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**FROM PETER THE GREAT
TO LENIN**

FROM PETER THE GREAT TO LENIN

A HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN LABOUR
MOVEMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO TRADE UNIONISM

BY

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P R E F A C E

IN writing this book my chief aim has been to present an account of the Russian Labour Movement, based mainly on original Russian sources. I should not have ventured on this dangerous ground if I had not been persuaded that the materials and documents here collected may be of some use in filling in the gap which exists on this subject in the literature of this country.

The Labour Movement in Russia differed greatly from those of the chief European countries from its inception up to its final stage, and it would be a mistake to apply to it the same measuring-rod which we are accustomed to use for the Labour Movement of this or any other country of Europe. On the other hand, the Revolution of 1917 created universal interest in the "soviets." Before that the existence of soviets was hardly known outside Russia, although the whole history of the Russian Labour Movement rests upon them.

The object of the book is, therefore, to investigate the main trends of the movement; to analyse the origins and nature of soviets; and to describe the scope and character of the Russian Labour organisation. The latter will be treated here with special reference to trade unionism, for the trade union problem has not received adequate treatment outside Russia, and indeed, even in Russia itself it has not been investigated sufficiently. The existence of a fair number of books in English on the Socialist Movement in Russia, makes it hardly necessary for me to describe it fully here. I deal with it, therefore, as need arises, mainly

in connection with its influence upon the labour organisation in Russia.

Finally, I attempt to throw some light on the question of how far the present *régime* in the U.S.S.R., with all its strength and weakness, is the natural outcome of the prolonged struggle for freedom and independence by the Russian people.

No one can be more aware than myself of the defects and shortcomings of the pages which follow. I feel, however, that the opportunity which I have had of handling documents and materials that have already disappeared, or are rapidly disappearing, and my participation in the trade union movement, which I was able to observe from the inside at a highly critical period in its history, imposed on me a moral obligation to preserve some permanent record of them.

I have supplemented the book by the addition of two articles. The first is a Report on Workers' Family Budgets in Soviet Russia, which I communicated to the International Labour Office of the League of Nations in 1929; the second is a lecture on Russian Consumers' Societies, delivered at the Summer School of the Co-operative Party at Cober Hill, near Scarborough, in 1927. The former may serve as a basis for a study of the standard of life of the Russian workman; the latter describes, though necessarily only in outline, the development of the Co-operative Movement in Russia before the Revolution.

The bibliography of Russian sources printed at the end of the book will, I hope, be of some use for a further study of Russian problems, especially as in their more recent works the majority of Russian economists, historians and politicians omit references to the pre-revolutionary literature. I have resisted

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the temptation to utilise sources published in languages other than Russian, and have made only a few references to them. I have also abstained from quoting any material published in Russian outside Soviet Russia, soon after the Revolution of 1917, as such material must be regarded as a secondary, and not a primary source.

My indebtedness to Sir William Beveridge, Professor Harold Laski, Sir Bernard Pares and Professor Lionel Robbins is great. Without their encouragement I should have found it difficult to complete my investigation.

I need hardly say how much my studies of Russian trade unionism have been inspired and guided by the works of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb on the history and organisation of trade unionism in Great Britain.

I am deeply grateful to Professor R. H. Tawney and Mr. C. M. Lloyd for all their suggestions and their invaluable criticism during my study. It is needless to say that I alone am responsible for any arguments and conclusions contained in this book.

I have also to thank many friends for their help and assistance of all kinds, and my wife for her unflinching comradeship throughout the whole period of my study and work.

I shall have realised my aim if my book should prove of some use to students of Russian problems, and helps to elucidate them.

S. P. T.

London, 1935.

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The last two tables clearly indicate that the increase in wages lagged behind the increase in food prices: in other words, real wages went down. Indeed, while the average money wages for 1914 went up by 1 per cent., food prices rose approximately by 5 per cent.; at the end of the same year by 15 per cent. to 20 per cent., and at the beginning of 1915 by 36 per cent.

At the beginning of 1915 food prices were rising rapidly and reached enormous heights for certain kinds of products. It is true that the mobilisation of industry in the summer of 1915 caused a great rise in wages of industrial workmen, though this rise continued to lag behind the rise in the cost of living.

BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

- 1613 The great *Zemsky Sobor* (Russian Parliament) elects the first Romanov Tsar.
- 1613-1645 The reign of Mikhail Fedorovich.
- 1645-1676 The reign of Alexey Mikhailovich.
- 1648-1649 The rebellion of Cossacks (Hetman Khmel-nitsky).
- 1666 Trial of the Patriarch Nikon (*Raskol*, Old Believers).
- 1668-1671 The insurrection of Stepan Razin.
- 1682-1725 The reign of Peter the Great.
- 1700-1721 The great Northern War with Sweden.
- 1703 The foundation of St. Petersburg.
- 1721 Decree authorising factory owners to buy villages, together with their bondmen.
- 1725-1727 The reign of Catherine I.
- 1727-1730 The reign of Peter II.
- 1730-1740 The reign of Anne.
- 1736 Decree authorising factory owners to employ "freely-hired" labour (*Obrok* system).
- 1740-1741 The reign of Ivan VI.
- 1741-1743 The War with Sweden.
- 1741 The "Labour Regulation" and the "Workers' Rules."
- 1741-1761 The reign of Elizabeth (daughter of Peter the Great and Catherine I.).
- 1755 The foundation of the University of Moscow.
- 1756-1763 The Seven Years' War.
- 1750-1760 Riots and insurrections of peasants attached to factories ("possessional" workers).
- 1761-1762 The reign of Peter III.
- 1762-1796 The reign of Catherine II. (wife of Peter III.).
- 1773 The first partition of Poland.
- 1775 The abolition of independence of *Zaporozhie* (Ukrainian Cossacks).
- 1768-1774 The first Turkish War.

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- 3-1775 The insurrection of Pugachev.
 7-1791 The second Turkish War.
 8-1790 The War with Sweden.
 3-1795 The second and third partitions of Poland.
 6-1801 The reign of Paul I.
 1-1825 The reign of Alexander I.
 6-1812 Wars with Napoleon, Turkey and Sweden.
 1812 The Fatherland War.
 1-1825 The rebellion of Decembrists.
 1824 The "Third Department of His Majesty's Chancellery" (similar to the G.P.U. or *Cheka*) formed.
 5-1855 The reign of Nicholas I.
 10-1831 The insurrection of Poland.
 13-1856 The Crimean War.
 15-1881 The reign of Alexander II.
 1861 The emancipation of serfs (February 19th).
 1864 *Zemstvos* (Local Governments, Russian County Councils) formed.
 11-1870 The beginning of the Co-operative Movement in Russia.
 13-1875 *Narodnichestvo* (Movement to work among the people).
 14-1878 The South and North Russian Labour Unions (first political "underground" labour organisations) formed.
 1879 The "*Narodnaya Volya*" (People's Will), the "*Zemlya i Volya*" (Land and Freedom) and the "*Cherny Peredel*" (Redistribution of the land) formed.
 1881 Alexander II. killed.
 81-1894 The reign of Alexander III.
 1883 The first Social-Democratic Organisation: "Emancipation of Labour Group" (G. Plekhanov, P. Axelrod, Vera Zassulich).
 1885 The Morozov Strike.
 1886 The "First Russian Labour Code."
 94-1917 The reign of Nicholas II.
 1897 The 11½ hours' working day.
 "Bund" (the Jewish Socialist Workers' Union) formed.

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- 1898 The Russian Social Democratic Labour Party formed.
- 1900 The General Strike at Kharkov.
- 1901 The "*Zubatovshchina*."
- 1903 Printers' strike in Moscow and the first "underground" Printers' Trade Union.
Pogroms at Kishinev.
- 1904 The Japanese War.
Gapon.
- 1905 January 9th.
The Revolution.
The Soviets of Workers' Delegates amongst the textile workers at Ivanovo-Voznessensk and amongst Printers in Moscow.—The beginning of legalised trade unionism.—The St. Petersburg and Moscow Soviets of Workers' Deputies.—Barricades in Moscow.
- 1906 The First Duma.
- 1912 The miners' strike in Lena Goldfields.
- 1915 The War.
- 1917 The Revolution.
Abdication of Nicholas II. (March 15th).—The Provisional Government (Prince Lvov).—The First All-Russian Congress of Soviets (June–July).—Kerensky (July 21st).—Lenin, as Chairman of the Soviet Government (October).
- 1918 The Dissolution of the Constituent Assembly (January 19th).
Brest-Litovsk Peace Treaty signed (March 3rd).
Attempt on Lenin's life by Kaplan—a woman Social-Revolutionary—(August 30th).
- 1918–1921 The Civil War and the "War Communism."
- 1921–1926 The New Economic Policy (N.E.P.).
- 1922 The G.P.U. (the State Secret Political Department) formed.
The Declaration of the establishment of the U.S.S.R.
- 1924 The death of Lenin (January 21st).
- 1928–1933 The First Five-Year Plan.
- 1933–1937 The Second Five-Year Plan.

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GLOSSARY

- Artel* " An association formed to carry out specified units of work, or to carry on certain industries, or to render personal services on the joint responsibility of the members of the *artel* and for their joint account."
- Bolshevik* Member of the left wing of the Social-Democratic Party.
- Bolshinstvo* Majority.
- Boyar* " Free follower of a prince ; member of highest social and political class in Russia until Peter the Great established the ' Table of Ranks ' (1722), which made rank technically dependent on service position."
- Byloe* Past.
- Centrosoyus* Central Union.
- Cherny* Black.
- Cherny Peredel* Redistribution of the land.
- Duma* Assembly, the Russian Parliament.
- Ispravnik* Captain of the Police.
- Izvozchik* Cab-driver.
- Knut* Whip.
- Komsomol* The Union of the Communist Youth.
- Kooperatsia* Co-operative Society.
- Krasny Arkhiv* Red Archives.
- Kvass* Home-made cider.
- Menshevik* Member of the right wing of the Social-Democratic Party.
- Menshinstvo* Minority.
- Mir* Village local administration.
- Moskovskiya Vedomosti* The Moscow News.
- Narod* People.
- Narodnaya Volya* The People's Will.

- Narodnichestvo* . . . A movement of the Russian intelligentsia to help the people.
- Nashe Delo* . . . Our Affairs.
- Obrok* . . . Money tax.
- Okhrana* . . . A Department of the Secret Police.
- Osvobozhdenie Truda* . . . The Emancipation of Labour.
- Podstrekatel* . . . Initiator of a riot.
- Pogromschiki* . . . Organisers of a pogrom.
- Possessionnye Krestiane* . . . Peasants attached to the State or private factories.
- Proletarskaya Revolutsia* . . . The Proletarian Revolution.
- Pud* . . . 36·11 lbs.
- Rabochy Soyus* . . . The Workers' Union.
- Russkiya Viedomosti* . . . *The Russian News*.
- Soviet* . . . Council.
- Stanichnaya Isba* . . . District (Cossacks) Peasants' Court.
- Starosta* . . . Elder, headman, foreman, steward, monitor.
- Starshina* . . . Elder, headman.
- Trud* . . . Labour.
- Trudovaya Groupa* . . . Labour Group.
- Versta* . . . 66 English mile.
- Votchinye Krestiane* . . . Peasants who were obliged to work in the hereditary estates or undertakings of noblemen.
- Vpered* . . . Forward.
- Yassnaya Polyana* . . . Leo Tolstoy's estate.
- Zachinshchik* . . . Instigator.
- Zastava* . . . Border of a suburb.
- Zemsky Sobor* . . . Russian Parliament.
- Zemskaya Mirskaya Izba* . . . Local peasants' Court.
- Zemstvo* . . . Local Government.
- Zubatovshchina* . . . "Police Socialism in Russia," originated by Zubatov.

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