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Review

Reviewed Work(s): Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International. Documents 1907-1916: The Preparatory Years by John Riddell

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Source: *Labour / Le Travail*, Vol. 19 (Spring, 1987), pp. 214-217

Published by: Canadian Committee on Labour History and Athabasca University Press

John Riddell, ed., *Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International. Documents 1907-1916: The Preparatory Years* (New York: Monad Press 1984).

THIS VOLUME OF DOCUMENTS, the first in a series on the history of the early Communist International, begins with the proceedings from the 1907 Stuttgart congress of the Second International. It is an appropriate opening since it was at the Stuttgart congress in the aftermath of the 1905 revolution in Russia that Lenin and his followers, with others such as Rosa Luxemburg, began the lengthy and difficult process of constructing an anti-war, internationalist current within the Second International. The intention of this volume is to present the key discussions and debates that occurred between the future leaders of the new international and various anarcho-syndicalist, centrist, and reformist currents.

The documents, well translated and often appearing for the first time in English, cover more than Lenin himself. Forgotten voices such as Alfred Rosmer, Nikolai Bukharin, Gregory Zinoviev, Karl Liebknecht, Karl Radek, and Christian Rakovsky are again heard. As the names suggest, the book largely limits its choice to the two countries where the debates were focused — Russia and Germany. Unfortunately, given their role in society at the time, too few women's voices are included.

Nonetheless, there is considerable relevance in these debates for labour history and political studies in Canada. As David Bercuson noted in his *Confrontation at Winnipeg* (1974), "Lenin's success fired the imagination and spurred the efforts of socialists throughout the world." The ideas of the collection under consideration were central in the labour and socialist politics of Europe as well as in the Russian revolutions of February, and particularly October, 1917.

Following the conference at Stuttgart came the outbreak of World War I and the

reactions of various parties and political currents in the labour movement to it: the Zimmerwald conference and the development of the Zimmerwald left; the war and revolutionary crisis in Czarist Russia; the war and the crisis of German social democracy; and finally, the split in the Second International. This volume's collection of documents covers each of these in turn, ending on the eve of the Russian Revolution of February 1917. Given limited space the most appropriate way to indicate the relevance of the 604 pages of this book is to comment briefly on the three main themes of the debates covered: war; colonialism and nationalism; and bureaucracy and reformism.

By the time of the Stuttgart congress in 1907, two phenomena were evident: first, that a major war was looming; and second, that the majority of parties in the Second International counterposed reform of their respective capitalist societies to fundamental social change. Underestimating the depth of crisis, August Bebel, the central leader of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), sought to encompass both reformist and revolutionary currents in one party. In his view: "No one in German ruling circles wants war." (25) At the same time he agreed that the international should oppose war preparations — preferably all protests should go through the SPD's parliamentary deputies. Jean Jaures, the leader of the French Socialist Party, argued that conflict in the International arising from competitive European powers could be resolved by an "international court of arbitration." (30) His moderate perspective was opposed by a strong minority delegation in his own party. In the end, with the aid of Luxemburg, Lenin and Julius Martov, the congress reaffirmed previous international resolutions against "militarism and imperialism."

Nonetheless, when World War I broke out, the volume documents how most socialist members of European parliaments supported "their" government,

voted for war credits, and in some cases, such as Belgium and France, even joined war cabinets. The "Great War," as World War I was then called, proved indeed to be the greatest slaughter known to humanity up until that time. The 1916 Battle of Verdun alone took the lives of some six hundred thousand German, French, and other allied soldiers. As the war dragged on many worker supporters of socialist parties affiliated to the Second International lost whatever enthusiasm they might have had for the conflict.

International leaders, such as the SPD's Karl Kautsky, reflected these anti-war sentiments. Yet in rejecting an outright pro-war position he also opposed the clear anti-war views of Lenin and Zinoviev as articulated in their pamphlet "Socialism and War" (1915), which is reprinted in the text. Downplaying the pro-war trajectory of the International, Kautsky argued that it was "not an effective tool in wartime" as essentially it was "an instrument of peace." (148) His article, entitled "Internationalism and the War" argues that although "taking sides in war according to your national point of view clearly endangers the International . . . we certainly can rally behind a war fought to fend off enemy invasion." (146) The essence of Kautsky's position is perhaps best contained in his own slogan of "struggle for peace; class struggle in peacetime."

Trotsky's critical anti-war reply to Kautsky, entitled "War and the International" (150), is a valuable inclusion lending balance to the debate. It was first serialized in the Paris Russian-language daily *Golos (Voice)*, edited by the Menshevik leader Julius Martov. When a German translation began to circulate in the German underground, editorial notes inform us that Trotsky was sentenced *in absentia* by the imperial government to several months in prison.

A second theme, running throughout the documents of the first volume published in this series concerns the relation-

ship between the European workers' movement and the peoples of what is today termed the Third World. Riddell's editorial choice is to be commended here for its balanced presentation. Readers can judge for themselves in the debate between the left in the Second International, which fought to embrace the struggle of the "oppressed nations" against colonialism, and the moderate pro-war wing which thought otherwise. Hendrick Van Kol, a leader of the Dutch Social Democratic Labour Party, for example, held that providing aid to Africa was "a theoretical pipedream:"

Suppose that we bring a machine to the savages of central Africa, what will they do with it? Perhaps they will start up a war dance around it. . . . Perhaps they should send some Europeans to run the machines. What the native peoples would do with them, I do not know. . . . Perhaps the natives will destroy our machines. Perhaps they will kill us or even eat us. . . . Therefore we must go there with weapons in hand. . . . (14)

Such racial and pro-imperial views enjoyed a surprisingly wide hearing among the relatively high income layers of the working classes in the European parties which constituted the majority of the Second International.

Lenin's Struggle for a Revolutionary International also contains excerpts from the discussion of the immigration commission initiated at the Stuttgart conference. Here, Morris Hillquit, a leader of the Socialist Party in the United States, proposed that the International support restrictions on the immigration of Asian workers. This debate echoes Canada's west coast history on the perils of the "yellow race." Hillquit claimed that Chinese and Japanese immigration "threatens the native-born with dangerous competition and . . . unconscious strike-breakers." At the same time, he admonished how he had "absolutely no racial prejudices against the Chinese. . . ." (17)

Related to what was termed the "colo-

nial question" was the "national question." Again, the historical documents of labour politics grapple with social issues still topical. In "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self Determination," Lenin argued that "Socialist parties which did not show by all their activity, both now, during the revolution and after its victory, that they would liberate the enslaved nations and build up relations with them on the basis of a free union — and a free union is a false phrase without the right to secede — these parties would be betraying socialism." (354) The world, he said, was divided into oppressed and oppressor nations, the nationalism of the former being progressive, while that of the latter, reactionary.

A third important theme in the documents published here concerns the rise of industrial capitalism, its expansion throughout the world — "imperialism" — and the resulting social stratification and socio-political consequences. Most members of the now-divided Second International favoured its reunification following the war. Even some anti-war social democrats held that the crisis of the International was due to what they termed the "opportunist" or "social chauvinist" positions of individuals under the extreme pressures of war. The Marxist wing, and it is principally Lenin, Zinoviev, and Trotsky that we hear from, held that blaming the war and individual leaders was not sufficiently explanatory. They maintained that it was necessary to understand how the "pro-imperialist" views of leaders of the International originated in the pre-war "opportunist" (reformist) currents and found their material base within sections of the working classes themselves.

They sought both explanation and verification in the earlier writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels utilizing the notions of a "labour aristocracy" and a "labour bureaucracy." In his article "The Collapse of the Second International," Lenin argued that "opportunism was engendered in the course of decades by

the special features in the period of the development of capitalism, when the comparatively peaceful and cultured life of a stratum of privileged workingmen 'bourgeoisified' them, gave them crumbs from the table of their national capitalists, and isolated them from the suffering, misery and revolutionary temper of the impoverished and ruined masses." (20)

While the above illuminates the core of Lenin's position, a single sentence cannot capture the richness of the debate. The major article included in the collection is Zinoviev's "The Social Roots of Opportunism." (475) Here he analyzes both the "revisionist" ideologies of German social democrats and their social basis. Zinoviev's research reveals that a high proportion of SPD members were from the better-paid sections of the work force. Unskilled workers composed only 14.9 per cent of the organization. In part, this situation came about as unionized workers and skilled workers were largely synonymous. Beyond the economics of the development of a "labour aristocracy" and a "labour bureaucracy" Zinoviev analyzes the social stratification of the work force from the available data, mainly the case of Berlin, then links the material condition of the upper stratum to its ideological drift into reformist and "social chauvinist" politics.

The related, but distinct, notions of a labour aristocracy and a labour bureaucracy have long been controversial among labour historians and industrial sociologists. Most have avoided the notion of a labour aristocracy — a notable exception being E.J. Hobsbawm in his book *Labouring Men* (1964). The notion of a labour bureaucracy, on the other hand, has been widely utilized. Indeed, it has been the key explanatory variable for many social theorists. But the concept, as employed by Lenin and Zinoviev, is not equitable with Max Weber's "ideal type" nor with that of most contemporary writers. In the Marxist usage employed, bureaucracy is not simply an administra-

tion carrying out decisions. Rather, it involves power and privilege for the bureaucrats. Although this section of the text avoids the balance of views manifest in earlier sections, for labour historians and sociologists the discussion on the linkage between ideology, social stratification, and bureaucracy is perhaps of most interest.

The final section of this collection of documents is appropriately entitled "Toward the New International." Again, some hitherto unavailable material is presented. Resolutions and programmatic submissions of Second International conferences, such as the one at Kienthal, record a debate on the appropriate basis for political unity and the future of the International. Manifest on the horizon is the founding of the Third International but this is the subject of the next volume in the series. The richness of historical debate on still relevant social questions, the extreme care taken in translations, and the context notations by the editor make this volume an excellent beginning to an important new series.

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Mark Halström, *Industry and Inequality: The Social Anthropology of Indian Labour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1984).

THE POST-INDEPENDENCE government of India has consciously encouraged industrial development within two sectors: a large-scale sector and a small-scale sector. The large-scale sector was emphasized in the three five-year plans initiated under Nehru (1951-66) as he sought to vitalize an underdeveloped and export-oriented economy through the creation of large, Indian-controlled units in primary industries (steel production, mining, power, and petrochemicals). This emphasis continued under Indira Gandhi; and it has seen the government direct 10 to 25

times as much investment capital into large industry as towards small. In fact, the bulk of investment in large industry has come from the government, while in small industry the larger share has been raised by small entrepreneurs. This has been a deliberate strategy: primary industry has been seen as a base for more diversified, small-scale industry. At the same time, India has chosen the path of industrial as well as agricultural self-sufficiency; and the government has used licensing controls both to limit the presence of foreign firms and to cut imports by substituting domestic products for imported ones.

Although the government concentrated on large industry, it held high hopes for the small-scale sector. Gandhi's belief in the value of handicrafts and village industries (spinning and weaving, paper-making, and pottery) exerted a powerful influence in the Nehru years. The advocates of a free and open economy, untrammelled by bureaucratic controls, also made their mark. The idea that small-scale industry was a necessary complement to large-scale industry was present from the beginning. Following Gandhi's principles, the government has subsidized cottage industries and reserved spheres of production for them. It has also tried to disperse modern industrial production by encouraging small industries. It is difficult to show that handicrafts have benefited, but small industry has. In modern India, workshops with a handful of employees using modern machinery or ingeniously adapting older technology, are integral to the economic system, supplying large factories or competing with them. Such shops make machinery parts, electronic components, pharmaceuticals, and plastics as well as textiles, ceramics, and wood, paper, and leather products. They may pay low wages and be housed in primitive sheds, yet they produce with precision technologically sophisticated objects. They fall well short of the Gandhian ideal because they are, with few