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Peter Werbe

Russia Revolution Books – Review

From Adulation of Christ to Adulation of the Leader

2018, Spring

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a review of

Bloodstained: One Hundred Years of Leninist Counterrevolution eds. Friends of Aron Baron; Luigi Fabbri, Rudolf Rocker, Nestor Makhno, Iain McKay, Alexander Berkman, Maurice Brinton, Ida Mett, Otto Wile, Emma Goldman, et al. AK Press akpress.org, 2017

The Kronstadt Uprising by Ida Mett. Theory and Practice, 2017 theoryandpractice.org.uk

Anarchist Encounters: Russia in Revolution by Emma Goldman, Gaston Leval, Angel Pestana and Jack Wilkens. The Merlin Press merlinpress.co.uk, 2017

These books, and many others, make it clear that when communists, socialists, and academics commemorated the centenary of the 1917 Russian Revolution, it was actually a celebration of the seizure of the state by Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party.

Right from the beginning, the communists began a process of eliminating their opponents, establishing state capitalism, and erecting the police state perfected under Stalin.

What is detailed in these volumes, many written during that era in which the newly created Bolshevik secret police, the Cheka, were rounding up anarchists by the hundreds and executing them in prison basements, means that Bolshevik supporters needed to ignore, then and now, a lot of information that was always available.

Anarchist sources particularly, but also liberal, and Trotskyist (once their leader lost his bureaucratic power struggle with Stalin) exposed the ruthless, authoritarian Soviet government that usurped worker and peasant control.

It is curious that leftists who know the history of the Revolution so well, find nothing peculiar about the fact that the panorama of millions of workers, peasants, and soldiers overthrowing their masters and practicing direct democracy over their lives, are quite quickly marched deliberately off the stage of history to be replaced by internecine political machinations among powerful, elite politicians, particularly, Stalin and Trotsky.

Communism's two Lasting achievements:

1) organizing and developing large scale state capitalist economies and their technological/industrial infrastructure in areas where private entrepreneurial efforts were inadequate; then turning them over to private sector ownership such as in Russia, China, and Vietnam;

2) creating the apparatus for dismantling and destroying authentic revolutionary thrusts to the point where the original scenario for revolution currently seems impossible. Bloodstained is particularly good on this point detailing the murderous treachery of Leninist parties.

The Mett title recounts the last battle against the communist dictatorship and should erase any affection for Trotsky who

was known as the Butcher of Kronstadt for his command of the repression of the last bastion of the revolution in 1921.

Millions of Russians, animated with the spirit of a new world, were suppressed by the Bolshevik bureaucrats into a single entity—the masses—a hideous term indicating a return of people to their traditional status as objects of history whose fate is determined by Great Men.

This is well illustrated in a photo showing Russian peasants holding Orthodox icon boards from which paintings of saints have been stripped and replaced by ones of Bolshevik leaders.

Not only is the psychological submission of the ruled sadly illustrated, but think, in the midst of a civil war following the Revolution, the Bolsheviks had printing presses cranking out Large photos of party members for adulation.

People sometimes ask why we are so hostile to communists and socialists. These books give the answer.