

“The Class, the Party, and the Leadership” - Trotsky (1940)

Suggested Questions

1. What does “immaturity of the masses” mean? When & how is it used by the reformists?
2. Would the masses be “perfectly mature” some day?
3. Why would revolutionary workers accept or elect non-revolutionary leaderships? Is this always the case?
4. “People get the government/leadership they deserve”. What does this mean? Is it true?
5. Can a revolutionary leadership/organisation be created under the revolutionary process? Would that be enough?
6. If Lenin was such a great leader, why didn't he lead the revolution earlier?
7. Could the Russian revolution have succeeded without the Bolshevik party and/or its leadership?
8. Trotsky claims that: “*The peasantry can play a very great role in the revolution, but only an auxiliary role.*” Why?
9. Did the economic & social conditions in mid-war Germany lead automatically to Hitler?
10. “*Workers in general do not easily break with the party that awakens them to conscious life.*” What do you think this means? How is it relevant for our tactics today?
11. “*Only gradually, only on the basis of their own experience through several stages can the broad layers of the masses become convinced that a new leadership is firmer, more reliable, more loyal than the old. To be sure, during a revolution, i.e., when events move swiftly, a weak party can quickly grow into a mighty one provided it lucidly understands the course of the revolution and possesses staunch cadres that do not become intoxicated with phrases and are not terrorized by persecution. But such a party must be available prior to the revolution inasmuch as the process of educating the cadres requires a considerable period of time and the revolution does not afford this time.*”

Is the statement 'a weak party can quickly grow into a might one' contradictory with Trotsky's statement that workers do not easily break with parties that awaken them to conscious life? Given the need to create a revolutionary party in advance of a revolution, should revolutionaries just create a party and wait?

12. What is a centrist party?

13. Could the Spanish revolution have won? How?

A short summary and discussion of the text:

<https://www.marxist.com/marxism-anarchism-book/trotsky-the-class-the-party-and-the-leadership.htm>