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INTRODUCTION

The principal object in translating and publishing this book is to show the workers in America a revolutionary political party in operation, and to demonstrate its inevitable tendency towards bureaucracy with a consequent isolation from the masses. A complete survey or even a small part of the evils of abounding in a political centralization of production and distribution is of course beyond the scope of this small book and too, it is obvious that the complaint expressed here could not tread outside of party lines.

The book was only intended originally for the delegates of the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, and, anticipating criticism for publishing in America what was not intended for the world at large we justify ourselves on the ground that criticism of a party having perhaps the destiny and welfare of the millions of Russia in their hands is as much the business of revolutionary workers in America as anywhere else. Yes, even Russian workers.

The Russian revolution as a spontaneous movement of the masses is not the property of any certain group or party. All humanity is bound up in such an event and therefore no one can be expected to recognize certain circles beyond which a knowledge of such vital questions cannot go.

The failure of the Bolshevik party to solve the social problem and the failure of the author of this book to prove that it could have been solved by the same political party if they only had adopted the tactics suggested by the "Opposition", these two facts taken together, should, in our opinion, be sufficient to remove for a long time to come the notion that a few leaders can emancipate the workers from their desks in government buildings.

Kollontay has succeeded in convincing us that Lenin, Trotzky and Zinoviev together with other front rank bolsheviks were wrong all the time in trying to solve the social problem from the top downward. She has strengthened the belief that it must take place from the bottom upward, but she has failed to show any logical justification for a political party directing such a movement.

The translation of this book from Russian to English presented many difficulties, chief of which was the necessity of remodeling many parts into readable English. The original in Rus-

sian was written in haste, with barely time to have it printed for the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party and this made it impossible for a better and more studious attention to the details of construction. Therefore the English translation bears many sentences and paragraphs that are not exact translations, but retain the sense of the original copy. One other thing that must be noted in connection with the book, is the intimate manner the writer assumes. This is of course because her intended auditors were familiar with the situation with which she was dealing and therefore she was excluded from the necessity of going very deep in her discussions. But in spite of all this it is obvious that the "Infantile sickness of Leftism" is a disease that is completely overshadowed by the organic weakness of political centers.

This book is now out of print in Russia and together with the "Workers Opposition" as a movement was officially declared by the Tenth Congress of the Russian Party to be, "incompatable with the present policy of the Communist party", and as this can mean nothing else than that the stamp of illegality has been placed on the movement it must now operate outside of party influences. What will be the future of the "Opposition" principles in Russia one can only guess, but it is certain that the struggle of the workers to control the industries themselves will be carried on in Russia in spite of all legal hindrances.

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