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History Of The Russian Revolution



Synopsis

During the first two months of 1917 Russia was still a Romanov monarchy. Eight months later the Bolsheviks stood at the helm. They were little known to anybody when the year began, and their leaders were still under indictment for state treason when they came to power. You will not find another such sharp turn in history especially if you remember that it involves a nation of 150 million people. It is clear that the events of 1917, whatever you think of them, deserve study. --Leon Trotsky, from History of the Russian Revolution

Regarded by many as among the most powerful works of history ever written, this book offers an unparalleled account of one of the most pivotal and hotly debated events in world history. This book reveals, from the perspective of one of its central actors, the Russian Revolution's profoundly democratic, emancipatory character. Originally published in three parts, Trotsky's masterpiece is collected here in a single volume. It serves as the most vital and inspiring record of the Russian Revolution to date. [T]he greatest history of an event that I know. C. L. R. James

Justly celebrated as a towering, vivid, historically vital work. China Miéville, October

In Trotsky all passions were aroused, but his thought remained calm and his vision clear.... His involvement in the struggle, far from blurring his sight, sharpens it.... The History is his crowning work, both in scale and power and as the fullest expression of his ideas on revolution. As an account of a revolution, given by one of its chief actors, it stands unique in world literature. Isaac Deutscher

Book Information

Paperback: 1040 pages

Publisher: Haymarket Books (July 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1931859450

ISBN-13: 978-1931859455

Product Dimensions: 6.1 x 1.5 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 28 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #254,127 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #276 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Russian & Former Soviet Union #455 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Sociology > Class #671 in Books > History > Asia > Russia

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• The greatest history of an event that I know. • C. L. R. James "Justly celebrated as a towering, vivid, historically vital work. • China Miéville, October • The History is his crowning work, both in scale and power and as the fullest expression of his ideas on revolution. As an account of a revolution, given by one of its chief actors, it stands unique in world literature. • Isaac Deutscher • I would routinely smuggle copies of Trotsky's History of the Russian Revolution into the USSR • so our colleagues could know a little about their own political beginnings. • Carl Sagan "This passionate, partisan and beautifully written account by a major participant in the revolution, written during his exile on the isle of Prinkipo in Turkey, remains one of the best accounts of 1917. No counter-revolutionary, conservative or liberal, has been able to compete with this telling." • Tariq Ali

Leon Trotsky was a leader of the Russian revolution in 1917 and is the author of My Life, The History of the Russian Revolution, and The Revolution Betrayed.

Trotsky was one of the great political thinkers of the last century. However, because of his association with the October revolution and the amazing denigration by Stalin, he became ostracised throughout the world. He alone wanted the German communist party to align with the socialists to stop Hitler but Stalin's preference for Hitler succeeded resulting in WWII. This book paints a vivid background on the Russian revolution and provides amazing detail of the corruption of the Tsarist regime and its insensitivity to the mood of the people. Trotsky gives a compelling historical explanation of the failure of Russia to keep pace with the political developments in the West which resulted in a revolution intending to take backward Russia without any experience of western democratic developments to a revolutionary state. His hopes of developing a democratic proletariat were dashed by Stalin. Trotsky pays great tribute to Lenin but is modest about the fact that Lenin was in hiding at the time of the revolution and it was he, Trotsky, who engineered the revolution and it was he, Trotsky, who constructed the red army from nothing and defeated the establishment forces thus securing the revolution. One of the brilliant political works of all time and a reflection of Trotsky, the defamed genius.

This sweeping and beautifully written description and analysis of the two Russian revolutions of 1917 is a great work of history. Although written by a prime participant, it is not a personal memoir but rather a detailed and objective account that never loses sight of the big picture, focusing on the strategy and tactics of each contending class and political party. Unashamedly Marxist in

orientation, this work also features vivid characterizations, including of Czar Nicholas, Rasputin, and Lenin. A must read for history buffs.

As in so many personal accounts of historical events, there is much to be gained from works by those who lived in and had a major part in the history itself. Having read other works addressing the Russian Revolution, this history is detailed and well written and it gave me a much different understanding of the causes and results of this revolution (actually more than just the 1917 event). There was so much more in this work than one usually has access to and explains what, why and how the events happened and the people who affected the happenings. The writing itself needs a positive major comment. Although originally written in Russian and translated into English it was so well presented that I felt that I was being spoken to by the author rather than reading off pages. For anyone interested in historical events this book is valuable. It is a major work and will provide a much great understanding and appreciation to the reader than generally available.

If you're looking for a light read, Trotsky's History of Russian Revolution is not the way to go by any means. But, despite its length, and despite the enormity of its topic, this is an amazingly accessible and engrossing account of one of the modern world's most important political and historical events, written by one of its main players. There are certainly some parts that are more difficult than others, and some where clearly Trotsky assumes an understanding of what happened in Russia during 1917 - an expectation of his readers that would have been utterly reasonable for the audience he was writing for, at the time he was writing, but which at times can be a bit confusing for a Westerner reading it almost 100 years later. But this is only occasionally frustrating and there is, in any event, a very helpful set of appendices and glossaris at the back that help you know who's who and what's what. It is, undoubtedly in my view, well worth the effort that it will take you to get through it. I don't think any other history of the revolution is as detailed, as comprehensive, and as engaging as this. There are times when it really has you on the edge of your seat - and that, no doubt, is largely because it is written by someone who was actually there. Max Eastman, who was a friend of Trotsky, gives us a translation that feels tremendously fresh and was enthusiastically endorsed by Trotsky himself.

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