

# ***OCTOBER, CHINA MIÉVILLE*** **A.C.A.B. DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>, 2019**

China Miéville. British writer engaged in left-wing politics: member of a few different socialist groups of Trotskyist affinity and stood for election with the Socialist Unity Party in 2001. 2005 PhD thesis on Marxism and International Law. Prolific writer who plans on writing a novel in every genre, known for his science fiction & fantasy novels

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What were your first impressions of the book?
  
- Were you rooting for the Bolsheviks? Or maybe for another person or group? Miéville emphasizes the way the communist experiment had not yet failed by the end of the period narrated in the book. Do you agree? Miéville is a Trotskyist, unlike us (I assume) – was there any dissonance for you while reading, could you sympathize with his framing, did it change your outlook?
  
- Miéville’s writing is unabashedly literary, filling in all sorts of details, nuances, and poignancies that could only be imagined, not proven historically. Did you like this style? Did you find it fair, accurate, good? Miéville also only used sources published in English – do you think it’s a problem that the book wasn’t traditionally scholarly, or was it aiming for something else? If so, what was it?
  
- One of many dilemmas presented in the book was the conviction, held even by most of the left, that Russia had to go through a bourgeois-capitalist period to build up the material basis for communism. The Bolshevik’s gambit was taking their chance when they saw it even before ‘fully developed capitalism.’ Was this the right decision? (How) does uneven development still present revolutionary leftists with problems?
  - o A related point: should the Bolsheviks have seized power in July?
  
- Anarchists are one of many groups acting throughout the book, often escalating confrontations. Similarly, Miéville often uses the word ‘anarchy’ to describe the complex conflicts that ignite across Russia. How did you feel about the role of anarchists in the book? What could the anarchists have done differently, and how could the revolution have found a more anarchic solution?
  
- Are there any meaningful strategic or tactical insights we can draw from this revolution?