

Bolshevik Blindness

Because of her emotionalism and obviously propagandist purpose, Anna Louise Strong, in her book "I Change Worlds," completely overlooks an economic truth inherent in one of her flamboyant descriptions.

She is telling of the "wonderful" productive progress of the Russian revolution. The time is 1923, and the locale is Kiev, a city which had suffered much in the civil wars that followed the bolshevik coup. A fair is in progress.

"Clearly much local initiative was at work. Even the private speculators, it seemed, could be used if you knew how. Vidensky, chairman of the fair and chief of Kiev's public utilities and housing, told me how he had repaired the broken water-works, the power-plant, the ruined street-car system and hundreds of broken buildings, in a single year without a cent of taxes, by renting shops and market-booths to private traders and charging them, as capitalists do, 'all that the traffic would bear.' Vidensky was not sentimentally bewailing private trade as I had done; he exploited it to rebuild the city."

The emphasis is ours.

You would expect this paragraph

to be followed by an explanation, or a comment, or just a remark on the socialization of rent (without taxes) as the fact which made possible the re-building of a city. But, she hops-skips-and-jumps to another ebullient description of the marvels of the bolshevist regime, very much like a sub-deb telling you in inchoate confusion of her "conquests."