

LENIN AND THE COMINTERN, vol. 1. By *Branko Lazitch* and *Milorad M. Drachkovič*. Hoover Institution Publications, 106. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1972. xiii, 683 pp. \$17.50.

Over the years attempted syntheses of the Comintern's history have suffered from a polemical orientation that has reduced their scholarly usefulness. In large measure this book, volume 1 of a two-volume study tracing the "role of the Comintern in the life of its most important sections," falls into this category.

Nevertheless there are valuable things to be learned from the book. The landscape is familiar: the roots of the Communist movement in prewar left-wing social democracy and the first postwar years when world revolution appeared to loom large on the horizon, down to the initiation of the united-front policy at the end of 1921. But the authors deal with a dimension of the subject that never has been explored seriously in depth: the unofficial and clandestine activities of the Comintern. The description of the Comintern's official emissaries to the parties in Germany, France, and Italy particularly, throws much new light on the opinions formed and decisions taken in Moscow regarding these parties. Even more revealing is the role played by a host of unofficial emissaries dispatched by Lenin, Zinoviev, and the Comintern's Little Bureau to monitor the national sections and their leaders, often without their knowledge. Equally original is the authors' attempted reconstruction of the organization and structure of the Comintern in its early years, although the actual interaction of the various parts remains conjectural. For the first time the little-known or understood roles of the Comintern's West European Secretariat in Berlin and Western Bureau in Amsterdam are explored fully. In short, much about the conspiratorial side of the Comintern is presented for the first time, and many previous errors and assumptions are corrected in the process.

These fascinating revelations about one aspect of the Communist movement certainly warrant a monograph. A 683-page tome, which at best recapitulates the excellent recent monographic literature on various Communist parties, is more difficult to justify. But the authors have cast the early history of the Comintern in a new light: conspiratorial activities are used to give an essentially conspiratorial cast to the Comintern itself, and Lenin is presented as the master conspirator. By a Carlylean reading of history the authors contribute to the Lenin cult, but in a negative sense. Throughout the book Lenin is credited with an omnipresence in the movement and omnipotence over historical forces. He knew in 1902 what course Russian social democracy must take to come to power in 1917; he planned in 1914 how to maneuver the creation of the Third International in 1919; he foresaw in 1917 that the Western socialist parties had to be split along Bolshevik/Menshevik lines. Even where Lenin was not involved, as in the Bavarian and Hungarian Soviet Republics of 1919, the authors give the impression that these were the handiwork of a few men. The social, political, and economic pressures before and after the armistice, the masses in the streets of Munich and Budapest, the workers' and soldiers' councils in action, are notoriously absent from the authors' description. One is left with the clear impression that the widespread social unrest of 1918-19 in Central Europe and elsewhere was a matter of clandestine plots. The same ahistorical approach prevails in the treatment of the splits in major socialist parties following the Comintern's Second World Congress. In the case of the French and Italian socialist parties, interesting new material on the behind-the-

scenes activities of Comintern emissaries is presented. But the authors insist that the outcome of the Tours and Livorno Congresses was arranged and determined by Lenin and other Bolsheviks. Such simplistic treatment adds little and is inferior to the brilliant analyses of the origins of French communism by Robert Wohl and Annie Kriegel and of the origins of Italian communism by John M. Cammett and Paolo Spriano.

The authors' use of sources deserves comment. A significant number of unpublished confidential documents—minutes of Comintern Executive Committee and Presidium meetings and correspondence between Comintern leaders and chiefs of the German and French parties—have been used. They are cited in the footnotes as being in the possession of the authors. If history is not to deteriorate into a branch of philately, these valuable documents should be deposited in a library open to scholars of diverse orientations (especially since the authors quite rightly complain about the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism's being closed to scholars). Extensive use has been made of the memoir literature, but considering its generally tendentious nature, it seldom has been checked against other sources (M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, for instance, written in the 1950s, are used without circumspection in reconstructing the drafting of theses on the national and colonial questions at the Comintern Second World Congress in 1920).

In turning to this work the reader is advised to separate the contributions on the Comintern underground from the larger conspiratorial framework. Every historian writes from a point of view; reductionism is another matter.

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RABOCHII KLASS ROSSII V 1917 GODU. By L. S. Gaponenko. Moscow: "Nauka," 1970. 579 pp. 2.56 rubles.

RABOCHIE IUGA ROSSII: 1914-FEVRAL' 1917 G. By Iu. I. Kir'ianov. Moscow: "Nauka," 1971. 307 pp. 1.24 rubles.

These are two of the most important Soviet books to appear on labor in the past decade. Each is a clearly organized and well-written work of Soviet scholarship. Each, of course, is bound by the fundamental assumptions and theoretical framework of Marxism-Leninism within that total conceptual structure. Each makes a particular departure, however, from previous Soviet scholarship in its field. The function of both is to reassess the relations of labor and the party in the revolutionary situation and to emphasize the role of the party, and Lenin as its leader, in guiding and directing labor to the victory of proletarian dictatorship. Each of the books begins with a bibliographical essay discussing previous secondary works on the subject and describing new primary sources which Kirianov and Gaponenko have used. Bibliographies are also appended. They and particularly the essays are extremely valuable especially to Western scholars. The bibliographies themselves contain no Western works, but footnotes in the text sometimes refer to Western scholarship, refuting from a Soviet-Marxist-Leninist basis contentions by "bourgeois historians" in the field. One of the interests both these books hold for Western scholars is an historiographical one. There is, moreover, reason to suspect that this new Soviet point of view on labor and the Soviet revolution is not directed at the "bourgeois" West but more directly, even if more subtly, at points of view