

Leon Trotsky's Literature and Revolution now available

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Mehring Books is pleased to make *Literature and Revolution* by Leon Trotsky available to readers of the *World Socialist Web Site*. [Click here to order your copy](#).

This extraordinary work of Marxist literary criticism, first published in 1924, is a further illustration of the author's multifaceted genius. Leon Trotsky, co-leader of the Russian Revolution and its leading orator, Soviet foreign minister and founder and leader of the Red Army, was also one of the leading Marxist critics of this period.

Trotsky subjects the leading trends in literature and art in the early years of the revolution to criticism that is sharp but never tendentious. He illuminates and develops the Marxist method of historical materialism, rejecting "art for art's sake" conceptions as well as their apparent opposite, the theories of "proletarian culture" and "proletarian art," then becoming fashionable in certain left circles.

The latter conceptions were soon made use of by the growing Stalinist bureaucracy as it moved to strangle genuinely revolutionary tendencies and tighten its grip on the first workers' state. Trotsky's attention to questions of literature and art, like his writings on technology and broader questions of social life and culture, was inseparably bound up with the early struggles against the degeneration of the October Revolution.

Trotsky saw the lack of culture of the masses as an important factor contributing to the growth of bureaucratism in the young Soviet state. *Literature and Revolution* was part of Trotsky's contribution to the debate within the party on how this problem

bequeathed by tsarism could be overcome.

In opposition to the Stalinist leader cult, he envisioned a new man arising under socialism. He argues, "More correctly, the shell in which the cultural construction and self-education of Communist man will be enclosed, will develop all the vital elements of contemporary art to the highest point. Man will become immeasurably stronger, wiser and subtler; his body will become more harmonized, his movements more rhythmic, his voice more musical. The forms of life will become dynamically dramatic. The average human type will rise to the heights of an Aristotle, a Goethe, or a Marx."

This work is a highly recommended addition to your library of Marxist classics. [Click here to order your copy](#).

Literature and Revolution by Leon Trotsky
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