

Canada: Kingston, Ontario, ISSE to show Tsar to Lenin

26 March 2008

The Kingston, Ontario, chapter of the International Students for Social Equality will be hosting a showing of the classic documentary *Tsar to Lenin* on Thursday, March 27.

Many right-wing historians have claimed that the Russian Revolution was a coup organized by the Bolsheviks without any significant popular support. Produced by Herman Axelbank in 1937, *Tsar to Lenin* is a powerful answer to such historical falsifications.

Axelbank was with Goldwyn Pictures when the Russian Revolution broke out. So inspired was he by what was unfolding in Russia that he decided to produce a film about it. The project, which became his life work, was to take him 20 years. The result is a unique collection of original material, including home movies from the archive of the tsar, a rare view of World War I shot from behind German lines, and rare footage of the tumultuous events of 1917 and the years following the revolution.

The narration, by the famed American socialist Max Eastman (1883-1969), was itself a work of genius. For years *Tsar to Lenin* was steeped in controversy. In the 1930s and 1940s, it was denounced and boycotted by much of the Stalinist-dominated Left in North America because it provides a factually accurate depiction of the major role played by Leon Trotsky in the Russian Revolution. During the McCarthyite era, Herman Axelbank was reduced to near bankruptcy as he fought various court actions that barred him from showing the film. Not until the 1970s was it possible to see *Tsar to Lenin* as it had been conceived originally by Axelbank.

**Queen's University Thursday,
March 27, 7 p.m.**

Watson Hall, Room 217
49 Bader Lane, Kingston

For more on the political controversy surrounding, and the historical significance of, Tsar to Lenin please

see "ISSE meetings in Britain to screen Tsar to Lenin: Documenting the last days of Tsarist Russia and the birth of the new Soviet Union"



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