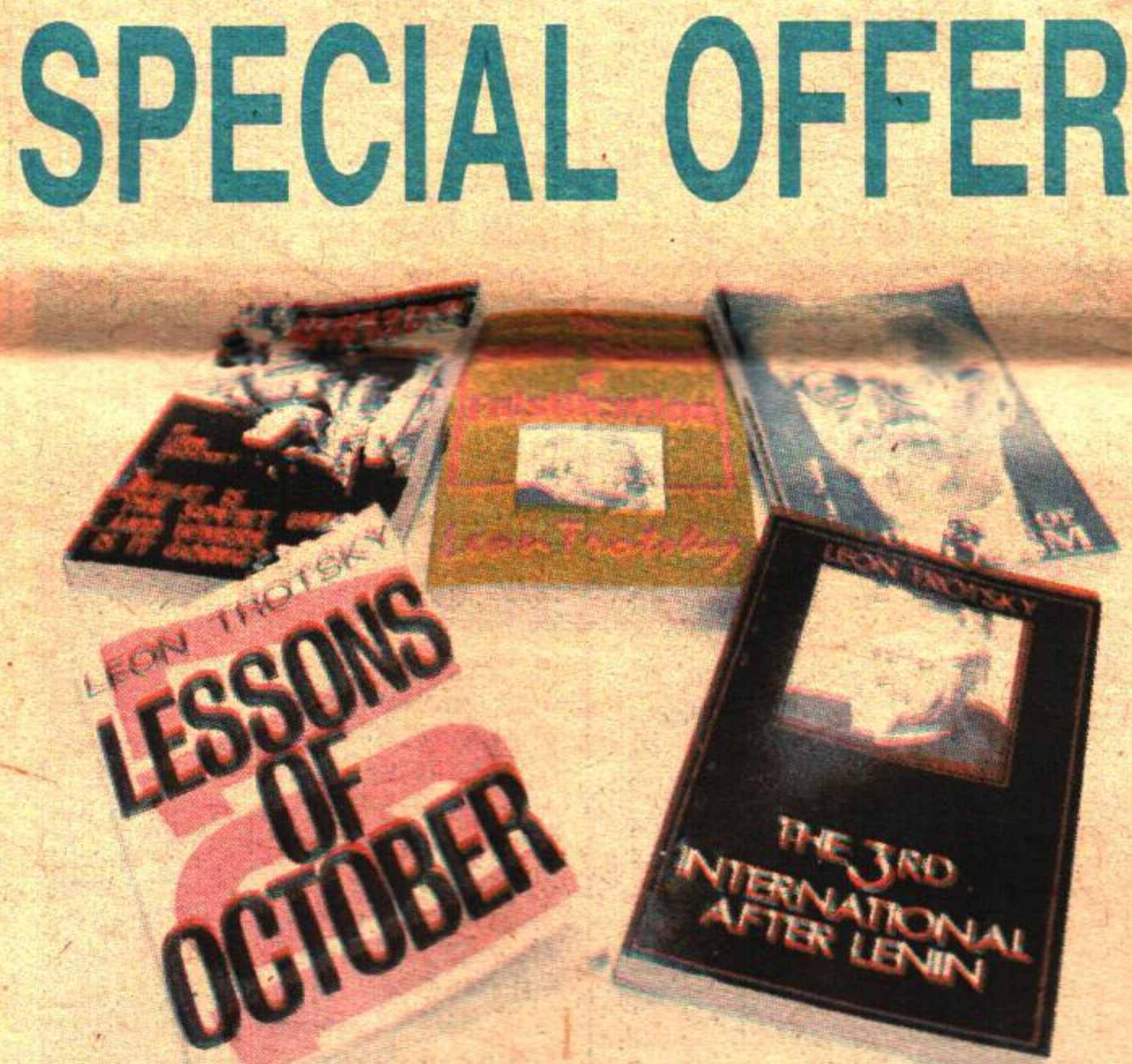
So you stood in 1917 a tribune of the people
Giving voice and form to these unalterable laws
Grasping the moment, fearful that it pass,
Urging the masses, 'Do, do, do
Take what is yours by right
Answer the call of history
And victory
Is ours.'

Trotsky, in all your later darkest hours
When reaction ruled, the fascist boot
The social democrats pushed wide the traitors gate
And Koba Stalin primed his murderous machine
All this and more
Even the bloody ice pick in your noble brain
Could not humble you
Nor force you to renege
On motion's immutable law.

Today we fight wearing your mantle
Tall upon your shoulders
When the masses of the world
Hurl tyrant after tyrant down
The tide has turned
The water rushes on
What you began is ours to finish.

Roger Smith

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